



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, April 11, 2017

Day 19

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Third Session

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Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)
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Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND),
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Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (PC)
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Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (ND)
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Starke, Dr. Richard, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC)
Stier, Pat, Livingstone-Macleod (W)
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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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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us reflect or pray, each in our own way. Allow us time to reflect on the past, recognizing the significant achievements that we have made along the way. Let us concentrate on the present and have a vision for the future that makes life better for our province and for our world.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

Ms Gray: M. le Président, c'est avec fierté que je me lève à la Chambre aujourd'hui pour introduire Greenview elementary school. The students are accompanied by their teachers, Mme Cheri Krywko and Mrs. Angela Sharun, along with their chaperones: Mr. Bob Graham, Mrs. Terri White, and Mrs. Michele Schulhaus. There are two classes visiting today, approximately 47 students, learning about the important history of this place and those who have had the privilege of serving here. I would like them to all rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly 44 bright young students, two classes, from Overlanders school in the incredible constituency of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview. They're accompanied by their two teachers, Mrs. Nabe and Ms Torrance, and four chaperones: Kiera Batchelar, Rafia Moazam, Sarah Antoniuk, and Damir Skeric. I'd ask them all to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Are there any other school groups, hon. members? The Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my – oh. It's a student as opposed to a school group. Is that . . .

The Speaker: You've got the floor.

Ms Larivee: I'm here anyway. Okay.

On behalf of my colleague the Minister of Seniors and Housing it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Jack Stoddard. Jack is an honours student in grade 9 at l'école Joseph-Moreau and is very involved with cadets, having achieved the rank of master corporal in 2836 Edmonton 1st Combat Engineer Regiment in the Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps. He is also keenly interested in politics and is here today to observe both question period and to watch the pages at work since he is interested in learning more about the page program. I would ask him to rise as a student here today and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome. I hope you still want to return and become a page after you watch this event.

The hon. Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you a number of folks who are here today because it's Dental Hygienists Week and April is Oral Health Month, including dental hygienists. Dental hygienists are the sixth-largest health profession in Canada. They play a crucial role in promoting oral health and preventing disease. In their honour I remind my esteemed colleagues to brush, floss, and get regular checkups, please. I now ask Paulette Dahlseide, Denise Kokaram, Alysha Ferguson, and Marthe Benoit to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Minister of Infrastructure and of Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly officers of the Parkinson Alberta board, clients, and care partners, who are here as we recognize Parkinson's Day. The chief executive officer of Parkinson Alberta is John Petryshen. He's joined today by members of the Parkinson Alberta board and, as I mentioned, clients and care partners: Dr. Wayne Martin, neurologist and Parkinson Alberta board member; Brandi La Bonte, operations manager of Parkinson Alberta; George Plouffe; Paulette Plouffe; Ron Ebbers; Brad Freysteinson; Brandy Freysteinson; Blair Harwood; Dr. Harold Dhliwayo; Lucia Dhliwayo; Jim Maxwell; Gina Tedeschini; and Doug de Vries. The tulips we wear today symbolize that hope will bloom this spring. I would like to recognize and applaud the efforts of Parkinson Alberta as they rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly board members and staff from Alberta Ballet, including the daughter of one of the founders: Larry Clausen, George Goldhoff, Josh Bilyk, Jennifer Faulkner, Margaret Dalwood, Candice Harris. I look forward to doing my member's statement later today on Alberta Ballet and its 50th anniversary season. I would like them now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real privilege to be able to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Pastor Jim Lochhead. Jim is the pastor at the fine church of McClure United, and I will be speaking more about Jim later in my member's statement. I would now ask him to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. It is my privilege to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly four members seated in your gallery from the northeast division of the Edmonton Police Service located in the constituency of Edmonton-Manning. I would like to introduce Acting Superintendent Teri Uhryn, Staff Sergeant Dave Goodkey, Patrol Sergeant Shelley Fisher, and Sergeant Cory Huculak. I will be speaking more to these four members and the

entire Edmonton Police Service northeast division in my member's statement this afternoon.

I would also like to introduce Gerard Amani, the newest addition to the Edmonton-Manning constituency office. Gerard was born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and came to Canada with his family at the age of 18 as a refugee and has given back to his community ever since. I look forward to working with Gerard now and in the future.

I would like to ask them all now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and privilege to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly representatives from the Sikh community who are joining us today: Tejinder Sidhu, Vikram Sahiwal, Dr. Hans, Deep Shergill, Vishal Comer, Prabhjeet Grewal, Varinder Sidhu, Pavan Elapavuluri, and Arohi Elapavuluri. Last Friday along with my colleagues I was honoured to declare April 2017 to be Sikh Heritage Month in Alberta, and my guests are joining us here for the reception tonight. I ask my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a number of agriculture stakeholders who are visiting today. They represent the many hard-working men and women of the Alberta Beef Producers and Alberta Lamb Producers. Bob Lowe, a rancher from Nanton, Alberta, is the board chair of the Alberta Beef Producers. He's joined by Roland Cailliau, vice-chair, and Tom Lynch-Staunton, government relations with ABP. Darlene Stein is the board chair of the Alberta Lamb Producers. She's joined by Bernadette Nikkel, member and producer, and with them are future lamb producers Lexi Stein and Rebekah Nikkel. I would like to ask them all now to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

1:40

Members' Statements

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

McClure United Church Gifts to Central America

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year I provided some pencils, pens, and pins to Pastor Jim Lochhead from McClure United church. He was bicycling through Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama and needed some small gifts for schools and children in the area. This is just one example of how his church is making lives better for people here and elsewhere.

Recently I was absolutely delighted to receive this e-mail from Pastor Lochhead and wanted to take the opportunity through this member's statement to share it with everyone.

I want to thank you for the pencils, pens and pins that you provided me with to share while traveling in Central America. I was able to distribute all of the pencils and pens along the way. One of the most heartwarming moments doing this occurred during a ride between Rivas and San Juan Del Sur in Nicaragua. It was a hot, dusty ride along a gravel road. Children were standing alongside the road shouting "hello" as we went by; obviously practicing the English they were learning at school. I carried the pencils and pens in my shirt as I rode. I would take a

pencil and a pen [out] for each child as I rode, throwing them to them, or passing them if able. At one point three children were in the middle of the road having greeted riders ahead of me. Seeing me coming they began to move to the side, two younger siblings encouraged by the older sister who was 9 or 10. The older sister saw me taking the items from my pocket and reached for them as I handed them to her. I could hear her shouting, "Gracias! Gracias!" as I continued along the road. Other riders commented on her delight for the gift. It is an area of Nicaragua that appeared both isolated and impoverished. I was grateful for the opportunity to offer a little (however small) help along the way.

Thank you, Pastor Lochhead, for all your hard work bringing joy to these children. I'm very proud to have you and your parish in my riding, and I can't thank you enough for all that you do.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I wonder if we might have unanimous consent. I neglected two introductions today.

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

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

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislature I'd like to introduce four residents of Edmonton-Whitemud and two residents of Edmonton-Centre who are here today to meet with representatives of the Ministry of Service Alberta to discuss the evolution of condominium and life lease regulations and to witness question period. As I read their names, I would ask our constituents to rise: from Edmonton-Whitemud, Bernice Neufeld, Carol Stirrett, Judy Slavutych, and Marilyn Richardson; and from Edmonton-Centre, Carol Moeller and Tom Hodgson. I would ask my colleagues to extend their usual recognition.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Status of Women and of Service Alberta.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a good friend of mine in the gallery, Jean Munn. She is an accomplished immigration and refugee lawyer in the city of Calgary and a partner at Caron & Partners. She has also been a professor from time to time at the University of Calgary, and I had the opportunity of learning under her tutelage the topics of immigration and refugee law. I ask that she rise and be given the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Thank you, hon. members.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky.

Residential No-charge Energy Savings Program

Mr. Loewen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans didn't like the residential no-charge energy savings program right from the start. They saw it for what it was, a blatant waste of money funded by the equally insulting carbon tax. When legitimate questions are raised on this program, instead of addressing Albertans' concerns, the government suggests that we don't respect those that have signed

up for the program. Nothing could be further from the truth. One person who signed up and saw the video of the question period exchange where the Deputy Premier suggested that the Wildrose disrespected those who did sign up said this to the government, quote: don't – and I say don't – involve me in your lies. End quote.

The environment minister has made a few dubious claims as well, including that this was the most cost-effective way to run an energy efficiency program. I can't imagine that paying a company from Ontario to install light bulbs in Albertans' homes is the most cost-effective way of improving energy efficiency in this province. As we delve deeper into this program, we find some totally inappropriate clauses, including that installers ask personal questions, including the number of people in the home, income range, utility account number, and rate codes. For a government who constantly touts their ban on door-to-door energy sales, how can it justify requiring installers to upsell energy programs and products? Unfortunately, this is yet another example of hypocrisy from this NDP government.

We know that some installers will be Albertans just doing their best, but to have this kind of wording in the bid package is alarming. Finding out that the government misled them when the environment minister said that the Ecofitt bid was the lowest cost provider was disturbing. Now we learn that not only was Ecofitt not even the second-lowest; it was actually the third-lowest bid. A person doesn't just accidentally mistake the lowest bid for the third-lowest bid.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the government, in the words of the Energy minister, continues to mislead this House and indeed Albertans for their own political gain. Now, that's just unacceptable.

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

Calgary-Lougheed Town Hall Meeting

Mr. Rodney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I held a town hall in Calgary-Lougheed, and the attendees asked me to deliver the following unanimous messages to the NDP. They said that the debt should be repaid and the government should eliminate its deficit. They should cut personal, business, and carbon taxes, and the size of the Alberta government should be reduced. There should be a public-sector salary freeze, no negotiated increases in public service contracts, and across-the-board spending controls. The government should renegotiate a better equalization agreement. The NDP should work with the energy industry and the New West Partnership, not against them. Government spending over \$30 million on advertising for the climate leadership plan, on light bulbs, shower heads, power bars, and thermostats is a misuse of taxpayer money. Instead, job creation should be the top priority for this government. There should be no secrecy regarding the revamp of the education curriculum. Serenity's bill should be passed. And the NDP needs to start listening and stop taxing the average middle-class Albertan into nonexistence.

On this point one constituent was so incensed that they wrote this. Our voices are not being heard by this totally incompetent NDP government. They stand on higher ground in the belief that we as Albertans are accepting of the policies that have been shoved down our throats, but I will be silent no longer. As a single parent I have struggled to make ends meet. I am very proud I have stood on my own two feet and raised my children to be self-sustaining adults and proud Albertans. Please use me as an example of what a typical Alberta family is facing and tell the NDP they have done nothing to improve the quality of life for Albertans. Tell them that we do not accept this. Yours truly, Tracey.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP would do well to listen to Tracey, the constituents of Calgary-Lougheed, and indeed all Albertans. Thank you.

Alberta Ballet

Ms McKittrick: Mr. Speaker, when I was a young girl growing up in Paris, I was fortunate to attend ballet performances at the Palais Garnier opera house. My love of ballet and appreciation for the artistic, physical, and musical demands on the dancers have stayed with me.

Mr. Speaker, we are fortunate here in Alberta to have Canada's second-largest ballet company, renowned for their contemporary and classical ballets, available to both Edmonton and Calgary audiences. This year Alberta Ballet celebrates its 50th anniversary season. Alberta Ballet is comprised of 28 classically trained professional dancers from as far away as Japan to as close as my own riding of Sherwood Park. This season we've enjoyed performances of traditional ballets such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Dracula* and three visiting contemporary dance groups.

I was pleased this year to introduce my 90-year-old mother-in-law to ballet. She had never been to a performance before. She now has insisted that she be my date for the next season.

Jean Grand-Maître, the company's artistic director, has been with the company since 2002 and has raised the profile of Alberta Ballet to a world-wide audience. The company has caught the world's attention for its portrait ballets, collaborations with popular music icons such as Joni Mitchell, Elton John, and k.d. lang.

1:50

I am delighted that the final performance of this season is *Our Canada*, the latest portrait ballet, featuring the music of singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot, the first singer-songwriter I learned to love when I moved to Canada. *Our Canada* commemorates the nation's 150th birthday. It tells the story of all Canadians and honours the cultural diversities which define us. Performances will be May 4 to 6 in Calgary and 12 to 13 in Edmonton.

This government is proud to support the work of organizations which try to make life better for Albertans through art and culture. I am not sure how many MLAs have had the pleasure of attending a performance of Alberta Ballet . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition.

Residential No-charge Energy Savings Program

Mr. Jean: Here are some real-world issues for the Premier: 100,000 Albertans are on unemployment insurance right now in Alberta; over 60,000 haven't been able to find work for six months. What has been the NDP's response to this? Well, they've raised everyone's taxes with the largest tax grab in Alberta history. Billions of dollars from families, billions of dollars from businesses, and for what? To pay for a sweetheart contract to an Ontario company to install taxpayer-funded light bulbs. Premier, this program is turning into a real boondoggle. How much will it cost Albertans by the end of this year?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again the member opposite is showing his tendency to flip and flop just a

little bit. Last week the Wildrose was complaining that we had an energy efficiency program. This week in their press release they're complaining that our energy efficiency program isn't big enough. You know, at least the light bulbs are starting to turn on over there. What we will say is that Albertans are excited about saving money. What they're not excited about is the Wildrose opposition, that wants to reverse our cut to school fees, that wants to reverse our tuition freeze, that wants to reverse our school lunch program. They know we're working to make their lives . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: Non answer number one, Mr. Speaker.

The government once claimed that Ecofitt was the lowest cost provider, but we know that's simply not true. Now we see in the request for proposal that the NDP is asking Ecofitt to upsell Albertans on "all other energy efficiency opportunities in the home" and to "cross-promote other energy . . . programs and services available." That's after, of course, Ecofitt gets into their homes. The NDP claims to be against door-to-door sales tactics but have asked Ecofitt to do just that. Why is the NDP allowing Ecofitt to push other products once they get into Albertans' homes?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, the member is right in the fact that this government did ban door-to-door sales. And you know what? We're very proud of that. What we didn't ban was helping Albertans save money on their energy bills. That is what this program does. Now, given that the Wildrose is opposed to cutting school fees, freezing tuition, capping electricity rates, it is hardly surprising that they're also opposed to helping people save on their energy bills. But you know what? We're going to help Albertans do just that because that's what this government promised to do.

Mr. Jean: Non answer number two, Mr. Speaker.

Here's why this whole program is one of the most boneheaded government policies we've ever heard of. Albertans don't need the government to spend their money to hire workers to come into their homes and then educate and upsell them in their own houses. On this side of the House we believe that keeping life more affordable means not taking Albertans' money in the first place. We trust that Albertans know how to install their own light bulbs. Maybe if you need some help, you could ask on this side of the House. Why not just scrap the carbon tax and trust that Albertans know how to spend their own money better than you do?

Ms Notley: Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, over 90,000 Alberta households have signed up to save money on their energy bills. Now, you might think that the Wildrose would say that this is a good thing, but not this gang. I'll tell you what. We know that the Leader of the Opposition has trouble taking a position on a number of different issues, and we know that he has trouble getting consensus from his caucus on a number of different issues where he's failing to take a position. I suggest that he go back and take about six weeks to consider whether he might actually support Albertans wanting to save money on their energy bills.

Mr. Jean: Non answer number three, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The second main question.

Premier's Trip to Washington, DC

Mr. Jean: While 35,000 Albertans have been out of work for over a year and are having trouble actually putting food on the table, this

NDP government is quickly developing a taste for excess, for waste, and for mismanagement. Here's one example. Last month the Premier travelled to Washington for a three-day visit. The cost: \$42,000 to the people of Alberta and without meeting any senior cabinet officials whatsoever. Now, the Premier of Saskatchewan, just next door, finished his trip. The cost according to his office: \$10,000. How can the Premier possibly justify spending four times as much for the same trip as the Premier of Saskatchewan?

Ms Notley: Well, frankly, Mr. Speaker, if I were the member opposite, I truly would be a little cautious about holding up the Premier to the east of us as an example to follow. But, as I'm sure the member knows, the Auditor General directed our government to include the full expenses of everybody involved in the trip, and that's why our numbers are higher, because they are counted differently. He's comparing apples to oranges. That's hardly new, just another example of how the member opposite tends to exaggerate things to the people in this Assembly and to the province. [interjections]

The Speaker: It's getting noisy, folks. Keep it down.

Mr. Jean: We understand the need for the Premier's security and a strong voice in Washington. It's very important, now more than ever. But taxpayers in Alberta deserve to see good value for money spent. Saskatchewan's Premier met the Commerce secretary, the President's point man on NAFTA. They met the Energy secretary, and they met the head of the EPA. A \$42,000 trip? That's what the Premier gave us, new professional diplomats and, of course, the social licence that was promised to come with massive new carbon taxes, yet not a single meeting with a senior member of the President's cabinet. Not one. Why does the Premier possibly think that is?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member knows, I had the opportunity to meet with oil and gas executives as well as forestry leaders, manufacturing leaders, and agriculture leaders before we went to Washington. We were proud to be the first province down in Washington advocating on behalf of our industry to support strong trade relationships and to support those industry representatives. Just on Friday members from my office met with those leaders from the energy industry, and they said that they were exceptionally pleased with the work that we've done, that they'd heard tremendous feedback, and that people are getting our message, so I believe . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

Mr. Jean: The NDP spent \$1.3 million to maintain Alberta's presence in Washington. Just a year ago they fired a very well-connected envoy in favour of professional diplomats because they said that it would get us a better deal. Apparently not, Mr. Speaker. Not even a meeting, in fact. Saskatchewan has the former U.S. ambassador advocating for them and setting up meetings with senior members of the President's cabinet. It cost a third of the NDP's hand-picked Washington office. Tens of thousands more for trips, hundreds of thousands more for offices, and minimal access if access at all. How can the Premier justify this ineffective use of Alberta's tax dollars?

Ms Notley: Well, I appreciate the interesting choice of the member opposite to use his opportunity to ask me questions to defend a former political friend and insider on an issue that's two years old.

However, Mr. Speaker, I'm focused on promoting Alberta jobs, Alberta industry, Alberta business in Washington and across the border, and that's exactly what we've been doing. We've been doing it objectively with excellent support both from the federal government and from our own officials, and we will continue to do that because that is the kind of professional work that Albertans expect.

The Speaker: Third main question.

Canadian Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Jean: Yesterday the NDP showed how little they know about the deals that they made on behalf of Albertans. When asked about a new Crown corporation they agreed to create in last week's free trade deal, the minister said that he had no idea where we're getting our information. Well, here's a hint. Read the agreement that you signed. "Alberta gives notice of its intention to create a Crown corporation which will be responsible for all infrastructure procurement." We didn't make this up. It's in the agreement you signed. Will the Premier please confirm that they've signed us up for a new Crown corporation, or have they still not actually read the agreement that they signed?

2:00

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, the answer that I gave to the hon. member yesterday was correct. We have no intention whatsoever of setting up a Crown corporation for infrastructure. In the previous agreement the only way to exempt Alberta companies from free trade requirements under the agreement was to set up a Crown corporation. Other provinces had done that. But I want to say that the minister of economic development has negotiated a new agreement, a new free trade agreement, that protects Alberta businesses. We don't need the Crown corporation, and we have no intention of setting it up.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, yes, no, no, yes, but they include it in the agreement? Come on. Albertans should be concerned about the NDP pattern of making decisions without understanding what they're actually signing Albertans up for. The last time that happened, taxpayers found themselves on the hook for a \$2.3 billion bailout of the power agreements under this government. Now we have a brand new Crown corporation coming without the NDP providing any information whatsoever on what this body will do or what it will cost the taxpayers, but they included it in an agreement. Once the NDP get a chance to read this agreement that they signed, will the Premier please release details about just . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. [interjections] Quiet down, folks.

The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, I wish the hon. member would listen to the answer for a change because the answer is: we're not setting up a Crown corporation; therefore, the Crown corporation will have no costs because the Crown corporation will not exist. And because it does not exist, there will be no costs. I don't know if he's following me, but we're not setting up a Crown corporation, and there are no costs, just to be clear. [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet, everyone. [interjections] Quiet down, please, hon. members.

Mr. Jean: Now, there were rumours about the negotiations on the free trade agreement with the NDP government, that they were the

odd person out and were actually pushing protectionist policies. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to believe that that's not the truth, but now we're in a spot where the government's front bench doesn't even know the contents of a major trade agreement that they signed. Albertans don't want protectionist policies. They don't want a secret agenda from these folks. They want to show that Alberta is open for business and attracting investment, not turning it away. Why on earth did the Premier sign Albertans up for a Crown corporation that they didn't ask for and that they don't need but that is in an agreement they drafted and had signed? [interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. [interjections] Quiet, please. [interjection] Hon. minister, please.

The Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know what? For decades the previous government failed to take meaningful action to stand up for Alberta businesses. The Canadian free trade agreement is a good deal because it finally levels the playing field for Alberta. It's now easier for Albertans to get their world-class products and services to Canadian markets. At the same time, we worked hard to ensure that this is fair treatment for Albertans at home. We will not apologize for negotiating exemptions that mean we can put Albertans back to work rebuilding Fort McMurray. [interjections]

The Speaker: Calm, folks.

The leader of the third party

Children's Charter

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, Albertans were consulted on an Alberta children's charter in 2013, leading to the 2013 Children First Act. Bill 25 passed unanimously, with senior members of the current government in the Assembly. Albertans expected the charter would be adopted in 2015, but instead the NDP government has done nothing. The website childcharter.alberta.ca has since disappeared. I will table the document Together We Raise Tomorrow and provide a copy to the minister today in case she hasn't seen it. To the Minister of Children's Services: why has this government stalled work on adopting and implementing the children's charter?

The Speaker: The Minister of Children's Services.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I can tell you is that this government has unapologetically stood up for children and families here in Alberta, and we've committed to making the lives of Albertan children better. That's why we have a Children's Services department once again, to focus on providing support and making life affordable for everyday families through the child benefit, investing in new child care spaces. If there is anyone who is child centred and focusing on placing children first in this Legislature, it's the members on this side of the room.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Well, perhaps the government could try answering the question, because that's her ministry.

Given that the government-dominated Legislative Offices Committee has been reviewing the Child and Youth Advocate Act and related matters since September 2015 and given that the Alberta children's charter has not been discussed since then, again to the minister, and it is your ministry: when do you intend to fulfill the obligation under section 2(1) of the Children First Act to establish a children's charter?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a demonstration of how centred and focused we are on children in this province, we established the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention. There were many tragic outcomes within the child intervention system, a system that has clearly had substantial challenges for years, so this government is taking action to put children first. We established the ministerial panel, and I look forward to working again with all of my colleagues to deal with this challenging issue, to take some real action to ensure that Alberta's children really have the support they need to move forward and have the very best outcomes.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister ought to be less chippy when she doesn't know her own file, so I'll give her another chance. Given that protection of children and, particularly, vulnerable children in care has been a heightened priority for all Albertans and given that this is now the third session without work on the children's charter, again to the same minister: when will Albertans and this Assembly expect to see a draft of the children's charter as required by section 2(1)? Will you do your job, Minister?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Larivee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While others within this Legislature would focus on cuts that would not give families the leg-up that they need in tough times, this government is taking action to make life better and more affordable. We're not talking about words here. We're going to take real action and we have taken real action to focus on families, to be child centred, and to move forward in ways that we haven't seen in the past to really take that real, strong action to make life affordable, to provide those services to children and families. [An hon. member raised an object]

The Speaker: Hon. member, would you please put that down. You're interfering with my view of the member whose turn it is to now speak.
Calgary-Elbow.

Acute Health Care System Costs

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last week I had an unexpected opportunity for an up-close-and-personal tour of our health care system, and I am proud to say that it was there for me when I needed it. I know that there are people who fall through the cracks and that we still have a lot of work to do in this province on prevention, chronic disease, and mental health, but our acute-care system is truly world class. Every single front-line worker I encountered, from the admissions clerk to the amazing nurses, from all the porters and doctors and cleaning staff to everyone in between, all were compassionate and professional. We're truly lucky to have them. To the Minister of Health: what are you doing to ensure that the voices of people on the front lines are being heard and that the suggestions they make are being listened to?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much to the member, and welcome back. We're pleased that you had a successful experience.

One of the things that I personally do regularly – and I know that our CEO for Alberta Health Services does as well – is site visits. For example, this morning I met with staff at the Boyle McCauley health centre. Regularly we tour AHS facilities as well and have opportunities to chat with some of the staff on the front lines and

meet with their elected representatives through their unions as well. It's important that they have a voice, that their voice is heard within their organization and is respected by their government, and that's what they have in this government.

Mr. Clark: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very glad to hear that because while I was in hospital, staff told me about some of the challenges they face and shared with me some ideas about how to fix them. I was told that it takes \$8 to process every single blanket they use. I learned that it cost \$500,000 to paint a small space in emergency and that an ordinary office desk that costs about \$1,500 at Staples cost more than \$12,000 when it was acquired through the AHS procurement process. These are just stories that I heard in the little more than 24 hours in hospital. Again to the Minister of Health: do you hear these sorts of stories from the front lines, and when you do, what do you do about them?

2:10

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. I welcome the member to pass along those details to my office. I'd be very happy to share them with Alberta Health Services. Definitely, I have a regular meeting with the CEO of AHS and the deputy minister. It's important that we're at the same table, that we have an opportunity to raise specific questions and concerns with each other and to make sure that we're bringing about the very best result, using our investment effectively, and finding ways to improve efficiencies. That's why we're also looking at operational best practices, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like a lot of the complaints I heard stem from the procurement process. This government has been in power for nearly two years, and they haven't made any meaningful changes to these old, broken, and expensive processes. Now, I realize that there are special considerations when buying medical equipment or renovating a hospital, but there's a huge missed opportunity here for savings. Again to the Minister of Health: outside of nationalizing laundry and lab services, do you have any plans to improve AHS procurement to focus on real savings in areas that won't hurt front-line care?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. The hyperbole around how we're going to protect Albertans and make sure that we have effective and efficient systems I'll be happy to expand on tonight in estimates, I imagine.

I also want to say that I'm happy to talk about procurement. We've brought in a number of initiatives through Alberta Health Services. They've been very effective in finding many areas for significant savings. I'll be happy to detail those through a tabling later this session. We always are looking for more ways to be efficient, Mr. Speaker, rather than just pushing the slash-and-burn budgets that the Official Opposition and the third party, their best friends, are pushing. We're effective in making sure we can find ways to use Albertans' money most effectively.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Life Lease Housing

Dr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, my constituents, particularly seniors, are really pleased with our government protecting consumers by banning door-to-door sales of various products. These changes have helped our seniors be at less risk of losing their peace of mind and

their financial stability. In a similar vein, I've met many seniors in my constituency who reside in life lease units that are not covered by our current condominium act. Residents have expressed concern that they have little or no input into management of the facility and have difficulty in disposing of the units. My question is to the minister responsible for Service Alberta. Are there currently any protections in place for constituents like mine who are life lease holders?

Ms McLean: Mr. Speaker, there is no legislation specific to life leases in the province of Alberta. As a result, the terms and conditions of the life lease are governed by the contract between the resident and the life lease owner or operator, including the fees and calculation of those fees. It is important for life lease holders to read their contract carefully and obtain legal advice, as they would for any housing transaction. Some life lease agreements include a dispute resolution process. However, in the absence of this, disputes that cannot be worked out proceed through the court system like any other contractual dispute.

Dr. Turner: Given that amendments were passed to the condominium act in 2014 and given my constituents' concern about increased consumer protection, what is the minister doing to ensure both consumers and condo boards are consulted with on any future changes?

Ms McLean: Service Alberta will be consulting with all condominium stakeholders as part of the consultations for the development of the regulations. Condo boards will be included as part of the consultation, as will condominium owners, managers, developers, members of the legal community, and others who are part of the condo industry. My department expects to be inviting feedback later this year so that all condominium owners can make their voices heard.

Dr. Turner: Thank you, Minister. Given that life leases are a hybrid financial product, combining aspects of condominiums and rental units, to the minister: can life lease issues be incorporated into the consultation for consideration?

Ms McLean: Mr. Speaker, as mentioned, there is currently no legislation applicable to life leases. Life leases are a legal contract the person can enter into, and it lies between the owner and the resident. That being said, the planned condominium property consultation will allow for Albertans to engage the government on important issues such as but not limited to governance, insurance, reserve funds, dispute resolution, voting procedures, and general public comments. Service Alberta certainly welcomes the opportunity to hear the important and diverse set of perspectives from Albertans.

Thank you.

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

School Nutrition Programs and Special-needs Children

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A boy with autism was sent to eat in the hallway because he brought banana bread for lunch. This child was unnecessarily traumatized by having to sit in the hallway, away from his classmates. Getting healthy food into children with aversions is a lifelong strategy for a family. Teaching proper nutritional choices in the classroom is essential. However, this should not be done in a way that snack shames children. To the minister: is this snack shaming part of the curriculum?

The Speaker: The Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the question from the hon. member. It's very important to understand what individual circumstances might have been in a situation like this. I did say that this was not an appropriate circumstance, by any means, but it's also important for us to look further, investigating and seeing what the individual case might be. Yes, I did read about this as well, and I did find it disturbing. It's nothing to do with the curriculum. It could have been some kind of misstep in regard to whoever the responsible adult might have been.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mrs. Aheer: Thank you. Well, given that the parents are feeling the impact of an authoritarian behaviour run amok over snacks and given that parents know what their children will eat and will not eat and don't need government telling them how to feed their children, especially when their food sensitivity is an obvious issue, and given that pudding, granola bars, and applesauce have been banned in this classroom, the parents are now contemplating moving their child to another school. To the minister: what approach should schools and boards take to encourage healthy eating in the classrooms and, more specifically, for children with special needs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, if this hon. member knows more specific circumstances about this individual case, I would be glad if she might share those with us afterwards. In general, certainly, it's entirely inappropriate to connect an individual circumstance around food and banana bread and one of the most effective education programs that we have put out in a generation, which is the school nutrition program here in the province of Alberta. We're expanding that now, using the local community to help us do so, making choices in the community. I can tell you that it's one of the most effective ways not just for nutrition but for education.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mrs. Aheer: This is not effective for children with special needs. Since banana bread to this little guy was not only food for his body and comforting and consistent and delicious to him, this is not a reason that a child should be excluded from that classroom, and given that it is important to avoid making food choice a chronic source of conflict, children with disability need specific, thoughtful, and supportive care in the classroom, not reprimands and associated stigmas. Does the minister provide resources for teachers and parents through Alberta Education to accommodate instead of berating parents and children?

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, if we might share individual information about this circumstance. Certainly, from the reports that I did receive, it was probably not the most appropriate thing to have happened, although we don't have all the details. Maybe there's something to do with allergies. We don't really know what the individual's circumstances are, but we certainly know that the general circumstance of school nutrition in our schools and with our families is very, very strong. The school nutrition program – I was just at one in Wetaskiwin this morning. They said that it was one of the most meaningful nutrition and education experiences that they had ever endeavoured in that school.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Coal Strategy

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, this government is sending Albertans mixed messages on coal. The Health and Environment ministers tell Albertans that coal is bad, it's dirty, and that to save the planet, we must stop using it to generate electricity. But the Energy minister tells Albertans that coal is good, that it's clean, that it provides jobs and tax revenue, and that our coal is highly sought after. As if to prove the point, last night the economic development minister told Albertans that he is actively seeking export markets for our coal. To the Environment minister: help us out here. Is coal good, bad, or does it just depend on which minister is speaking?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a difference between thermal and metallurgical coal. Thank you. [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet, please.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that the phase-out of coal-fired electricity is a key pillar of this government's climate leadership plan and given that while we are shutting down our 18 coal-fired plants, some 2,400 coal-fired plants are either under construction or being planned world-wide and given that the economic development minister says that he supports exporting our thermal coal, to the environment minister: if Alberta's coal is burned in a power plant overseas, GHGs are still emitted, so why is it acceptable to simply shift GHG production to a different part of the same planet?

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

2:20

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to stand up and respond to this again. With our climate leadership plan we're phasing out coal-fired electricity emissions, and if the coal plants decide, if coal mining wants to continue their operations and look to potentially exporting, then they are completely entitled to do that.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, given that Canada is the world's third-largest exporter of metallurgical coal, coal that is essential in making the steel that is needed for manufacture of things like – oh, say – wind turbines and given that Alberta has eight proposed metallurgical coal projects that could generate \$10 billion to \$13 billion in government revenue and their proponents have been waiting in some cases for over a year for any word on their applications, to the environment minister: why the delay, Minister? When might these job-creating enterprises anticipate a response from your ministry?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you for the question. With respect to metallurgic mines and export mines, this is not part of the coal phase-out, as we've said, but they do need to go through the process with the AER in consultation and get the correct permits and all that before they can go. They're treated just the same as any other energy project in Alberta.

The Speaker: Drayton Valley-Devon.

Residential No-charge Energy Savings Program (continued)

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, following the release of the free light bulb RFP from the environment minister, it

was discovered that not only are we not getting the best deal, but the government is breaking its own rules on door-to-door energy sales. The RFP gives Ecofitt the okay to notify residents "of all other energy efficiency opportunities in the home . . . and cross-promote other energy efficiency programs and services." That sounds like high-pressure selling to me. Why is this company getting the green light to break Alberta law?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for an opportunity to ask him why in this House yesterday he came forward with a button on, with six other members of his caucus, that clearly was offensive towards children who are trying to create gay-straight alliances. [interjections] They introduced and had all of us cheer for somebody who just equated GSAs with residential schools. That's shameful. Stand up, and tell us why you did that. [interjections]

The Speaker: Folks, calm down. I'm trying to think of something wise to – I'm having difficulty.

First supplemental.

Mr. Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a bait and switch. Given that seniors on fixed incomes are desperately looking for ways to reduce their costs in these tough economic times and given that this government is aggressively selling this supposed no-cost energy retrofit program but at the same time giving Ontario-based Ecofitt the green light to utilize high-pressure sales tactics in Alberta homes, will the minister issue a notice that any Ecofitt worker caught upselling through their retrofit program will be charged under the Fair Trading Act as per Alberta law?

Ms Hoffman: We're proud to stand up and protect Alberta consumers, Alberta seniors, and Alberta children, Mr. Speaker. Albertans want to know why the former Education critic from that party moved on with six other colleagues, clearly in opposition to what his leader has been saying about protecting children and GSAs. We're proud to protect seniors. We're also proud to protect children. Stand up and tell us if you thought that button was appropriate while your leader and your Education critic clearly disagreed with you.

Mr. Smith: Let's try this again, Mr. Speaker. Last week, following the release of a free light bulb RFP from the environment minister, it was discovered that not only are we not getting the best deal, but the government is breaking its own rules on door-to-door energy sales. The RFP gives Ecofitt the okay to notify residents of, and I quote . . .

The Speaker: Could you get to your question, hon. member? Get to your question.

Mr. Smith: Why is this company getting the green light to break Alberta law? Minister, answer the question.

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Wildrose is so opposed to saving Albertans money that they're making things up again. This is not a program that will break the door-to-door sales ban. What it will do is introduce door-to-door savings, which is something that the Wildrose is opposed to. They want to reach into seniors' and others' pockets and take out \$112 per year. That's over 90,000 Albertans who are going to get those savings, Mr. Speaker, and they are so enamoured with their climate change denial, so

enamoured with their ideological fixation on rejecting the science of climate change that they can't find it in their hearts . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Job Creation and Retention

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, we heard from Suncor's CEO recently that oil sands investments are coming to an end, not just for Suncor but for the industry, for a considerable period, probably in excess of 10 years. Suncor has no plans to be going ahead with major capital investment in either mining or in situ in the foreseeable future. Can the Premier tell this House how she's planning to replace thousands of good-paying jobs from hundreds of approved projects not going ahead for at least a decade?

The Speaker: The minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to talk about our Alberta jobs plan. Through our capital plan it's creating 10,000 jobs a year. That was suggested to us by the former Bank of Canada governor David Dodge. As far as our petrochemical diversification program, that will create 5,000 jobs. Who laid the groundwork for that? Well, let's go back in time. That was actually Peter Lougheed, something that both parties have moved far away from. We are investing in jobs. We are investing in Alberta businesses. We have their backs, and we are going to continue to get Alberta's economy back on its feet.

Mr. Panda: Back to reality, Mr. Speaker. Given that thousands of engineers have been let go from EPC firms like Amec, Bantrel, Fluor, Golder, Jacobs, SNC-Lavalin, Stantec, WorleyParsons and given that it is believed that over 20 per cent of Alberta's engineers and 60 per cent of geoscientists are out of work, what is this government doing to keep our highest skilled workers in Alberta?

The Speaker: The minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, again, there are a number of initiatives in our Alberta jobs plan from two different tax credits that will help incent investment right now, when the economy needs it the most.

I just want to talk a little bit about some of the companies that are actually increasing their investment in our province this year. On that note, the Conference Board of Canada, TD Bank, and other banks have all said that Alberta's economy is going to grow the most in 2017 and 2018, faster and more than any other province in the country, growing at a rate of 2.7 per cent. Do you want to know why? Because we got two pipelines, and we're investing . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Panda: Zero answers, Mr. Speaker.

Given that new oil sands mining development won't be happening soon and given that Alberta has plenty of metallurgical and thermal coal projects that could boost the mining industry and given that coal is needed to make the steel for wind turbines and light rail tracks and the coal is already travelling across Alberta from the U.S.A anyway for export to Prince Rupert, will the Premier commit to cutting the red tape and ramping up coal mining to put Albertans back to work, back to real work, not imaginary work?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, metallurgic coal is not part of our coal phase-out. In fact, we do agree that it's good for manufacturing. It has a place. So those projects, as mentioned, are treated the same as any other energy project. They go through the AER standards consultation and all that sort. It's impacting communities. It will provide jobs.

I have to say on another front that recently we met with engineers, and I have to give the Labour department . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Employment and Labour Code Consultations

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, when introducing the infamous Bill 6, this government handled the process so poorly that thousands of Albertans protested across the province and on the steps of this Legislature before the government dispatched their ministers to actually speak with Albertans, a novel idea indeed. Now, with proposed changes to employment standards and the labour code, we once again see this government's distaste for open, transparent consultation with Albertans. To the Minister of Labour. Your ministry only set up four invitation-only consultations. Can you tell Albertans how many of those you personally attended?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour responsible for democratic renewal.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are very proud to have embarked on a review of Alberta's workplace legislation because it has not been reviewed since 1988, since Tom Hanks starred in the movie *Big*. We're making sure that we are having that conversation with Albertans and engaging with them to determine what their thoughts are on: should Albertans have job-protected sick leave the way other Canadians have? This is the conversation we're having. I'm very pleased with the results we're getting from our round-tables thus far.

Thank you.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, I'll take that as a zero.

Given that this government decided that four sessions, 36 days, and online consultations were adequate to understand Albertans' concerns around potential changes to the employment standards and to the labour code and given that this Legislature sent a private member's bill on daylight saving time to committee for further consultation and has given three months of consultation for the Castle park management plan, again to the minister: how can you defend a 36-day consultation as adequate for such important legislation when your government and members support much greater engagement for legislation of significantly less impact?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government believes in consulting adequately on each issue. In the case of our Employment Standards Code and Labour Relations Code we are asking some very focused questions. We are asking Albertans whether they believe compassionate care leave, that other Canadians have access to – that Albertans should have access to leave of the same length. We are asking about job-protected sick leave. We are asking some very targeted questions both online, where over 3,000 Albertans have submitted their opinions, and in round-tables. Making sure that we hear from Albertans is important to me, and we are through this process.

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, zero plus zero is zero.

Given that Ontario is taking over two years to consult and work towards broad-based consensus on similar labour-related legislation and given that the minister has described Alberta's 36-day consultation window as very reasonable despite key stakeholders such as the Calgary Chamber describing the process as completely, woefully inadequate, again to the Minister of Labour: Minister, without even talking about content, will you do the right thing and extend and enhance the consultation process with business and labour to better inform the impactful changes you are contemplating? [interjection]

The Speaker: I can't exactly tell, but there's a very loud voice coming from that corner. I'd ask you to contain your volume, please.

The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our government is embarking on a focused review. There are other reviews happening in this country, much broader, bigger reviews that are talking about things like: who is an employee? We are asking Albertans if they believe they should have job-protected sick leave. We are asking some very targeted questions. The amount of time that we've allocated in order for Albertans to submit their feedback has been adequate. In fact, we still have another week. I would invite all Albertans, including the members opposite and their constituents, anyone interested, to please submit your feedback because the consultation is still active . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for West Yellowhead.

Recreational Use of Public Lands

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Community members in my constituency of West Yellowhead enjoy spending time out on the land, particularly in the natural areas. Given that there have been rumours that off-highway vehicles, or OHVs, may be newly prohibited in popular OHV-use areas in West Yellowhead, to the Minister of Environment and Parks: has this government undertaken any plans to prohibit OHVs in many areas in my constituency?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer to the hon. Member for West Yellowhead's question is no.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that OHVs are a popular recreational pastime in Alberta and given that the Castle wildland park draft management plan is currently under consultation, to the same minister: how is the government working with OHV users in the Castle area as the plan is being finalized?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, what is in the draft management plan is a staged phase-out of OHV use in environmentally sensitive areas. Also, the House will note that in the budget papers currently there is a proposal for \$3 million over the next two years to invest in trail rehabilitation and infrastructure in adjacent areas so that that activity can be well supported where those opportunities are most appropriate and are best supported by the best available science.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Rosendahl: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Albertans enjoy a variety of activities in our great provincial outdoors, to the same minister: how will the Castle wildland draft management plan affect other land-use pastimes such as hunting and fishing?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. In fact what we've done is that we've extended hunting opportunities in the provincial park portion of the Castle in response to requests from ranchers and landowners. The draft plan also works with hunters on access routes and proposes some of those changes for the retrieval of game. We're also making sure our fishing opportunities are there for Albertans for all generations by rehabilitating habitat that's been damaged through erosion, through illegal stream crossing, and so on. We've also increased our enforcement presence in response to requests from ranchers and municipalities and others to ensure . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Labour Legislation and Regulation Consultations

Mr. Schneider: Mr. Speaker, recently I had the privilege of holding some town halls in my riding with the Leader of the Opposition. It was an opportunity to hear from our constituents. During these meetings I met a prominent member of the Farmworkers Union. He asked me to openly advocate for a quick resolution to the round-table regulations so that, quote, farmers can strike. End quote. To the Minister of Labour: is the fix in on writing these labour regulations in order to bolster the ranks of the unions?

The Speaker: The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I understand that the member might not be well versed in labour relations and other things. I understand that perfectly well, but you're more than welcome to educate him on that. Other provinces that have had rights for these workers for decades are . . . [interjections] Yes, I do. They have had these rights for decades, and there isn't every farm that's unionized. I think he's very misinformed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Schneider: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the folks across the aisle really don't want to upset the folks that actually door-knock for them.

Mr. Speaker, given that this government has announced its intention to rewrite several parts of the labour laws and given that any recommendations from the farm safety round-tables on labour can be undone by this upcoming labour rewrite, Minister, if the government intended all along to rewrite the labour laws, then was this farm safety round-table nothing more than a PR exercise to take some heat off this government for an ill-conceived Bill 6?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We believe firmly in the rights of all workers, including farm workers, and in basic human rights. I'm perfectly willing to sit down with any member from over there and help to educate them on those basic human rights. We feel that these farm workers should

have similar rights that every other farm worker in Canada has. These workers now have those same rights here in Alberta, and that's something this government is proud of. We're making Albertans' lives better.

Mr. Schneider: Mr. Speaker, I think the question had a lot more substance than the answer. If this is not a PR stunt . . . [interjections]

The Speaker: Hold it. You may continue.

Mr. Schneider: If it's not a PR stunt, then given that farm safety round-tables have been going on for many months and given that your government is rewriting several aspects of the labour code and the employment standards and that the question has more substance than the answers I've been getting, Minister: why are you only giving Albertans a five-week consultation when the farm safety aspects alone were given several months?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I have the opportunity to educate the member a little bit. This group of workers didn't have these rights ever in the history of Alberta. For decades the workers have been denied these rights and are now going to be getting these rights. It takes a little bit more work when they had no rights in the first place. Here's an opportunity to give these basic human rights to these workers as all other workers in Alberta have right across the country. That, I'm proud of. That, this government is proud of. We're sticking up for Albertans.

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

2:40 Crown Prosecution Services Funding

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recent stats point to a dramatic increase in crime as well as the severity of crime in the last two years. Actually, criminal prosecutions rose accordingly during the same time period, yet in 2015-16 this government cut the Alberta Crown prosecutors budget by \$5 million and left 35 positions unfilled. Then the Jordan decision caught Alberta's justice system in a vise. To the minister: why did you reduce the Crown's budget in each of your first two years in office?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member alluded to, backlogs in our court system had built up over a long time, and this government, when it took office, came into a fiscal situation that was very tight, which is why we were ensuring that we found the necessary efficiencies in every department. Obviously, just as the member has alluded to, the Jordan decision had a massive change in direction in terms of the court system, so we have responded accordingly. We will continue to respond to the facts on the ground because that's what good governance looks like.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Justice minister was asked a direct question about cutting the Crown prosecution service during the NDP's first two years and given that the cuts resulted in "exercising restraint in filling vacancies" and given that those vacancies involved 35 prosecutor positions, yet she points to the former government for "intense backlogs," Minister, will you not accept responsibility for the role you played in creating the backlog?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member, of course, is absolutely right. We did have the file for two years; they had it for 44. But I'm sure those things are perfectly comparable. When the situation changed when the Jordan decision came down, we knew we had to do things differently, and that is why we injected resources, unlike the members over there, who propose 10 per cuts to that same department.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Ellis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that during those same two years the Justice minister increased funding to Legal Aid by more than 26 per cent and given that this enhanced funding for legal aid clearly showed the minister knew the system was dealing with higher caseloads and given that the minister still went on to cut the prosecutors budget two years running: Minister, what was your plan here? Were you simply expecting Crown prosecutors to do more with less?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the increases of funding to Legal Aid were as a result of decades of underfunding by the previous government because apparently they don't understand that all elements of the system need to work together in order to have a functioning justice system. The rights of vulnerable individuals in Alberta are things that need protecting as are the rights of all Albertans, and we will continue to stand up for them.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Edmonton Police Service 125th Anniversary

Ms Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans deserve to feel safe in their homes, communities, and workplaces. The Edmonton Police Service plays a critical role in ensuring that they do. Today I am proud to recognize the work of the Edmonton Police Service, an organization which just celebrated its 125th anniversary.

A strong, well-functioning law enforcement system is one of the cornerstones of any thriving city. Over the last 125 years Edmonton has grown larger and even more complex. Each change in growth also comes with unexpected new challenges, including opportunities for criminal activity. EPS has consistently risen to meet these challenges, finding innovative ways to maintain the peace and deal with the forces that disrupt it.

Mr. Speaker, that mission would be impossible to carry out without the brave men and women of the Edmonton Police Service. These officers put on their uniforms each day without knowing what dangers may cross their path. We ask so much of these officers. We require them to be courageous in the face of physical danger, to be resourceful and quick thinking in the case of medical emergencies, and to be compassionate in their dealings with victims of violence. Their ability to perform these challenging tasks with grace and integrity is nothing short of remarkable. They leave their homes and families every day, not knowing if they will return, and when they do, they bear the burden of things they have seen and the

time they must spend away from their loved ones. These sacrifices are to ensure that we can live and enjoy safe communities.

Our government, especially the Minister of Justice, enjoys an open and honest and well-respected relationship with the Edmonton Police Service. They are an integral part of ensuring that we can continue to make life better for all Albertans.

I want to ask all members of this House to join me in expressing my gratitude to the northeast division and to the Edmonton Police Service. Thank you.

Easter

Mr. Orr: Over 700 years before the first Easter one of many prophecies made by the prophet Isaiah was, "Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering . . . he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."

This week Christians around the world are recognizing this sacrifice made by their Lord and Saviour 2,000 years ago. Christians begin their remembrance by honouring Palm Sunday, when Jesus, their King, rode into Jerusalem on a humble donkey. Later that week, after a meal with His closest friends Jesus was betrayed. On Good Friday the Romans crucified Him for a crime He didn't commit, in one of the cruelest expressions of evil. For Christians around the world the killing of Jesus, the guiltless one with a message of peace, is a proxy for the death that we all deserve. His death forces us to confront our own faults and shortcomings.

But there is hope: the resurrection, the most profound moment in human history, when, as Christians believe, the all-powerful God of the universe, come in human flesh, died and came back to life. The God of great mercy and power makes right what is wrong, the power of death as condemnation for our sins is broken, injustice is made right, and a life cruelly taken is restored. This is the ultimate divine intervention. This is God revealing His true nature of compassion and righteousness, providing a pathway of redemption and restoration. This is the assurance that there is hope for humanity.

Because of Easter we know that God accepts us. We also know that He invites us to be changed and to choose change within. We have lived long enough in our old ways. Let us now live with joy for Him, moved by thanks and love rather than fear. At Easter God extends the free gift of life to all. It remains only for us to embrace this priceless gift.

Thank you.

Introduction of Bills

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

Bill 9

Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2017

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to introduce Bill 9, the Marketing of Agricultural Products Amendment Act, 2017.

Bill 9 will help to restore one of the fundamental principles and intents of this legislation, which is to empower Alberta's agriculture producers and organizations to set the direction for their own industries. The Marketing of Agricultural Products Act, or MAPA, enables our province's agriculture commissions to collect service charges to fund their operations as well as activities that benefit our

broader agriculture industries such as research and marketing. The amendment I am introducing today will provide commissions and their member producers with the choice to implement the service charge model, either refundable or nonrefundable, that works best for them. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't make sense in today's diverse agriculture industry. This amendment will also bring us closer in line with other jurisdictions across the country. I ask all members to support this important legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 9 read a first time]

2:50 Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table five copies of a document I shared with the Minister of Children's Services today, entitled Together We Raise Tomorrow, summing up the consultation for the children's charter in 2013.

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table a copy of an e-mail from the Calgary board of education to Calgary parents. It highlights the concerns the board has about not understanding the impacts on fees and service levels for families, on transportation, and therefore on delays to preregistration for the 2017-18 school year, seeking clarification on what constitutes instructional materials and supplies.

I also table the letter from the Education minister to parents and guardians. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings that I referred to in estimates this morning with the Minister of Labour. The first one is from the Alberta Chambers of Commerce, a document that is titled Cost Impacts Affecting Employment Outcomes in Alberta: Considerations Regarding Further Provincial Minimum Wage Increases.

The second tabling I have is a document prepared by the University of Calgary entitled If It Matters, Measure It: Unpacking Diversification in Canada. It references that Alberta and Saskatchewan are the most diverse economies in Canada.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of a publication entitled Metallurgical Coal: Building the Future, which clearly outlines the differences between metallurgical and thermal coal.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I rise today to table five copies of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's investigation report F2017-IR-03, entitled Investigation into Allegation of Delays and Possible Interference in Responding to Access Requests.

I would also like to table five copies of the commissioner's special report and request for legislative amendment, submitted to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, entitled Producing Records to the Commissioner: Restoring Independent and Effective Oversight under the FOIP Act.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the Assembly that the following document was deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the Hon. Mr. Mason, Minister of Infrastructure and Minister of Transportation, responses to Written Question 7 and Written Question 8, asked for by Mr. van Dijken on April 10, 2017: Written Question 7, as of March 1, 2017, what is the cost to resurface one kilometre of highway with gravel at both 11-metre and 13-metre widths; and Written Question 8, as of March 1, 2017, what is the cost to resurface one kilometre of highway with asphalt at both 11-metre and 13-metre widths?

Speaker's Ruling Language Creating Disorder

The Speaker: Hon. members, I would like to make a comment if I could. Earlier today the Member for Grande Prairie-Smoky in his comments referred, I believe – I don't have the Blues in front of me – to the word "lie" or to lying related to that. As we all know and discuss in this House – I've discussed many times – context is always the situation that comes into play in this House. I want to remind that member and all of the members that when they are citing from documents, they cannot "use language which would be out of order if spoken by a Member." I would refer the member to page 609 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. I'd ask that you all pay attention to that.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

Point of Clarification

Mr. Cooper: I'm just seeking some clarification from you to ensure that we won't make that mistake in the future. Under 13(2) "The Speaker shall explain the reasons for any decision on the request of a Member." It appears to me, Mr. Speaker, that you made a ruling about language that was used by my colleague in a member's statement where he quoted the Energy minister utilizing language that was deemed parliamentary by you in a ruling. He was using it in a very similar context today, that the government – in fact, the

only change was the word "government" for "opposition" in the quote that he had made. I'm having a hard time understanding how the context is significantly different, and I'm having a hard time understanding how today that language could be ruled out of order when it wasn't when the government used it. If you could provide some clarification so that on a go-forward we have a much better understanding of exactly how you would like this rule applied, that would be very helpful to this side of the House.

The Speaker: Well, let me just – first of all, Government House Leader, did you have a comment you wanted to make?

Mr. Mason: I did.

The Speaker: Sorry. I may be out of order in this regard.

I will respond to the Opposition House Leader. First of all, I want to remind you of the comments I made at the outset, that it has everything to do with context, and they are different each time. That includes things like references to tone, et cetera. Nonetheless, in this particular instance you can't say – I also indicated that the specific fact that was addressed to this particular comment was on page 609. Maybe you missed it. I don't believe that applied before, but I stand to be corrected. Again, another part of page 609 is that you can't do indirectly what you can't do directly. I think it's wise for all of the House to avoid those words like "liar," "lie." It's not constructive. It's not helpful. Yes, each context or situation is different, and I want to remind you of paying attention to that in the future.

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.

Please be seated. Just a minute. I'm not finished yet.

The legislative policy committees will convene this afternoon and tomorrow morning for the consideration of the main estimates. This afternoon Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Health in the Rocky Mountain Room. Tomorrow morning Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Service Alberta in the Parkland Room, and Alberta's Economic Future will consider the estimates for Infrastructure in the Rocky Mountain Room.

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

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