



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Third Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, April 18, 2017

Day 22

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

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

Party standings:

New Democrat: 55 Wildrose: 22 Progressive Conservative: 8 Alberta Liberal: 1 Alberta Party: 1

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Clerk	Philip Massolin, Manager of Research and Committee Services	Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms
Shannon Dean, Law Clerk and Director of House Services	Nancy Robert, Research Officer	Chris Caughell, Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms
Trafton Koenig, Parliamentary Counsel	Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Paul Link, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel and Legal Research Officer		Gareth Scott, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms

Executive Council

Rachel Notley	Premier, President of Executive Council
Sarah Hoffman	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health
Shaye Anderson	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Deron Bilous	Minister of Economic Development and Trade
Oneil Carlier	Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Joe Ceci	President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance
David Eggen	Minister of Education
Richard Feehan	Minister of Indigenous Relations
Kathleen T. Ganley	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Christina Gray	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal
Danielle Larivee	Minister of Children's Services
Brian Mason	Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation
Margaret McCuaig-Boyd	Minister of Energy
Stephanie V. McLean	Minister of Service Alberta, Minister of Status of Women
Ricardo Miranda	Minister of Culture and Tourism
Brandy Payne	Associate Minister of Health
Shannon Phillips	Minister of Environment and Parks, Minister Responsible for the Climate Change Office
Irfan Sabir	Minister of Community and Social Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mr. Coolahan
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	McKitrick
Dang	Taylor
Ellis	Turner
Horne	

Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future

Chair: Mr. Sucha
Deputy Chair: Mr. van Dijken

Carson	McPherson
Connolly	Orr
Coolahan	Piquette
Dach	Schneider
Drysdale	Schreiner
Fitzpatrick	Taylor
Gotfried	

Standing Committee on Families and Communities

Chair: Ms Goehring
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

Aheer	Miller
Drever	Pitt
Hinkley	Rodney
Horne	Shepherd
Jansen	Swann
Luff	Yao
McKitrick	

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Shepherd
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Drever	Nixon
Ellis	Pitt
Horne	van Dijken
Kleinsteuber	Woollard
Littlewood	

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Wanner
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Cooper	Nixon
Dang	Orr
Jabbour	Piquette
Luff	Schreiner
McIver	

Select Special Ombudsman and Public Interest Commissioner Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Shepherd
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Ellis	Pitt
Horne	van Dijken
Kleinsteuber	Woollard
Littlewood	

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Ms McPherson
Deputy Chair: Connolly

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

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick
Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

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

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. Cyr
Deputy Chair: Mr. Dach

Barnes	Malkinson
Fildebrandt	Miller
Fraser	Panda
Goehring	Renaud
Gotfried	Turner
Littlewood	Westhead
Luff	

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship

Chair: Loyola
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hunter

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

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us reflect and pray, each in our own way. As we all return from our celebration time with our families and communities, let us express our appreciation, gratitude, and respect to our fellow MLAs for the opportunity to work with them.

Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Robert Clark. I would invite all to participate in the language of their choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two groups of students from Patricia Heights elementary school. They are accompanied today by their teachers, Keri Clifford and Shane Little, and also by their chaperones, Scott Karaim, Rhonda Phibbs, Elizabeth Martin, and Ms Kendra Blumenhagen. I wish them to rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you 50 students from the beautiful and, I may add, diverse constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie from Meyokumin school. They're accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Megan Davis and Ms Cindy MacLeod. I'd ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups here today?
Seeing and hearing none, the hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured to rise today on your behalf to recognize Stephanie Nedoshytko. Stephanie has been an integral member of the Legislative Assembly for the past five years and recently resigned to take up a new position as the president of the Students' Association of MacEwan University. Stephanie began her time here as a page, then continued on as a part-time office assistant in the Speaker's office, where I know both you and I greatly appreciated her hard work on our behalf. Today she's joined by her parents, Mary and Ihor Nedoshytko. Mary is a

junior high teacher at Holy Family Catholic school. Ihor is a retired teacher and musician who currently spends his time in various organizations as an instructor and band member. They're also very active in the Ukrainian community. We'd like to give our sincere thanks to Stephanie for your dedicated service to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. They're seated in your gallery, and I'd ask that they now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce two compassionate professionals from Alberta Health Services advanced care planning goals of care team. April 16 was National Advance Care Planning Day, and we are encouraging all Albertans to talk about their health care goals with their families and their care providers and to write them down in a personal directive. I now ask Sharon Iversen, AHS project lead for advanced planning, and her colleague Sarah Hall to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Dr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members skin cancer survivor Violetta Ambrozuk and Chelsea Draeger, executive director of the Canadian Cancer Society. I'll be speaking to this in my coming member's statement. Joining Violetta and Chelsea is Angeline Webb, who works with the Canadian Cancer Society in health policy and promotion. The CCS is a strong voice informing Albertans about the need to avoid excessive UV exposure. I'd ask my guests to rise and receive the customary welcome of this Chamber.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House a remarkable Canadian, Ai Tran. Ai left Vietnam as a 20-year-old person and lived as a stateless refugee in a camp in the Philippines for 12 years. In 2000 he married his childhood friend, who lived in Canada, and came here the following year. Here he built upon an already remarkable life, graduating from McGill with honours before moving to Edmonton to become a social worker, which is how I met him and heard his story. I ask my guest to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to introduce a good friend of mine, Garnett Genuis, the Member of Parliament for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan. Garnett and I were close family friends. His wife, Dr. Rebecca Genuis, came from Goa in India. Today Garnett is accompanied by his beautiful daughter, Gianna. His wife and younger son, Judah, couldn't be here. Garnett and I were two of those 70 losers for Wildrose in 2012, but today we both are here. Although he is the youngest parliamentarian, he spoke most of the words in the Commons, and he actually used a creative standing order to introduce me and the Member for Strathmore-Brooks in Parliament in February. I ask everyone to extend a warm welcome for him and his daughter today. Please rise.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to welcome through you and to you three guests this afternoon. Blake Radovanovic is a grade 12 student at Eastglen high school, whom I met last week at a GSA meeting at his school. He is joined today by his parents, David Leslie and Nick Stadnyk. I enjoyed meeting Blake and David last week, where we discussed the importance of GSAs for students in Alberta and the work our government is doing to ensure that all of our schools are welcome, caring, and safe. I'd ask them to please rise and for everyone to give them the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a constituent, Marilyn Spilchen. Marilyn is the manager of corporate support with One! International Poverty Relief, which her daughter Tania founded in 2001. One! International operates three schools in Mumbai, India, for children who would not otherwise have the opportunity to obtain an education, a cause that is very close to my own heart. The organization wants to thank the government of Alberta for helping them to make a difference by providing a yearly grant since 2012. I would ask Marilyn to stand up to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

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

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce some outstanding constituents from the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. You know, there are few people in your life who you can call at 3 a.m. and know that they will answer the phone, but some of those folks are up in the gallery today. We are joined by some very, very dear friends of ours, Trevor and Kristin Whitlow, and their two children, Julia and David. If you'll please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

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

Reynolds-Alberta Museum

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to speak today about the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in my Wetaskiwin-Camrose constituency. The Reynolds-Alberta Museum opened in 1992 to interpret the impact of technological change in transportation, aviation, agriculture, and industry from the 1890s to present. The museum now contains thousands of vintage artifacts and is family friendly, offering school tours and group programs.

Director Noel Ratch was here on budget day to hear about the three-year, \$39.5 million investment to develop and expand artifact acquisition, storage, restoration, and display. It was great news for local job creation, tourism, and economic stimulation, and I wanted to share some of what the museum has to offer.

For car enthusiasts this June 10 and 11 will be the ultimate car show, featuring more than 700 cars, trucks, and motorcycles spanning a century of automotive history. Imagine the thrill of driving a manual transmission classic car. This year on July 16 young drivers between the age of 15 and 25 will learn how to start, operate, and drive one

of these classics. August 19 will be a great day for motorcycle riders from across Alberta as the museum hosts the Motorcycle Ride to Reynolds. Throughout the summer, for a fee, you can take a two-seater biplane open-cockpit flight, which flies over my home, so be sure to wave when you go by. Chauffeur-driven tours of the grounds in select 1920s to 1950s vintage vehicles give you the rare chance to hear and feel the motion of these venerable links to our past. More than just a viewing museum, Reynolds is world-renowned for its vehicle restoration workshops. Professional restorers offer one-, three-, and five-day courses. All of these can be found at the museum website.

I am proud of our government for its continued support in Alberta heritage. Thank you.

Conservatism

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks I have noticed that the NDP continue to up their shrill, acerbic attacks. Now the PCs and Wildrose are being lumped into one category, conservatives, almost as if that is something to be ashamed of, so I decided to use my member's statement to define what it means to me to be a conservative.

This definition comes from the founder of the Heritage Foundation, Ed Feulner. He starts:

The purpose of politics is . . . to carve out a system of justice under the rule of law . . . and freedom . . .

When governments seek utopia, they end in oppression, because man and society are infinitely complex and cannot be reshaped by any institution of experts.

He goes on to say:

Conservatives . . . understand that power is a zero-sum game. When power is assumed by government, it is lost by individuals. There must be a stopping point in every program and plan beyond which no government should be allowed to go, not merely because of budgetary concerns but because of the inevitable loss of freedom . . .

Conservatives believe in the necessity of change, yes. But not in radical change based on abstract theories and the passions of the moment.

He finishes by saying that the value of conservatism isn't their persuasive leaders, but the power of their ideas – and the applications of those ideas to the problems of the day.

There it is, Mr. Speaker, the difference between socialists and conservatives.

Conservatives are all about outcomes. As a case in point, my van is presently in the mechanic's shop. The mechanic is a very nice person, but I can tell you that if he didn't fix the vehicle or did a shoddy job, he wouldn't get my business because I need to see acceptable outcomes, not pie-in-the-sky best of intentions as we have seen over the past two years from this NDP government.

I conclude by imploring the individual MLAs opposite to look at the outcomes of the past two years as well as the outcomes of past NDP governments in other provinces and ask themselves: do we really want that kind of legacy?

Emergency Medical Services Funding

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, leadership is defined in different ways, and it's subjective to how the leadership is applied. For instance, the NHL captain on a hockey team is responsible for something entirely different than the captain of a fire hall. Another example: a CEO of a multinational company deals with different consequences of their leadership than the CEO of a local charity society. What they all have in common, though, is the accountability to the people that they lead, which brings us to the responsibility of government

to lead. What they say and what they do is intensely scrutinized because they're the government and they're in charge and, at the very least, until the next election they are directly responsible to Alberta and its citizens.

The provincial government bears an immense responsibility to Albertans, and one of the most important aspects of that responsibility is to provide the services necessary to ensure that Albertans have timely access to treatment in a medical emergency. What I find perplexing is that even with regard to the most basic responsibilities of a government, the responsibility to provide public safety and emergency care, the government is cutting corners. The government is putting emergency medical services in a no-win situation. You can't say that front-line services matter and then cut their budget by \$17 million. EMS workers are the very definition of front-line services, often being the first point of contact for Albertans in medical distress.

Mr. Speaker, I don't say this lightly, and I don't say this without understanding or experience. I have the experience, I have the understanding, and, what's more, I have the confidence and support of the EMS community on this issue. There's been a lot of discussion about bringing people of different backgrounds and different experiences into this House as representatives so that we can be more effective voices for those communities. Today I'm in this House speaking for concerned paramedics across this province. Paramedics across Alberta are asking this minister to restore the \$17 million cut to emergency medical services. In fact, they're asking the government to recognize them as a major partner in the delivery of health care in this province, not to be treated as an afterthought. Minister, they're asking you to lead in this regard. I'm asking you as a registered paramedic, me to you. Don't let us down.

Daffodil Month

Dr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month, the month when Canadians unite in the fight against cancer. This April the Canadian Cancer Society is marking the 60th anniversary of Daffodil Month by asking all of us to show support for persons living with cancer and to honour those who have died by wearing a daffodil pin and buying fresh daffodils. Money raised goes to cancer research, education, and advocacy, and to support compassionate programs.

Mr. Speaker, as an oncologist I'm very proud of the advances made in cancer treatment over the last 40 years. My leukemia research has been very well supported by the Canadian Cancer Society, and there are, thankfully, many Albertan survivors of all types of cancers treated by my colleagues in CancerControl Alberta. I'm also keenly aware that the majority of cancer cases could be prevented by lifestyle modification, and this is the focus of this month's efforts of the CCS.

The CCS is encouraging youth to creatively educate their peers and families about cancer prevention and to advocate for policy changes in their communities that support four topics. Topic 1: expose the deceitful and manipulative ways that big tobacco markets to youth. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be part of a government which banned flavoured tobacco as one of its first actions after the election two years ago. We also are pursuing repayment of health costs from big tobacco, just two ways we're making life better for Albertans. Topic 2: learning about the fun and the positive benefits of regular physical activity. Twenty minutes a day of aerobic exercise is the best preventative for cancer of all types. Topic 3: embracing their natural glow while avoiding excessive sun exposure or using tanning beds. Topic 4: educating their peers about choosing healthy beverages. This applies to both alcohol and to high-sugar drinks that the food industry is marketing to our youth.

Mr. Speaker, youth are being encouraged to act, and they are responding. As legislators we are opinion leaders in our communities and bear responsibility to act as well. The CCS and I ask that we all use our abilities to support this fight against cancer.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

1:50

Easter

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Renewal of faith and hope. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten calendar for many Christians. Lent gives Christians the opportunity to focus on their love for one another and God's love for them. Those practising Lent sacrifice something meaningful and, instead, spend time on their relationship with God.

World-wide there are over 2 billion people that observe Easter, one of the most important dates on the Christian calendar. God's love is so great that he gave the life of his only son, Jesus Christ, so that Christians may have eternal life. Christians believe in the miracle of Christ rising from the dead three days after he was crucified, showing Christians that their faith is well placed.

There's also a secular aspect to Easter that many people celebrate and that has us looking under the couch and around the fridge for chocolate eggs and rabbits. During Easter many people come together with their families and their friends to celebrate peace and love.

It's important for us to honour the role that Christians have played and continue to play in the culture of our province. There are more than a dozen churches in Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill, and I know that many constituents came together on Sunday to celebrate the day that Christ rose from the dead.

I hope that everyone here and those who are watching and listening had a peaceful Easter.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Employment and Labour Code Consultations

Mr. Jean: In less than 12 hours the clock will run out on labour review consultations. I'll forgive everyone if they thought they just started; however, here in Alberta they're just ending. Ontario consulted for two years on similar changes to labour legislation, but here at home: 36 days. Albertans got just over a month. No wonder small-business owners are seriously worried about the ramifications. When the NDP ran out of taxes to raise, they created new ones. They threatened lawsuits to break contracts, and now they're rushing through significant changes to labour legislation. Why won't the NDP simply slow down, extend the consultation period, and listen to Alberta businesses?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In 1988 singer Bobby McFerrin released the hit single *Don't Worry, Be Happy*, which is the same thing that right-wing parties have been saying to Alberta workers ever since. Can't access job-protected sick leave? Don't worry; be happy. Well, I'm not happy about it and neither are many Albertans. We are working with stakeholders to ensure we have fair, balanced, and effective workplace legislation for all. We've received over 4,600 submissions so far, and I look forward to seeing how many more we receive today.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, everybody wants a good song; we just want to take some time to write it.

While there's no doubt that a need for some fine-tuning is there, Alberta has enjoyed relative labour peace for over 30 years. This is important. Any major overhaul that catches job creators by surprise will have some major ramifications for jobs, the economy, and, ultimately, Albertans. It's important. It's clear the fix is in. Invitation-only meetings, Mr. Speaker, no public events, and a cloud of secrecy have surrounded this government and what exactly they plan to do with this legislation. If the NDP won't extend consultations to a reasonable time, will they at least tell Albertans what they plan to do and when they will see . . .

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

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In a tough economy everyday Albertans deserve a government that's working to make life better. In Alberta you can lose your job if you get sick, and even though Albertans pay into employment insurance, we don't have access to some of the leave that other Canadians do. So we've reached out to Albertans about these kinds of practices and whether they need to be updated and modernized. We've received over 4,600 responses to date, including over a thousand from employers. We've held round-table discussions to discuss some of these issues, and we look forward to reviewing the results of the consultation and working to make life better.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are clear. They want a government that actually listens and consults, an easy idea that would put a lot of people's minds at ease, because they are worried. We know that the Premier's own appointees, who serve as partisan big union bosses, are pushing to get rid of a worker's right to a secret ballot. That is wrong and will cause chaos throughout businesses and companies across Alberta. It will. It's a fundamental democratic right of a worker. Will the Premier take at least this off the table, or will she continue to cozy up to her big union boss friends, who right now want to take away this right from Alberta workers?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The issues that we're discussing with Albertans have developed over decades. The previous government had years and years to make changes, and they never lifted a finger, even after conducting their own reviews. They would prefer that Albertans have no protections and fewer rights than other Canadians. We are going to work with stakeholders to make sure we're bringing forward fair and balanced changes that will improve the Alberta economy and workplaces for all.

The Speaker: The second main question.

Interprovincial Relations

Mr. Jean: The Premier said last week that political staff are not allowed to campaign for their counterparts in the B.C. NDP. The only problem is that that memo didn't seem to make its way into the hands of the Premier's chief of staff, John Heaney. His name is currently on the advertising sponsor list with Elections BC. Heaney was chief of staff to the current B.C. NDP leader and was called an invaluable adviser. Can the Premier please reassure Albertans that

this is simply an oversight and that her chief of staff is no longer on the sponsor list for the antipipeline B.C. NDP Party? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Heaney is not involved in the B.C. election. The third-party advertising report that was posted was from the 2005 and '09 elections.

In speaking about memos, perhaps the member opposite missed the ableg hash tag where his colleague the Member for Strathmore-Brooks says: "Actually seems like an honest mistake. Genuinely pleased the Premier has put the kibosh on [NDP] staffers campaigning [in] B.C."

Mr. Jean: Alberta's relationship with neighbouring provinces has never been worse, Mr. Speaker. On the one side, the NDP holds press conferences to slam the budget of a provincial neighbour while threatening them with trade sanctions. On the other side, the Premier's chief of staff is registered as a third-party adviser in the B.C. election still. Oh, and let's not forget the bait-and-switch negotiating tactics that the NDP employed in negotiating the Canada free trade agreement. Can someone over there admit that it might be just time to start making friends and stop making enemies of our allies? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet. [interjections] Quiet.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to answer the question from the member for Regina-Somewhere or maybe it's Kelowna-Somewhere. On this side of the House we're standing up for Albertans. Every day we're going to make sure that we work to make Alberta lives better, and that's what we're doing, whether it's negotiations with our partners at the table for the western trade agreement, whether it's across Canada, or whether it's our Premier and her chief of staff working to make sure that we expand market access in Japan through pipeline access on the west coast. I am proud of the work that we're doing every day and the results we're getting for Albertans.

Mr. Jean: A hundred thousand Albertans on unemployment insurance, Mr. Speaker, a record.

The Premier is chalking up a long list of adversaries at the provincial level. The cracks are beginning to show. The two contending parties in the B.C. election: neither are friends to this Premier. We know her comments on the B.C. NDP. The Premier of B.C. said just last week that, and I quote, Alberta is going broke under this NDP government's watch. I couldn't agree more. This Premier has positioned our province to be the enemy of B.C. regardless of who wins that election. When will the Premier realize that her divisiveness and bad economic policies are only hurting Alberta with what should be some of our closest allies, that we should be working together with?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm incredibly proud of the work that our Premier and our government are doing to make life better for Alberta families. That's why we are behaving in a mature, responsible fashion in working with them rather than spouting off angry tweets at partners from across the country who were working to actually continue to gain market access through expanded pipelines. We're going to continue being respectful, working with our partners, and getting results for Albertans,

including the 20,000 net new jobs that we got, full-time jobs, in Alberta in just the month of March. That's good results for the people of Alberta.

The Speaker: The third main question.

Marijuana Legalization

Mr. Jean: In just over a year recreational marijuana use will be legal. It's a dramatic change and demands immediate action from this government and the province. There are still a lot of questions about how effective saliva and other roadside tests will be and where the new training or technology will actually come from. Police forces are anxiously waiting to see how this will be administered. What roadside tools is this government thinking about giving our men and women in uniform to ensure that they have all the tools they need to keep our roads safe?

The Speaker: The hon. Justice minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, keeping roads safe and keeping marijuana out of the hands of children are the province's top priorities as we move forward. We're happy to see that those are priorities shared by our federal counterparts. We do know that they have to recognize the test under the Criminal Code in order for it to be legal. I understand that they're working very hard to have that under way. In the interim it is now and remains illegal to drive under the influence of any drug.

2:00

Mr. Jean: Last year 144 Albertans, tragically, died on the job. That number rose despite the economic slowdown. Oil, gas, and construction managers know the deadly consequences of on-the-job drug use. As such, they've developed strict drug-testing practices to keep their workers safe. However, employers are concerned that current technology can't accurately detect the level of marijuana impairment. What restrictions will the government consider on marijuana use in safety-sensitive workplaces to ensure that all workers get home safe and sound at the end of the workday?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. All Albertans should have safe workplaces, and that means workplaces that are free from impairment. Workers' safety is too critical for us to sit and wait and see what the federal marijuana regulations will look like, so as a province we are working with our partners across other jurisdictions to make sure that we have a plan. That includes making sure that employers can ensure their worksites are safe, and a significant aspect of this is ensuring that workers are fit to perform their tasks. We will work with Labour departments across Canada to fashion a pan-Canadian approach to this.

Mr. Jean: This rushed timeline for marijuana legislation is creating significant challenges for Alberta's municipalities as well. The AUMA has said that it needs more time than a few hundred days to develop policy to support this major drug reform from the federal government. They're calling for more support from the provincial and federal governments, and who can blame them? It's important. What is the government doing to support all communities to ensure that they have the tools necessary to meet this rapid 2018 deadline?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member correctly points out, all levels of government will have a role to play

in this. That's why I've already taken the initial steps of meeting with leadership from the AUMA and the AAMD and C. I also touched on this at my address to the AAMD and C just recently. As we move forward, we'll continue to work together. I do know that there's a lot of heavy lifting to do on both parts, but the safety of Albertans is at stake, so we will ensure that we get there.

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

Labour Relations Code Review

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government, in its haste to amend the labour code far beyond what the Supreme Court requires, has not taken the time to properly consult with Alberta's business leaders, as it failed to do with the farming community during the Bill 6 fiasco. The prospect of removing the secret-ballot provisions in union certification drives and the opportunity to intimidate workers by forcing them to stand up and show their hand will concern many Alberta workers. To the Minister of Labour. It's a simple question that requires a straight answer. Are you planning to remove the secret-ballot provision?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, in this tough economy everyday Albertans deserve a government that's working to make life better. We have been reaching out to stakeholders to make sure that we are proposing fair, balanced, and effective workplace legislation for all. We've had over a thousand employers who've provided their feedback as well as over 4,600 Albertans. I look forward to reviewing their feedback so that we can move forward with reasonable changes that make sense for Alberta.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, a non answer sometimes speaks louder than an answer.

Mr. Speaker, given that we have had incredible labour peace in Alberta for decades and given that the minister and her comrades have chosen to bulldoze ahead with these changes far beyond the Supreme Court directive and further put the Alberta economy at risk, again to the minister: will you be clear and tell this House and all Alberta workers that you have no plans to remove the secret-ballot provision?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Did you know that in 1988 the singer Bon Jovi released his hit track *Bad Medicine*? That's exactly what not being able to take a sick day looks like, bad medicine. Not being able to take a sick day for fear of losing one's job shows that we have outdated laws, and we are talking to Albertans right now about how we might fix that. We are focused on making sure we have fair and balanced workplace legislation that supports a strong Alberta economy, and Albertans have responded very well to our consultation. I look forward to reviewing those results.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, the Labour minister uses examples of *Beetlejuice* and Bon Jovi from 1988, when the current labour standards were passed. She is at the same time, as she confirmed in estimates, using as a guideline the International Labour Organization's eight core principles, that go back to 1930, when the Marx Brothers' movie *Animal Crackers* was released. Minister, since time is obviously not the real reason for your rush to a

decision on the labour standards changes, what is the real reason? [interjections]

The Speaker: Whoa. Quiet.
Go ahead.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite seems proud that we still do not meet standards that were implemented in the 1930s. The former government had years, years, and years to review these workplace legislations. In fact, they did review, but they did not put in basic workplace rights like job-protected sick leave. They would prefer that Albertans have no protections, they would prefer that we have fewer rights than other Canadians, and their new dance partners in the Wildrose seem to agree. We want to make sure life is better for Albertans, including reviewing workplace legislation. [laughter]

The Speaker: Many of you are laughing – that’s a good thing – but you’re all very noisy. That’s not a good thing.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta Party believes passionately in the importance of tackling poverty in our province, and I assume the NDP government would as well, but in the two years since the election there’s been no effort to create a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. In fact, the word “poverty” doesn’t appear in the Speech from the Throne even once, nor is it anywhere in the budget. Actions speak louder than words, but in this case we don’t have either. A simple question to the Premier: when is your government going to create a poverty reduction strategy? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet. Quiet, please.
The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. I certainly agree that actions speak louder than words. We added \$25 million to FCSS. I guess that action speaks louder than words. We added a new child benefit and enhanced the existing child and family benefit, a \$340 million investment, so certainly our actions speak very loud for the families throughout the province. Certainly, we have Albertans’ backs, and we are working to make sure that all Albertans benefit from the prosperity that Albertans enjoy.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, my concern is with this government’s patchwork approach and lack of a plan. Many not-for-profits I’ve talked with don’t know where they stand among the hodgepodge of quickly evolving government programs. An Alberta poverty reduction strategy would allow not-for-profits to align their important work with government programs. Again to the Premier: in the absence of a strategy, can you tell us what you think the role of government is and what role not-for-profits should play in poverty reduction?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. I’m happy to take this one and then go back to the minister for the final one. I want to talk about some of the work that we continue to do to make life better for Alberta families, including having reasonable, planned increases to the minimum wage for some of the lowest earners in Alberta; making sure that we’re expanding access to affordable daycare because we believe that every child deserves to have a safe

place to be while their parents are at work; making sure that hungry children, when they go to school, have a balanced, nutritious meal and that their parents don’t have to worry about whether or not they can buy that, Mr. Speaker. These are some of the concrete actions that we’re very proud to take in partnership regularly with the not-for-profit organizations in Alberta, and we continue to continue working with them.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. EndPovertyEdmonton says that people “experience poverty when they lack or are denied economic, social and cultural resources.” Calgary’s enough for all plan says simply, “My neighbour’s strength is my strength.” I want to end poverty. There is clear evidence that the most effective, efficient policy tool to end poverty is a guaranteed income targeted at those who genuinely need help. To the Premier: will you replace your damaging minimum wage plan with a guaranteed annual income for those who really need it?

2:10

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There were a lot of oohs in many parts of this House with that last question. I have to say that we are very proud to make sure that Albertans who work full-time, who are at a job for 40 hours a week, have the ability to pay their rent and put food on the table. This is something that we believe is important, to make sure that everyone has access to live with dignity and respect. While I appreciate that other ideas are being proposed rather than just opposition, we think that the reasonable thing to do is to make sure that we have planned increases to make sure the minimum wage can support Alberta families, and we’re proud to be the government doing that.

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

Educational Curriculum Redesign Arabic Language Educational Curricula

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this government is currently taking part in the largest curriculum redevelopment in Alberta’s history and just last week spoke about the results of the fall curriculum survey, to the Minister of Education: what were some of the areas that Albertans want to see focused on in the curriculum redevelopment?

Mr. Eggen: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, we found a number of areas where the vast majority of Albertans surveyed want a new focus on curriculum. A vast majority of participants were looking for pathways to career and other postsecondary opportunities. We also saw some very interesting commentary, that we’re following up on, in regard to financial literacy, coding, working with business groups, energy, and especially language advocates.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that my constituents of Edmonton-Decore have expressed how important Arabic language programming is, to the same minister: what are you doing to ensure that the curriculum redevelopment will benefit those seeking Arabic language arts programming?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While some school boards do offer other languages, including Arabic language prototypes, I'm very happy to tell you that we're in development of a provincial Arab language arts curriculum here in the province of Alberta, that should be ready about one year from now. This is something that we've needed in our province for many years. We've worked very hard in conjunction with language groups, and we've seen that they are very willing and happy to help us.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the importance this language program will have on this vibrant community, to the same minister. We already heard the hint. When can we see and expect this programming to be in place?

Mr. Eggen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to announce that we are identifying the resources here over the next 12 months, building on programs that have existed in Edmonton already, working through the translations and so forth so that we can have something in place by the fall of 2018. I want to thank the members of the Alberta Arab community for their very hard work and advocacy to help make this happen.

Carbon Levy Revenue Utilization

Mr. Fildebrandt: Normally getting the Minister of Finance to answer a question is a bit like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall, but this morning in estimates we finally got to pin the minister down on a few things. Like Muhammad Ali, he danced around questions like a butterfly but stung taxpayers like a bee. But we finally got him to admit that the carbon tax slush fund is kept off the main set of books, unlike any other expenditure in the government. This falsely makes it look like they're spending less money than they are. Why is the government misleading Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We made a commitment to fully reinvest those revenues from the climate leadership plan back into Albertans' pockets, and we clearly laid that out in our budget. We have page 61 of the fiscal plan, and it shows clearly how those climate leadership plan expenses match revenue over time and will have no net impact on our bottom line. We're going to continue to do that because that's what Albertans expect.

Mr. Fildebrandt: The NDP say "reinvest taxes" like United means "reaccommode passengers."

Given, Mr. Speaker, that just because a tax is dedicated to a specific expenditure doesn't mean it doesn't count as spending – we spend money raised from the alcohol tax, the tobacco tax, and the lottery fund, and all of these count as operational spending – and given that when asked today why spending from the carbon tax doesn't count on their books, the minister said that it's "just this one," why?

The Speaker: Hon. members, I need to remind you again. I'm very patient, very generous with the opportunities. I do want to tell you that when you're asking questions, though, you might want to listen to some of your peers as to what is a preamble and what is not.

Let us go to the answer to the question. The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, this is the first full year of the climate leadership revenue and expenditure.

Making year-over-year comparisons would not provide an accurate picture with regard to the changes in our operating expenses. We will do that going forward in the '18-19 year.

Mr. Fildebrandt: This minister could dance around a question like *Dancing with the Stars*.

The Speaker: That's a preamble.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Given, Mr. Speaker, that if I had a nickel for every time the minister didn't answer the question I asked him, I could balance the budget, but given – let's try again – that if a tree falls in a forest and no one hears it, did it really fall? Or . . .

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: I've got a point of order.

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, I'm incredibly proud of the budget we have laid before Albertans. Working to make life better for Albertans is what we have committed to do. We're doing that by ensuring that operating expenses for programs and services like health care, education, and social services remain strong. This is the first full year of the climate leadership revenue and expenditures, and going forward, we will include those in our budget fully.

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

Agency, Board, and Commission Appointments

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Institute of Corporate Directors, or ICD, is Canada's leading organization for fostering excellence in corporate governance. Graduates of ICD's director education program include high-ranking Alberta officials such as the Auditor General, the Ethics Commissioner, and the deputy ministers of Environment and Parks and Status of Women. Now, one would think that being an ICD graduate would be a huge benefit to any board, but apparently this NDP government does not. To the Premier: can you confirm that ICD graduates are no longer being considered for appointment to the boards of Alberta agencies, boards, and commissions?

Ms Hoffman: No, I can't, Mr. Speaker, because that is not indeed a fact. But what I can confirm is that it shouldn't be a course that costs in excess of \$10,000 for you to even be considered to serve your province. So while we are very pleased to receive applications from people who do have the ICD credential, we are opening the application process to all Albertans. We're posting them publicly, and we're proud to do so.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's certainly not what ICD graduates have been telling us.

Given that the ICD director education program is recognized world-wide as the leader in delivering competence in board governance and given that improved board governance is surely something that the NDP wants to see in all of Alberta's agencies, boards, and commissions and given that many ICD graduates have been told that they should either not apply for board reappointment or not disclose that they are ICD graduates in their application to government boards, to the Premier. Cabinet makes dozens of appointments. How many ICD graduates have you appointed to Alberta's boards, agencies, and commissions?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're certainly happy to receive applications from all Albertans. One of the things that we reviewed in the past was that sometimes having an ICD credential was listed explicitly to ensure that other Albertans who didn't have \$10,000 that they could afford to put into that course wouldn't even be eligible to put their names forward. While we're very happy to receive applications from people who do have ICD credentials, they're not the only people who are welcome to serve Albertans, to be part of our agencies, boards, and commissions. We encourage all Albertans to please look at the website. There are many postings available right now, and we want them to put their names forward.

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, given that this NDP government has made it clear that it wants wholesale changes in the governance boards of Alberta's agencies, boards, and commissions and given that many current board members are being told not to reapply but are not being told why and given that board vacancies are being filled using methods that are certainly far removed from the universally accepted practice of analyzing gaps in competency matrices, to the Premier: which affiliation is best for Albertans applying to the BODs of the ABCs, ICD or NDP?

2:20

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the fun question coming from the former member of the most secretive government in Canada. Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the fact that we have an open and transparent process. All of the applications are posted on our website. We are happy to receive applications from all experienced applicants, including people who've been involved in any party represented in this House or otherwise. We want Albertans to step forward, be part of the process, be part of making life better for all Albertans, and we are happy to welcome all applicants to the process of serving their government.

The Speaker: Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Health Quality Council of Alberta

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently we learned that the Health Quality Council of Alberta has received very few requests from this NDP government. The state of our health care in Alberta is inconsistent. We see significantly higher rates of C. difficile contamination in Edmonton hospitals. Hip surgeries are 19 weeks slower in Red Deer than in Edmonton, and as an urgent patient you wait over an hour longer to see an ER doctor in St. Albert than you will in Medicine Hat. To the Minister of Health: why doesn't your government ask the HQCA to investigate these discrepancies and identify solutions?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We're very proud to have the Health Quality Council of Alberta and to put them to work in a number of very key areas of focus. For example, in the past few years HQCA has done work to support us in a co-ordinated fashion with the implementation of medical assistance in dying, a huge public policy initiative that we're very proud to have their support on; worked to review lab services, that play a key part in the development of our overall provincial framework; developed the website FOCUS, which has updates on emergency departments. We are proud to have them working in partnership with us, and we'll continue to do so.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, we've also learned that the Health Quality Council has decided to eliminate a patient satisfaction survey. Given that within AHS there are major departments called community engagement and communications, another one called community engagement, operational best practices, quality and patient safety, and so on, and so on, again to the Minister of Health: was this survey removed due to all the unnecessary overlap between AHS, Alberta Health, and the Health Quality Council, or is the state of our health care system so bad that you had to do away with this independent quality measure?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. I'm having a little déjà vu to estimates because I believe the member at estimates was asking me to cut a number of initiatives that were taking place in other areas because he thought they were redundant. Mr. Speaker, this isn't a proposal that we brought forward. The Health Quality Council thought that they had ample information in this area, and they were happy to work with partners to continue to update that information. But we look at their expertise, and on occasion we do call them to do specific work for us in areas of research, including the support we had on medical assistance in dying.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, in this most recent budget this NDP government increased the budget for the Health Quality Council. Interestingly enough, the Health Quality Council stated that they have current capacity to do more and they've had fewer requests for its services from Alberta Health Services and this NDP government. To the Minister of Health. Can you please clarify: despite giving them fewer requests and the Health Quality Council indicating that they can do so much more and multiple departments within AHS and Alberta Health providing similar roles, why did you increase their budget?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. It's my understanding that they requested two additional staff to support them in meeting some of the timelines that they were struggling with. One of the reasons why we are making sure that we have this is to make sure that we have open, upfront work done. For example, they're continuing to do work on continuity of patient care, surveys of families in long-term care on their experience, and gathering physician participation, that was brought alongside to help expand the physician panel work on the provincial scale. We're proud of the work that they're doing, and we're continuing to work in partnership to make sure that Alberta's health care system is the best it possibly can be instead of deep . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Employment and Labour Code Consultations (continued)

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again this NDP government has found itself in trouble for not consulting before it bulldozes ahead with ideological legislation. Today Alberta's opposition parties stood on stage with Alberta's business community and called on the government to extend its consultation process on upcoming labour legislation changes, citing a severe lack of engagement. This government has committed in the past to raising the bar for transparency and engagement. Will the minister

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us reflect and pray, each in our own way. As we all return from our celebration time with our families and communities, let us express our appreciation, gratitude, and respect to our fellow MLAs for the opportunity to work with them.

Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, we will now be led in the singing of our national anthem by Mr. Robert Clark. I would invite all to participate in the language of their choice.

Hon. Members:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
Car ton bras sait porter l'épée,
Il sait porter la croix!
Ton histoire est une épopée
Des plus brillants exploits.
God keep our land glorious and free!
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.
O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

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

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two groups of students from Patricia Heights elementary school. They are accompanied today by their teachers, Keri Clifford and Shane Little, and also by their chaperones, Scott Karaim, Rhonda Phibbs, Elizabeth Martin, and Ms Kendra Blumenhagen. I wish them to rise now and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you 50 students from the beautiful and, I may add, diverse constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie from Meyokumin school. They're accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Megan Davis and Ms Cindy MacLeod. I'd ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Hon. members, are there any other school groups here today?
Seeing and hearing none, the hon. Member for Peace River.

Ms Jabbour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured to rise today on your behalf to recognize Stephanie Nedoshytko. Stephanie has been an integral member of the Legislative Assembly for the past five years and recently resigned to take up a new position as the president of the Students' Association of MacEwan University. Stephanie began her time here as a page, then continued on as a part-time office assistant in the Speaker's office, where I know both you and I greatly appreciated her hard work on our behalf. Today she's joined by her parents, Mary and Ihor Nedoshytko. Mary is a

junior high teacher at Holy Family Catholic school. Ihor is a retired teacher and musician who currently spends his time in various organizations as an instructor and band member. They're also very active in the Ukrainian community. We'd like to give our sincere thanks to Stephanie for your dedicated service to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. They're seated in your gallery, and I'd ask that they now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The Associate Minister of Health.

Ms Payne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce two compassionate professionals from Alberta Health Services advanced care planning goals of care team. April 16 was National Advance Care Planning Day, and we are encouraging all Albertans to talk about their health care goals with their families and their care providers and to write them down in a personal directive. I now ask Sharon Iversen, AHS project lead for advanced planning, and her colleague Sarah Hall to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of our Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Dr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members skin cancer survivor Violetta Ambrozuk and Chelsea Draeger, executive director of the Canadian Cancer Society. I'll be speaking to this in my coming member's statement. Joining Violetta and Chelsea is Angeline Webb, who works with the Canadian Cancer Society in health policy and promotion. The CCS is a strong voice informing Albertans about the need to avoid excessive UV exposure. I'd ask my guests to rise and receive the customary welcome of this Chamber.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House a remarkable Canadian, Ai Tran. Ai left Vietnam as a 20-year-old person and lived as a stateless refugee in a camp in the Philippines for 12 years. In 2000 he married his childhood friend, who lived in Canada, and came here the following year. Here he built upon an already remarkable life, graduating from McGill with honours before moving to Edmonton to become a social worker, which is how I met him and heard his story. I ask my guest to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this House.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to introduce a good friend of mine, Garnett Genuis, the Member of Parliament for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan. Garnett and I were close family friends. His wife, Dr. Rebecca Genuis, came from Goa in India. Today Garnett is accompanied by his beautiful daughter, Gianna. His wife and younger son, Judah, couldn't be here. Garnett and I were two of those 70 losers for Wildrose in 2012, but today we both are here. Although he is the youngest parliamentarian, he spoke most of the words in the Commons, and he actually used a creative standing order to introduce me and the Member for Strathmore-Brooks in Parliament in February. I ask everyone to extend a warm welcome for him and his daughter today. Please rise.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Education.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to welcome through you and to you three guests this afternoon. Blake Radovanovic is a grade 12 student at Eastglen high school, whom I met last week at a GSA meeting at his school. He is joined today by his parents, David Leslie and Nick Stadnyk. I enjoyed meeting Blake and David last week, where we discussed the importance of GSAs for students in Alberta and the work our government is doing to ensure that all of our schools are welcome, caring, and safe. I'd ask them to please rise and for everyone to give them the traditional warm welcome.

The Speaker: Welcome.

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a constituent, Marilyn Spilchen. Marilyn is the manager of corporate support with One! International Poverty Relief, which her daughter Tania founded in 2001. One! International operates three schools in Mumbai, India, for children who would not otherwise have the opportunity to obtain an education, a cause that is very close to my own heart. The organization wants to thank the government of Alberta for helping them to make a difference by providing a yearly grant since 2012. I would ask Marilyn to stand up to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

The Speaker: Welcome.

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

Mr. Cooper: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce some outstanding constituents from the outstanding constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills. You know, there are few people in your life who you can call at 3 a.m. and know that they will answer the phone, but some of those folks are up in the gallery today. We are joined by some very, very dear friends of ours, Trevor and Kristin Whitlow, and their two children, Julia and David. If you'll please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Welcome.

Members' Statements

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

Reynolds-Alberta Museum

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to speak today about the Reynolds-Alberta Museum in my Wetaskiwin-Camrose constituency. The Reynolds-Alberta Museum opened in 1992 to interpret the impact of technological change in transportation, aviation, agriculture, and industry from the 1890s to present. The museum now contains thousands of vintage artifacts and is family friendly, offering school tours and group programs.

Director Noel Ratch was here on budget day to hear about the three-year, \$39.5 million investment to develop and expand artifact acquisition, storage, restoration, and display. It was great news for local job creation, tourism, and economic stimulation, and I wanted to share some of what the museum has to offer.

For car enthusiasts this June 10 and 11 will be the ultimate car show, featuring more than 700 cars, trucks, and motorcycles spanning a century of automotive history. Imagine the thrill of driving a manual transmission classic car. This year on July 16 young drivers between the age of 15 and 25 will learn how to start, operate, and drive one

of these classics. August 19 will be a great day for motorcyclists from across Alberta as the museum hosts the Motorcycle Ride to Reynolds. Throughout the summer, for a fee, you can take a two-seater biplane open-cockpit flight, which flies over my home, so be sure to wave when you go by. Chauffeur-driven tours of the grounds in select 1920s to 1950s vintage vehicles give you the rare chance to hear and feel the motion of these venerable links to our past. More than just a viewing museum, Reynolds is world-renowned for its vehicle restoration workshops. Professional restorers offer one-, three-, and five-day courses. All of these can be found at the museum website.

I am proud of our government for its continued support in Alberta heritage. Thank you.

Conservatism

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks I have noticed that the NDP continue to up their shrill, acerbic attacks. Now the PCs and Wildrose are being lumped into one category, conservatives, almost as if that is something to be ashamed of, so I decided to use my member's statement to define what it means to me to be a conservative.

This definition comes from the founder of the Heritage Foundation, Ed Feulner. He starts:

The purpose of politics is . . . to carve out a system of justice under the rule of law . . . and freedom . . .

When governments seek utopia, they end in oppression, because man and society are infinitely complex and cannot be reshaped by any institution of experts.

He goes on to say:

Conservatives . . . understand that power is a zero-sum game. When power is assumed by government, it is lost by individuals. There must be a stopping point in every program and plan beyond which no government should be allowed to go, not merely because of budgetary concerns but because of the inevitable loss of freedom . . .

Conservatives believe in the necessity of change, yes. But not in radical change based on abstract theories and the passions of the moment.

He finishes by saying that the value of conservatism isn't their persuasive leaders, but the power of their ideas – and the applications of those ideas to the problems of the day.

There it is, Mr. Speaker, the difference between socialists and conservatives.

Conservatives are all about outcomes. As a case in point, my van is presently in the mechanic's shop. The mechanic is a very nice person, but I can tell you that if he didn't fix the vehicle or did a shoddy job, he wouldn't get my business because I need to see acceptable outcomes, not pie-in-the-sky best of intentions as we have seen over the past two years from this NDP government.

I conclude by imploring the individual MLAs opposite to look at the outcomes of the past two years as well as the outcomes of past NDP governments in other provinces and ask themselves: do we really want that kind of legacy?

Emergency Medical Services Funding

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, leadership is defined in different ways, and it's subjective to how the leadership is applied. For instance, the NHL captain on a hockey team is responsible for something entirely different than the captain of a fire hall. Another example: a CEO of a multinational company deals with different consequences of their leadership than the CEO of a local charity society. What they all have in common, though, is the accountability to the people that they lead, which brings us to the responsibility of government

to lead. What they say and what they do is intensely scrutinized because they're the government and they're in charge and, at the very least, until the next election they are directly responsible to Alberta and its citizens.

The provincial government bears an immense responsibility to Albertans, and one of the most important aspects of that responsibility is to provide the services necessary to ensure that Albertans have timely access to treatment in a medical emergency. What I find perplexing is that even with regard to the most basic responsibilities of a government, the responsibility to provide public safety and emergency care, the government is cutting corners. The government is putting emergency medical services in a no-win situation. You can't say that front-line services matter and then cut their budget by \$17 million. EMS workers are the very definition of front-line services, often being the first point of contact for Albertans in medical distress.

Mr. Speaker, I don't say this lightly, and I don't say this without understanding or experience. I have the experience, I have the understanding, and, what's more, I have the confidence and support of the EMS community on this issue. There's been a lot of discussion about bringing people of different backgrounds and different experiences into this House as representatives so that we can be more effective voices for those communities. Today I'm in this House speaking for concerned paramedics across this province. Paramedics across Alberta are asking this minister to restore the \$17 million cut to emergency medical services. In fact, they're asking the government to recognize them as a major partner in the delivery of health care in this province, not to be treated as an afterthought. Minister, they're asking you to lead in this regard. I'm asking you as a registered paramedic, me to you. Don't let us down.

Daffodil Month

Dr. Turner: Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month, the month when Canadians unite in the fight against cancer. This April the Canadian Cancer Society is marking the 60th anniversary of Daffodil Month by asking all of us to show support for persons living with cancer and to honour those who have died by wearing a daffodil pin and buying fresh daffodils. Money raised goes to cancer research, education, and advocacy, and to support compassionate programs.

Mr. Speaker, as an oncologist I'm very proud of the advances made in cancer treatment over the last 40 years. My leukemia research has been very well supported by the Canadian Cancer Society, and there are, thankfully, many Albertan survivors of all types of cancers treated by my colleagues in CancerControl Alberta. I'm also keenly aware that the majority of cancer cases could be prevented by lifestyle modification, and this is the focus of this month's efforts of the CCS.

The CCS is encouraging youth to creatively educate their peers and families about cancer prevention and to advocate for policy changes in their communities that support four topics. Topic 1: expose the deceitful and manipulative ways that big tobacco markets to youth. Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be part of a government which banned flavoured tobacco as one of its first actions after the election two years ago. We also are pursuing repayment of health costs from big tobacco, just two ways we're making life better for Albertans. Topic 2: learning about the fun and the positive benefits of regular physical activity. Twenty minutes a day of aerobic exercise is the best preventative for cancer of all types. Topic 3: embracing their natural glow while avoiding excessive sun exposure or using tanning beds. Topic 4: educating their peers about choosing healthy beverages. This applies to both alcohol and to high-sugar drinks that the food industry is marketing to our youth.

Mr. Speaker, youth are being encouraged to act, and they are responding. As legislators we are opinion leaders in our communities and bear responsibility to act as well. The CCS and I ask that we all use our abilities to support this fight against cancer.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill.

1:50

Easter

Ms McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Renewal of faith and hope. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten calendar for many Christians. Lent gives Christians the opportunity to focus on their love for one another and God's love for them. Those practising Lent sacrifice something meaningful and, instead, spend time on their relationship with God.

World-wide there are over 2 billion people that observe Easter, one of the most important dates on the Christian calendar. God's love is so great that he gave the life of his only son, Jesus Christ, so that Christians may have eternal life. Christians believe in the miracle of Christ rising from the dead three days after he was crucified, showing Christians that their faith is well placed.

There's also a secular aspect to Easter that many people celebrate and that has us looking under the couch and around the fridge for chocolate eggs and rabbits. During Easter many people come together with their families and their friends to celebrate peace and love.

It's important for us to honour the role that Christians have played and continue to play in the culture of our province. There are more than a dozen churches in Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill, and I know that many constituents came together on Sunday to celebrate the day that Christ rose from the dead.

I hope that everyone here and those who are watching and listening had a peaceful Easter.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Employment and Labour Code Consultations

Mr. Jean: In less than 12 hours the clock will run out on labour review consultations. I'll forgive everyone if they thought they just started; however, here in Alberta they're just ending. Ontario consulted for two years on similar changes to labour legislation, but here at home: 36 days. Albertans got just over a month. No wonder small-business owners are seriously worried about the ramifications. When the NDP ran out of taxes to raise, they created new ones. They threatened lawsuits to break contracts, and now they're rushing through significant changes to labour legislation. Why won't the NDP simply slow down, extend the consultation period, and listen to Alberta businesses?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In 1988 singer Bobby McFerrin released the hit single *Don't Worry, Be Happy*, which is the same thing that right-wing parties have been saying to Alberta workers ever since. Can't access job-protected sick leave? Don't worry; be happy. Well, I'm not happy about it and neither are many Albertans. We are working with stakeholders to ensure we have fair, balanced, and effective workplace legislation for all. We've received over 4,600 submissions so far, and I look forward to seeing how many more we receive today.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, everybody wants a good song; we just want to take some time to write it.

While there's no doubt that a need for some fine-tuning is there, Alberta has enjoyed relative labour peace for over 30 years. This is important. Any major overhaul that catches job creators by surprise will have some major ramifications for jobs, the economy, and, ultimately, Albertans. It's important. It's clear the fix is in. Invitation-only meetings, Mr. Speaker, no public events, and a cloud of secrecy have surrounded this government and what exactly they plan to do with this legislation. If the NDP won't extend consultations to a reasonable time, will they at least tell Albertans what they plan to do and when they will see . . .

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

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In a tough economy everyday Albertans deserve a government that's working to make life better. In Alberta you can lose your job if you get sick, and even though Albertans pay into employment insurance, we don't have access to some of the leave that other Canadians do. So we've reached out to Albertans about these kinds of practices and whether they need to be updated and modernized. We've received over 4,600 responses to date, including over a thousand from employers. We've held round-table discussions to discuss some of these issues, and we look forward to reviewing the results of the consultation and working to make life better.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are clear. They want a government that actually listens and consults, an easy idea that would put a lot of people's minds at ease, because they are worried. We know that the Premier's own appointees, who serve as partisan big union bosses, are pushing to get rid of a worker's right to a secret ballot. That is wrong and will cause chaos throughout businesses and companies across Alberta. It will. It's a fundamental democratic right of a worker. Will the Premier take at least this off the table, or will she continue to cozy up to her big union boss friends, who right now want to take away this right from Alberta workers?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The issues that we're discussing with Albertans have developed over decades. The previous government had years and years to make changes, and they never lifted a finger, even after conducting their own reviews. They would prefer that Albertans have no protections and fewer rights than other Canadians. We are going to work with stakeholders to make sure we're bringing forward fair and balanced changes that will improve the Alberta economy and workplaces for all.

The Speaker: The second main question.

Interprovincial Relations

Mr. Jean: The Premier said last week that political staff are not allowed to campaign for their counterparts in the B.C. NDP. The only problem is that that memo didn't seem to make its way into the hands of the Premier's chief of staff, John Heaney. His name is currently on the advertising sponsor list with Elections BC. Heaney was chief of staff to the current B.C. NDP leader and was called an invaluable adviser. Can the Premier please reassure Albertans that

this is simply an oversight and that her chief of staff is no longer on the sponsor list for the antipipeline B.C. NDP Party? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Heaney is not involved in the B.C. election. The third-party advertising report that was posted was from the 2005 and '09 elections.

In speaking about memos, perhaps the member opposite missed the ableg hash tag where his colleague the Member for Strathmore-Brooks says: "Actually seems like an honest mistake. Genuinely pleased the Premier has put the kibosh on [NDP] staffers campaigning [in] B.C."

Mr. Jean: Alberta's relationship with neighbouring provinces has never been worse, Mr. Speaker. On the one side, the NDP holds press conferences to slam the budget of a provincial neighbour while threatening them with trade sanctions. On the other side, the Premier's chief of staff is registered as a third-party adviser in the B.C. election still. Oh, and let's not forget the bait-and-switch negotiating tactics that the NDP employed in negotiating the Canada free trade agreement. Can someone over there admit that it might be just time to start making friends and stop making enemies of our allies? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet. [interjections] Quiet.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to answer the question from the member for Regina-Somewhere or maybe it's Kelowna-Somewhere. On this side of the House we're standing up for Albertans. Every day we're going to make sure that we work to make Alberta lives better, and that's what we're doing, whether it's negotiations with our partners at the table for the western trade agreement, whether it's across Canada, or whether it's our Premier and her chief of staff working to make sure that we expand market access in Japan through pipeline access on the west coast. I am proud of the work that we're doing every day and the results we're getting for Albertans.

Mr. Jean: A hundred thousand Albertans on unemployment insurance, Mr. Speaker, a record.

The Premier is chalking up a long list of adversaries at the provincial level. The cracks are beginning to show. The two contending parties in the B.C. election: neither are friends to this Premier. We know her comments on the B.C. NDP. The Premier of B.C. said just last week that, and I quote, Alberta is going broke under this NDP government's watch. I couldn't agree more. This Premier has positioned our province to be the enemy of B.C. regardless of who wins that election. When will the Premier realize that her divisiveness and bad economic policies are only hurting Alberta with what should be some of our closest allies, that we should be working together with?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm incredibly proud of the work that our Premier and our government are doing to make life better for Alberta families. That's why we are behaving in a mature, responsible fashion in working with them rather than spouting off angry tweets at partners from across the country who were working to actually continue to gain market access through expanded pipelines. We're going to continue being respectful, working with our partners, and getting results for Albertans,

including the 20,000 net new jobs that we got, full-time jobs, in Alberta in just the month of March. That's good results for the people of Alberta.

The Speaker: The third main question.

Marijuana Legalization

Mr. Jean: In just over a year recreational marijuana use will be legal. It's a dramatic change and demands immediate action from this government and the province. There are still a lot of questions about how effective saliva and other roadside tests will be and where the new training or technology will actually come from. Police forces are anxiously waiting to see how this will be administered. What roadside tools is this government thinking about giving our men and women in uniform to ensure that they have all the tools they need to keep our roads safe?

The Speaker: The hon. Justice minister.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, keeping roads safe and keeping marijuana out of the hands of children are the province's top priorities as we move forward. We're happy to see that those are priorities shared by our federal counterparts. We do know that they have to recognize the test under the Criminal Code in order for it to be legal. I understand that they're working very hard to have that under way. In the interim it is now and remains illegal to drive under the influence of any drug.

2:00

Mr. Jean: Last year 144 Albertans, tragically, died on the job. That number rose despite the economic slowdown. Oil, gas, and construction managers know the deadly consequences of on-the-job drug use. As such, they've developed strict drug-testing practices to keep their workers safe. However, employers are concerned that current technology can't accurately detect the level of marijuana impairment. What restrictions will the government consider on marijuana use in safety-sensitive workplaces to ensure that all workers get home safe and sound at the end of the workday?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. All Albertans should have safe workplaces, and that means workplaces that are free from impairment. Workers' safety is too critical for us to sit and wait and see what the federal marijuana regulations will look like, so as a province we are working with our partners across other jurisdictions to make sure that we have a plan. That includes making sure that employers can ensure their worksites are safe, and a significant aspect of this is ensuring that workers are fit to perform their tasks. We will work with Labour departments across Canada to fashion a pan-Canadian approach to this.

Mr. Jean: This rushed timeline for marijuana legislation is creating significant challenges for Alberta's municipalities as well. The AUMA has said that it needs more time than a few hundred days to develop policy to support this major drug reform from the federal government. They're calling for more support from the provincial and federal governments, and who can blame them? It's important. What is the government doing to support all communities to ensure that they have the tools necessary to meet this rapid 2018 deadline?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice.

Ms Ganley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member correctly points out, all levels of government will have a role to play

in this. That's why I've already taken the initial steps of meeting with leadership from the AUMA and the AAMD and C. I also touched on this at my address to the AAMD and C just recently. As we move forward, we'll continue to work together. I do know that there's a lot of heavy lifting to do on both parts, but the safety of Albertans is at stake, so we will ensure that we get there.

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

Labour Relations Code Review

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, this NDP government, in its haste to amend the labour code far beyond what the Supreme Court requires, has not taken the time to properly consult with Alberta's business leaders, as it failed to do with the farming community during the Bill 6 fiasco. The prospect of removing the secret-ballot provisions in union certification drives and the opportunity to intimidate workers by forcing them to stand up and show their hand will concern many Alberta workers. To the Minister of Labour. It's a simple question that requires a straight answer. Are you planning to remove the secret-ballot provision?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, in this tough economy everyday Albertans deserve a government that's working to make life better. We have been reaching out to stakeholders to make sure that we are proposing fair, balanced, and effective workplace legislation for all. We've had over a thousand employers who've provided their feedback as well as over 4,600 Albertans. I look forward to reviewing their feedback so that we can move forward with reasonable changes that make sense for Alberta.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, a non answer sometimes speaks louder than an answer.

Mr. Speaker, given that we have had incredible labour peace in Alberta for decades and given that the minister and her comrades have chosen to bulldoze ahead with these changes far beyond the Supreme Court directive and further put the Alberta economy at risk, again to the minister: will you be clear and tell this House and all Alberta workers that you have no plans to remove the secret-ballot provision?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Did you know that in 1988 the singer Bon Jovi released his hit track *Bad Medicine*? That's exactly what not being able to take a sick day looks like, bad medicine. Not being able to take a sick day for fear of losing one's job shows that we have outdated laws, and we are talking to Albertans right now about how we might fix that. We are focused on making sure we have fair and balanced workplace legislation that supports a strong Alberta economy, and Albertans have responded very well to our consultation. I look forward to reviewing those results.

Mr. McIver: Mr. Speaker, the Labour minister uses examples of *Beetlejuice* and Bon Jovi from 1988, when the current labour standards were passed. She is at the same time, as she confirmed in estimates, using as a guideline the International Labour Organization's eight core principles, that go back to 1930, when the Marx Brothers' movie *Animal Crackers* was released. Minister, since time is obviously not the real reason for your rush to a

decision on the labour standards changes, what is the real reason? [interjections]

The Speaker: Whoa. Quiet.
Go ahead.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite seems proud that we still do not meet standards that were implemented in the 1930s. The former government had years, years, and years to review these workplace legislations. In fact, they did review, but they did not put in basic workplace rights like job-protected sick leave. They would prefer that Albertans have no protections, they would prefer that we have fewer rights than other Canadians, and their new dance partners in the Wildrose seem to agree. We want to make sure life is better for Albertans, including reviewing workplace legislation. [laughter]

The Speaker: Many of you are laughing – that’s a good thing – but you’re all very noisy. That’s not a good thing.
The hon. Member for Calgary-Elbow.

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Mr. Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Alberta Party believes passionately in the importance of tackling poverty in our province, and I assume the NDP government would as well, but in the two years since the election there’s been no effort to create a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. In fact, the word “poverty” doesn’t appear in the Speech from the Throne even once, nor is it anywhere in the budget. Actions speak louder than words, but in this case we don’t have either. A simple question to the Premier: when is your government going to create a poverty reduction strategy? [interjections]

The Speaker: Quiet. Quiet, please.
The hon. Minister of Community and Social Services.

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Member, for the question. I certainly agree that actions speak louder than words. We added \$25 million to FCSS. I guess that action speaks louder than words. We added a new child benefit and enhanced the existing child and family benefit, a \$340 million investment, so certainly our actions speak very loud for the families throughout the province. Certainly, we have Albertans’ backs, and we are working to make sure that all Albertans benefit from the prosperity that Albertans enjoy.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, my concern is with this government’s patchwork approach and lack of a plan. Many not-for-profits I’ve talked with don’t know where they stand among the hodgepodge of quickly evolving government programs. An Alberta poverty reduction strategy would allow not-for-profits to align their important work with government programs. Again to the Premier: in the absence of a strategy, can you tell us what you think the role of government is and what role not-for-profits should play in poverty reduction?

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much. I’m happy to take this one and then go back to the minister for the final one. I want to talk about some of the work that we continue to do to make life better for Alberta families, including having reasonable, planned increases to the minimum wage for some of the lowest earners in Alberta; making sure that we’re expanding access to affordable daycare because we believe that every child deserves to have a safe

place to be while their parents are at work; making sure that hungry children, when they go to school, have a balanced, nutritious meal and that their parents don’t have to worry about whether or not they can buy that, Mr. Speaker. These are some of the concrete actions that we’re very proud to take in partnership regularly with the not-for-profit organizations in Alberta, and we continue to continue working with them.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. EndPovertyEdmonton says that people “experience poverty when they lack or are denied economic, social and cultural resources.” Calgary’s enough for all plan says simply, “My neighbour’s strength is my strength.” I want to end poverty. There is clear evidence that the most effective, efficient policy tool to end poverty is a guaranteed income targeted at those who genuinely need help. To the Premier: will you replace your damaging minimum wage plan with a guaranteed annual income for those who really need it?

2:10

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There were a lot of oohs in many parts of this House with that last question. I have to say that we are very proud to make sure that Albertans who work full-time, who are at a job for 40 hours a week, have the ability to pay their rent and put food on the table. This is something that we believe is important, to make sure that everyone has access to live with dignity and respect. While I appreciate that other ideas are being proposed rather than just opposition, we think that the reasonable thing to do is to make sure that we have planned increases to make sure the minimum wage can support Alberta families, and we’re proud to be the government doing that.

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

Educational Curriculum Redesign Arabic Language Educational Curricula

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that this government is currently taking part in the largest curriculum redevelopment in Alberta’s history and just last week spoke about the results of the fall curriculum survey, to the Minister of Education: what were some of the areas that Albertans want to see focused on in the curriculum redevelopment?

Mr. Eggen: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, we found a number of areas where the vast majority of Albertans surveyed want a new focus on curriculum. A vast majority of participants were looking for pathways to career and other postsecondary opportunities. We also saw some very interesting commentary, that we’re following up on, in regard to financial literacy, coding, working with business groups, energy, and especially language advocates.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that my constituents of Edmonton-Decore have expressed how important Arabic language programming is, to the same minister: what are you doing to ensure that the curriculum redevelopment will benefit those seeking Arabic language arts programming?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Eggen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While some school boards do offer other languages, including Arabic language prototypes, I'm very happy to tell you that we're in development of a provincial Arab language arts curriculum here in the province of Alberta, that should be ready about one year from now. This is something that we've needed in our province for many years. We've worked very hard in conjunction with language groups, and we've seen that they are very willing and happy to help us.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the importance this language program will have on this vibrant community, to the same minister. We already heard the hint. When can we see and expect this programming to be in place?

Mr. Eggen: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to announce that we are identifying the resources here over the next 12 months, building on programs that have existed in Edmonton already, working through the translations and so forth so that we can have something in place by the fall of 2018. I want to thank the members of the Alberta Arab community for their very hard work and advocacy to help make this happen.

Carbon Levy Revenue Utilization

Mr. Fildebrandt: Normally getting the Minister of Finance to answer a question is a bit like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall, but this morning in estimates we finally got to pin the minister down on a few things. Like Muhammad Ali, he danced around questions like a butterfly but stung taxpayers like a bee. But we finally got him to admit that the carbon tax slush fund is kept off the main set of books, unlike any other expenditure in the government. This falsely makes it look like they're spending less money than they are. Why is the government misleading Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We made a commitment to fully reinvest those revenues from the climate leadership plan back into Albertans' pockets, and we clearly laid that out in our budget. We have page 61 of the fiscal plan, and it shows clearly how those climate leadership plan expenses match revenue over time and will have no net impact on our bottom line. We're going to continue to do that because that's what Albertans expect.

Mr. Fildebrandt: The NDP say "reinvest taxes" like United means "reaccommode passengers."

Given, Mr. Speaker, that just because a tax is dedicated to a specific expenditure doesn't mean it doesn't count as spending – we spend money raised from the alcohol tax, the tobacco tax, and the lottery fund, and all of these count as operational spending – and given that when asked today why spending from the carbon tax doesn't count on their books, the minister said that it's "just this one," why?

The Speaker: Hon. members, I need to remind you again. I'm very patient, very generous with the opportunities. I do want to tell you that when you're asking questions, though, you might want to listen to some of your peers as to what is a preamble and what is not.

Let us go to the answer to the question. The Minister of Finance.

Mr. Ceci: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, this is the first full year of the climate leadership revenue and expenditure.

Making year-over-year comparisons would not provide an accurate picture with regard to the changes in our operating expenses. We will do that going forward in the '18-19 year.

Mr. Fildebrandt: This minister could dance around a question like *Dancing with the Stars*.

The Speaker: That's a preamble.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Given, Mr. Speaker, that if I had a nickel for every time the minister didn't answer the question I asked him, I could balance the budget, but given – let's try again – that if a tree falls in a forest and no one hears it, did it really fall? Or . . .

Mr. Mason: Point of order.

The Speaker: I've got a point of order.

Mr. Ceci: Mr. Speaker, I'm incredibly proud of the budget we have laid before Albertans. Working to make life better for Albertans is what we have committed to do. We're doing that by ensuring that operating expenses for programs and services like health care, education, and social services remain strong. This is the first full year of the climate leadership revenue and expenditures, and going forward, we will include those in our budget fully.

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

Agency, Board, and Commission Appointments

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Institute of Corporate Directors, or ICD, is Canada's leading organization for fostering excellence in corporate governance. Graduates of ICD's director education program include high-ranking Alberta officials such as the Auditor General, the Ethics Commissioner, and the deputy ministers of Environment and Parks and Status of Women. Now, one would think that being an ICD graduate would be a huge benefit to any board, but apparently this NDP government does not. To the Premier: can you confirm that ICD graduates are no longer being considered for appointment to the boards of Alberta agencies, boards, and commissions?

Ms Hoffman: No, I can't, Mr. Speaker, because that is not indeed a fact. But what I can confirm is that it shouldn't be a course that costs in excess of \$10,000 for you to even be considered to serve your province. So while we are very pleased to receive applications from people who do have the ICD credential, we are opening the application process to all Albertans. We're posting them publicly, and we're proud to do so.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's certainly not what ICD graduates have been telling us.

Given that the ICD director education program is recognized world-wide as the leader in delivering competence in board governance and given that improved board governance is surely something that the NDP wants to see in all of Alberta's agencies, boards, and commissions and given that many ICD graduates have been told that they should either not apply for board reappointment or not disclose that they are ICD graduates in their application to government boards, to the Premier. Cabinet makes dozens of appointments. How many ICD graduates have you appointed to Alberta's boards, agencies, and commissions?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.
The Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We're certainly happy to receive applications from all Albertans. One of the things that we reviewed in the past was that sometimes having an ICD credential was listed explicitly to ensure that other Albertans who didn't have \$10,000 that they could afford to put into that course wouldn't even be eligible to put their names forward. While we're very happy to receive applications from people who do have ICD credentials, they're not the only people who are welcome to serve Albertans, to be part of our agencies, boards, and commissions. We encourage all Albertans to please look at the website. There are many postings available right now, and we want them to put their names forward.

Dr. Starke: Mr. Speaker, given that this NDP government has made it clear that it wants wholesale changes in the governance boards of Alberta's agencies, boards, and commissions and given that many current board members are being told not to reapply but are not being told why and given that board vacancies are being filled using methods that are certainly far removed from the universally accepted practice of analyzing gaps in competency matrices, to the Premier: which affiliation is best for Albertans applying to the BODs of the ABCs, ICD or NDP?

2:20

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the fun question coming from the former member of the most secretive government in Canada. Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the fact that we have an open and transparent process. All of the applications are posted on our website. We are happy to receive applications from all experienced applicants, including people who've been involved in any party represented in this House or otherwise. We want Albertans to step forward, be part of the process, be part of making life better for all Albertans, and we are happy to welcome all applicants to the process of serving their government.

The Speaker: Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

Health Quality Council of Alberta

Mr. Yao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently we learned that the Health Quality Council of Alberta has received very few requests from this NDP government. The state of our health care in Alberta is inconsistent. We see significantly higher rates of C. difficile contamination in Edmonton hospitals. Hip surgeries are 19 weeks slower in Red Deer than in Edmonton, and as an urgent patient you wait over an hour longer to see an ER doctor in St. Albert than you will in Medicine Hat. To the Minister of Health: why doesn't your government ask the HQCA to investigate these discrepancies and identify solutions?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. We're very proud to have the Health Quality Council of Alberta and to put them to work in a number of very key areas of focus. For example, in the past few years HQCA has done work to support us in a co-ordinated fashion with the implementation of medical assistance in dying, a huge public policy initiative that we're very proud to have their support on; worked to review lab services, that play a key part in the development of our overall provincial framework; developed the website FOCUS, which has updates on emergency departments. We are proud to have them working in partnership with us, and we'll continue to do so.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, we've also learned that the Health Quality Council has decided to eliminate a patient satisfaction survey. Given that within AHS there are major departments called community engagement and communications, another one called community engagement, operational best practices, quality and patient safety, and so on, and so on, again to the Minister of Health: was this survey removed due to all the unnecessary overlap between AHS, Alberta Health, and the Health Quality Council, or is the state of our health care system so bad that you had to do away with this independent quality measure?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much for the question. I'm having a little déjà vu to estimates because I believe the member at estimates was asking me to cut a number of initiatives that were taking place in other areas because he thought they were redundant. Mr. Speaker, this isn't a proposal that we brought forward. The Health Quality Council thought that they had ample information in this area, and they were happy to work with partners to continue to update that information. But we look at their expertise, and on occasion we do call them to do specific work for us in areas of research, including the support we had on medical assistance in dying.

Mr. Yao: Mr. Speaker, in this most recent budget this NDP government increased the budget for the Health Quality Council. Interestingly enough, the Health Quality Council stated that they have current capacity to do more and they've had fewer requests for its services from Alberta Health Services and this NDP government. To the Minister of Health. Can you please clarify: despite giving them fewer requests and the Health Quality Council indicating that they can do so much more and multiple departments within AHS and Alberta Health providing similar roles, why did you increase their budget?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. It's my understanding that they requested two additional staff to support them in meeting some of the timelines that they were struggling with. One of the reasons why we are making sure that we have this is to make sure that we have open, upfront work done. For example, they're continuing to do work on continuity of patient care, surveys of families in long-term care on their experience, and gathering physician participation, that was brought alongside to help expand the physician panel work on the provincial scale. We're proud of the work that they're doing, and we're continuing to work in partnership to make sure that Alberta's health care system is the best it possibly can be instead of deep . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The hon. Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Employment and Labour Code Consultations (continued)

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again this NDP government has found itself in trouble for not consulting before it bulldozes ahead with ideological legislation. Today Alberta's opposition parties stood on stage with Alberta's business community and called on the government to extend its consultation process on upcoming labour legislation changes, citing a severe lack of engagement. This government has committed in the past to raising the bar for transparency and engagement. Will the minister

listen to business, work with the opposition, and extend and enhance the consultation process?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In a tough economy hard-working Albertans deserve a government that makes life better. Alberta has changed a lot. With labour codes that were enacted in 1988, we have a responsibility to ensure that our employment and labour practices are fair and balanced for all Albertans. We have ensured that we have engaged all stakeholders through this process, including members of the CFIB and chambers who are part of our round-tables, as well as received over a thousand submissions from employers. I look forward to reviewing those results.

Thank you.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, given that this NDP government has given Andy Sims, the hand-picked union lawyer tasked with completing a review of labour relations changes, no deadline for completing his report and given that it would be foolhardy and ideological to move ahead with sweeping labour changes without at least having this report in hand, is the minister going to give Mr. Sims ample time to write this report and make it public before making any changes to Alberta's labour relations legislation? Yes or no?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Gray: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Being disrespectful does not become the member opposite. Mr. Andrew Sims is one of the most experienced and respected labour lawyers in our province. He has a deep understanding of labour law. He was used in consultations by the previous government. He is a former chair of the Labour Relations Board. I am very honoured to have his expertise at my disposal for this important review so that we can make sure we have fair and balanced workplace legislation for all Albertans.

Mr. van Dijken: Mr. Speaker, given that in estimates I asked the minister if she would consider enacting an all-party committee to discuss any potential labour legislation changes, to which she replied, "Thank you for the suggestion," and given most Albertans would agree that an all-party committee would meet a higher bar for transparency and engagement, will the government initiate an all-party committee to ensure that a wide variety of expert voices are heard on this critical issue?

Ms Gray: Mr. Speaker, it seems like only tomorrow, but did you know it was 1988 when the band Guns N' Roses released their hit single *Sweet Child o' Mine*? Speaking of children, did you know that Alberta women have to work far longer than women in any other jurisdiction before they qualify for and can claim maternity leave? Alberta's labour laws have not been revised since we first heard Slash's guitar solo, and while that amazing solo has stood the test of time, our labour laws have not. We will continue to work with stakeholders to make sure we have fair and balanced workplace legislation that serves all Albertans.

The Speaker: I have some eight-tracks of those.
The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Applied Research and Forage Associations

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's agriculture associations are a key part of the agricultural industry. They develop partnerships with municipal and industry sources to enhance the work of ag producers through collaboration and

innovation. The applied research they create through these partnerships is used to enhance profitability, sustainability, and responsible stewardship of the land as well as to contribute to rural development across Alberta. To the minister of agriculture: do you support the work of Alberta's applied research and forage associations?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of agriculture.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I absolutely support research. Any kind of research done in agriculture can only benefit our producers, our farming community, and agricultural industry right across the province. It's important that all players in the field there contribute to research. Agriculture in this country and, as a matter of fact, world-wide has advanced because of that research, and we'll continue to support it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that these groups do much of the extension work for the agricultural industry and given that these groups are working hard to enhance agricultural practices through research and innovation and given that Alberta agriculture relies on these groups to do extension work to enhance the work of ag producers, to the minister: what benefit do these groups have for Alberta's agricultural industry as a whole?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. As I said in my previous answer, any research within agriculture is beneficial and crucial to the advancement of agriculture, as it always has been. Canada and Alberta, in particular, have had some great success stories over the years, applying that research directly into the field and continue to do so. The province of Alberta has had some great successes around research. Crop Diversification Centre North and Crop Diversification Centre South do great work, as just some examples. As producers do some more research themselves, it can only advance Albertans, as this government does, to make sure that all Albertans benefit.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Second supplemental.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that there are 12 applied research and forage associations that receive funding through the agriculture opportunities fund and given that these groups partner with others to expand the AOF funding they receive and given that the extension work they do would not be possible without the AOF funding, to the minister: will you commit to stable funding for these applied research and forage associations?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Research in agriculture, as I said before, is crucial to advancement. There have been some great projects, great programs by a lot of the commissions, whether it's canola, wheat. Forage has had some great projects, some great plans for their future to advance their industry for the advancement of their own producers here in the province and for those buyers of their products right across the nation, across the globe. This government is particularly proud of making Alberta farmers' lives better.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Postsecondary Education Funding

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For many years postsecondary institutions have been severely underfunded, which has led to a buildup of significant deferred maintenance liabilities. Given that this lack of adequate funding by the previous government has resulted in much fixing up being needed, to the Minister of Advanced Education: what is this government doing to address these issues at the University of Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the hon. member for the question. In a tough economy we're working to make life better for Albertans looking to return to school to upgrade their skills, and a crucial part of that is making sure that we have the facilities on campus to deliver a world-class education. We've heard from students and from our institutions that the previous government did leave a significant deferred maintenance liability, and it's one that our government is committed to addressing. That's why Budget 2017 provides \$154 million for maintenance and repair work and identifies \$676 million over the next four years at our postsecondary institutions.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta is home to world-class postsecondary institutions which are in dire need of repairs due to previous government inaction, to the same minister: what other investments is the minister making in our postsecondary institutions across the province? [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear the members opposite decrying the lack of toughness in the question. However, they didn't make those investments, that our government is making, for 44 years. I'm quite proud of the fact that we're investing \$451 million in new and continuing capital projects, including two major renewals of existing facilities at our two largest universities. The University of Alberta will get the new dentistry and pharmacy restoration, and in Calgary we're committed to redeveloping and renovating the MacKimmie complex, which will create more than 500 new spaces for students at that university.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that well-maintained facilities are crucial to all of our postsecondary institutions but students require many more supports than that, to the same minister: what else is the government doing to support our students?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. We're committed to making sure that Alberta students are able to access affordable, high-quality education on campuses all across the province. We proudly announced in this budget that we've extended the tuition freeze for a third year, and we've been consulting with students on the creation of a long-term framework for tuition. We've also allocated \$3.6 million for mental health supports. This is a continuation of previous funding. After the completion of the pilot project, we're looking forward to rolling out a long-term strategy and funding for student mental health. We've

been working with our colleagues at the Ministry of Health to be able to deliver this important program supporting students.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Air Ambulance Service in Southern Alberta

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just as southern Alberta's ground ambulance dispatch was centralized to Calgary, diverting rural ambulances to do Calgary's day-to-day work, so too goes southern Alberta's fixed-wing medevac service. The recent award of the medevac contract has southern Alberta fearing that medevac services will be pulled from southern Alberta airports and centralized in Calgary, resulting in longer transfer times. Can the Minister of Health confirm or deny that southern Alberta's medevacs are being consolidated to Calgary?

Ms Hoffman: That's not true, Mr. Speaker. They are not.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that there is no hangar space in Medicine Hat, affecting the ability of the new medevac provider to set up base, and given that it will take time to set up new facilities to originate medevacs from these cities for the critical health care that southern Albertans need, what assurances can the minister give that if the medevac operator cannot establish bases in southern Alberta in a timely fashion, this service will not be impacted and consolidated to a busy and congested Alberta international airport?

Ms Hoffman: I hope that the member heard the answer to the first question. The scope of the contract that went out for RFP was to continue to have those local services provided locally. So, Mr. Speaker, that's the contract that was bid on. They certainly have an opportunity to fulfill their end of the contract, as the person who was successful in that application. He's asking hearsay questions or theoretical questions. All I can tell you is that the intent and the plan is and will continue to be to have those air ambulances housed locally.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, we have heard these kinds of answers before, and they proved false.

Can the minister assure this House that if the awarded company is not able to establish the bases or have the new aircraft delivered in time, the contract will be retendered so that companies who have the ability to fulfill these obligations are able to vie for the work?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently in a grade 6 class they asked me about fake news, and now I'm hearing some fake questions. I have to say that we are committed to making sure that we're moving forward in an open and transparent way. There is an appeal process, I believe, under way. But everything is going to continue to be done locally, as the tender laid out.

Emergency Medical Services Funding

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, the members of this House will be familiar with the term "shell game," where skilled hands working at a furious pace attempt to confuse the observer. We all know that game and how it applies to the art of government budgeting. Now, I'm sure the government is waiting for a zinger or a gotcha-politics question, but I believe that in this case it's the government that's being deceived. To the Minister of Health. I'm speaking to you as a paramedic, embedded in that community with experience. You don't honestly believe that once you pay off an ambulance, you can

cut the EMS budget for the cost of that ambulance, do you? Please answer carefully because paramedics are watching.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. It's clear that it is coming from a paramedic, not a conservative, because the conservatives of both parties have pushed for billions of dollars of cuts. While we are working with AHS to make sure that they continue to protect and support the front lines, we've made it very clear that we want to see their budget held harmless, and we've done so by arranging a meeting, that I was happy to facilitate, between paramedic representatives as well as with AHS, and that message was delivered very clearly. We're going to continue to support our front-line workers who every day work to support Albertans.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, given that the Health Sciences Association of Alberta president, who is also a paramedic, has denounced this budget cut and given that EMS is already underfunded to the tune of \$20 million necessary to make a greater contribution to the health care system here in Alberta and given that this is over and above the \$17 million that you in the Health department are going to cut, to the same minister: Minister, do you realize that in order for AHS, EMS not to cut front-line services, you need to restore the \$17 million? Will you do that?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you for the question from the member, who does rightfully refer to the fact that the president of the HSAA is a paramedic. Mr. Speaker, the president with the HSAA sat down in a meeting with myself and the president of Alberta Health Services, and we articulated very clearly that we expect to maintain those front-line services, that it will be done by ensuring that we protect front-line workers and making sure that they have the resources that they require. We're waiting to see the AHS proposal for their budget, and when it is received, it will be posted publicly, and paramedics will be able to see that AHS is fulfilling their commitments that were made during that meeting.

2:40

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that you have said time and time again that your government will invest in the most crucial of front-line services and given that there is a fentanyl crisis, a rise in posttraumatic stress syndrome, call volumes on the rise, the seriousness of calls on the rise, increasing hospital waits that are killing the morale of paramedics, Minister, I implore you to revisit this cut to front-line services.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I'm very proud of the work that our paramedics do each and every day. I was proud to visit a number of them just last weekend here in Edmonton. I have to say that the work they do is crucially important to saving lives across Alberta. That's one of the reasons why we had this conversation, a face-to-face opportunity to have discussions with Alberta Health Services. They have also communicated with HSAA that they're going to make sure that they hold harmless the front lines. We're going to make sure that we protect them. I'm glad that the member opposite is standing up for paramedics. I hope that he will stand up for all Albertans because his party certainly is pushing for a far more drastic reality than the one that he is arguing for.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Condominium Property Act

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans throughout the province, including many of my constituents of Edmonton-McClung, are buying new condominiums. Buyers of condos must provide a significant cash deposit toward a unit before it's actually completed. To the Minister of Service Alberta: how will changes to the Condominium Property Act protect these customers and ensure that they get the unit that they pay for?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for his question. This government cares about everyday Albertans, and we believe that Albertans deserve to be protected, especially when making a large purchase as important as a home. That's why the amendments to the Condominium Property Act will ensure that anyone holding a purchase deposit in trust is subject to specific rules and held to high standards. The act will also ensure that homebuyers have options if developers make any changes to units between the time that they are bought and the time they are actually being built.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that there may be years between the day the purchase agreement is signed and the construction of the actual unit, to the same minister: how will the government make sure that purchasers ultimately get the unit they were promised?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The act makes it clear that the developer must notify the buyer whenever there is a material change to the homebuyer's unit. Where a change happens, homebuyers will have clear notice and the ability to take action if needed. Since taking office, we began exploring and implementing ways to expedite developing these new rules. This is just one example of how we're taking action and making life more affordable for Albertans.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, given that purchasers' deposit monies may be held in trust for a long period of time, to the same minister: what is the government doing to ensure that those funds are safeguarded?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We heard from Albertans, loud and clear, that when a developer does not finish on time, buyers ought to have the option to cancel the agreement and get their deposits back. The act makes it clear that all purchase money will be held by a specific trustee. Work is currently under way to develop regulations to set requirements for these trustees. Once these rules are in place, Albertans will be able to take comfort, knowing that their purchase deposits are safe and subject to regulatory standards.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thirty seconds for members to leave the House.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Energy Industry Jobs

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville asked a question to the Labour minister regarding the federal government's decision to close the immigration case processing centre in Vegreville. They both cited concerns about the loss of jobs, loss of students, and the impact to the local economy. I, too, am very concerned about this closure, and I have written to the federal minister of immigration, as have my local MP and many of my colleagues. Closing this centre will definitely have an impact on Vegreville and the surrounding area, much like the coal generation shutdowns have a devastating effect on communities like Hanna and Forestburg. Unlike my colleagues on the government side, we are concerned about all Alberta jobs.

Unfortunately, what we see is that governments often have their minds made up, either for political reasons or ideology, long before announcements are made. Why don't the government members concentrate on saving Alberta jobs they can actually do something about by stopping the attacks on our coal industry? I wonder if either of the members has advocated for the people in Hanna, Forestburg, or any of the other communities that will be affected by their own ideological policies, or are they just poor-policy deniers?

Fort Saskatchewan is a huge industrial economy here in Alberta, heavily dependent on pipelines and continued development in the oil and gas industry. I wonder if their local MLA has discussed the implications of the Leap Manifesto with local industry leaders and their workers.

We are seeing in the election to the west that the Leap Manifesto line dance is alive and well within the NDP even though our local NDP government pretends not to know the steps. This government as well as its dance partners to the west and federally need to come clean with Albertans on what their actual intentions are. Albertans know exactly how this group actually feels about pipelines and our oil and gas industry. It's not much of a leap unless, of course, you're a poor-policy denier.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today, both from companies who feel they have not had adequate time or access to the consultation process around the changes to labour legislation. One is Mustang Well Services Ltd. from Calgary, and the other is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to table eight letters from different organizations also calling for an extension and enhancement of a more robust consultation process with respect to labour and employment legislation. I have those from George Goldhoff, president and CEO of Pure Canadian Gaming; Rod Rundell, general manager of Chinook Drilling; John Voorhorst, C.V. Benefits Inc.; John Yates, director of IT for Pure Canadian Gaming . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, that information is in the report?

Mr. Gotfried: I'm tabling these.

The Speaker: How many more names are there?

Mr. Gotfried: . . . Sandra Legere, VP of human resources, Pure Canadian Gaming; Maaiké Ezinga, vice-president, human resources, Trico Group of Companies; and Mark von Schellwitz . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I think we got the substance. Pass it around. Let's go. We're done, okay?

Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter from the Sylvan Lake Chamber of Commerce with regard to the workplace legislation review and their concern that they were not properly informed and engaged with regard to the review. I have the five copies available.

I also have a letter from Hurley Well Service, county of Grande Prairie, with regard to employment standards and Labour Relations Code review. They are concerned that they were not properly engaged in the review process.

I have a letter here from Pure Canadian Gaming. This letter, actually CCed to me, was sent to the Hon. Christina Gray, Minister of Labour, with concerns over the labour legislation review. That's come from Jeff Craik, general manager, Casino Edmonton.

I have another letter from Pure Canadian Gaming with the same concerns. The minister has this letter; it was sent to her. It's from Tony Chen, executive manager of business development.

My last tabling today, Mr. Speaker, is from Pure Canadian Gaming. It is a letter with regard to the workplace legislation review and their concerns that there was not proper consultation done. This is from Vince Pao, executive director of marketing, Pure Canadian Gaming.

Thank you.

2:50

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today to offer five copies of letters from constituents who are opposed to, as they say, the NDP slamming through workplace legislation and are pleading with the government to slow down and truly consult with real Alberta stakeholders to ensure that the Alberta labour code truly reflects their reality's past, present, and future. Now, there are 41 different constituents who wrote in. Would you like me to read each of their names?

The Speaker: No, I sure would not.

Mr. Rodney: They sure would like their names to be known. I'll be happy to table them instead, and you can all read them for yourselves.

The Speaker: Thank you. [interjections] Quiet.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter from a friend of mine, Mr. Pak Wong, who operates a hotel and a restaurant in nearby Provost, Alberta. He employs 26 people, and he, too, has concerns over the lack of consultation regarding the labour relations act.

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

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table five copies of a letter I wrote on March 9 to the hon. Government House Leader quoting what the Premier said on the 20th of April, including that the "Alberta NDP policy is to replace the Public Affairs Bureau with a smaller group of communications professionals."

The Speaker: Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter here addressed to the Minister of Labour from the Pacific Western Group of Companies, who employs 3,500 employees just in Alberta. They're very concerned about the time they need for better consultation, so they're asking them to consider their request to extend the time with regard to the workplace legislation review. I have the requisite copies.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, I believe that we have one point of order today. The Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Preambles to Supplementary Questions

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rose today during question period, during, I believe, the second supplemental of a question from the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks. I didn't write it all down, but I got a fraction of it that will give the sense of it. The hon. member used "given" and then proceeded into an unrelated speech, which included "if a tree falls in a forest." You know that saying.

Now, you've ruled on this before, Mr. Speaker. "Given" is permitted and does not constitute a preamble if you're stating some premise for the question that follows or some fact upon which the question is based. Otherwise, I would ask that you rule that it's an inappropriate use and simply an attempt to get around the rule against preambles on supplementary questions.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, on April 6 in *Hansard* on page 549 you cautioned the same member: "Hon. member, I would respectfully ask that you contain the preambles. In fact, you already know that's not accepted, so please ask your question without the preamble. Please proceed." The hon. member is quite aware of this issue.

Now, *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, sixth edition, citation 410(8) says, "Preambles to questions should be brief and supplementary questions require no preambles. Supplementary questions should flow from the answers of Ministers."

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, 2009, says:

The same guidelines which apply to initial questions apply to supplementary questions. They are to be constructed as "a follow-up device flowing from the response and ought to be a precise question put directly and immediately to the Minister, without any further statement."

Mr. Speaker, in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* under principles and guidelines for oral questions it states, from Speaker Jerome in 1975, that:

Speaker Bosley elaborated further . . .

And he's talking about brevity.

There can be no doubt that the greatest enemy of the Question Period is the Member who offends this most important principle. In putting the original question on any subject, a Member may require an explanatory remark, but there is no reason for such a preamble to exceed one, carefully drawn sentence.

And, Mr. Speaker, to quote another Speaker of note, on page 472 of *Alberta Hansard* the Deputy Speaker – I'm sorry; I thought it was you – said:

I would like to offer a little bit of clarification, however, on preambles with the use of "given." It doesn't give you blanket permission to just string together a bunch of unrelated comments simply because you've said "given" in between them. I'd encourage you, hon. members, to please keep your supplementals relevant to the first question.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the use of "given" is something that I'm very familiar with in this House, but it is based upon a premise for the supplemental question and is not simply something that you can say and then go on with some unrelated speech. So I would ask that you rule that in the future the rule against preambles ought not be circumvented in this way.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to the point of order this afternoon. I'd like to thank the Government House Leader for providing some context, which I believe made the case for the Member for Strathmore-Brooks. The Member for Strathmore-Brooks very specifically today asked three questions with respect to the use of a particular accounting tool that the government is using, some would suggest, to not provide all of the facts to Albertans. The Member for Strathmore-Brooks was merely highlighting that fact. I know that you have provided some feedback to the member inside this Chamber, and I also know that the member is efforting to ensure that he, too, is using the tools that are at the disposal of the opposition in the form of the use of "given" in our desire and ability to put together information that is reasonable and required for the question.

In many respects I think that this particular point of order has more to do with the opposition's ability to ask questions than it has to do with the preamble rule. There has been significant debate around this Chamber over a long period of time about whether or not this rule was an effective rule to keep order inside the Chamber. Again today we're seeing that it hasn't been but that, for whatever reason, there's a reluctance on behalf of the Government House Leader to review some of these challenges. I'm a little bit surprised because when in opposition, the Government House Leader was a master at utilizing the tools that were available to the opposition just as this opposition endeavours to do. So today for the Government House Leader to say that the Member for Strathmore-Brooks was just using the word "given" to put a few sentences together isn't close to the facts. My colleague in the opposition was utilizing a couple of analogies that are very important and useful to getting the point that he was making across, and that's exactly what happened.

3:00

Also today in the Chamber, with all due respect to my hon. colleague for Vermilion-Lloydminster, he also utilized some of these tools when it came to a quip that he utilized prior to his question, which is significantly different than a preamble, Mr. Speaker. The quip that he used, my colleague from the third party, was that that's not what the ICD graduates are saying. At that point in time you had no desire to interject about preambles because quips have been used as a tool to ensure that we can respond to what the minister has said just like the use of the word "given" or "since."

In this case my colleague used multiple givens in both supplementals. They were both on topic with respect to the same question, that the Finance minister was utilizing this very unique budgeting technique.

While I appreciate that these preambles sometimes – and I know that the Government House Leader mentioned that he would be brief; however, he wasn't. This tool is a very, very, very important tool that the opposition uses and will likely need to continue to use.

The Speaker: I'm not sure that I entirely agree with the Government House Leader with respect to the use of the word "given" because in my experience here in the last two years, that seems to have been a practice that's been accepted. By the way, I think you used the word "desire."

I, too, heard the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster make that quip, as you called it, but I decided in my patience and desire for protection of freedom of speech to not correct him. It is the freedom of speech question that we are speaking about here. Once you begin to erode that, it seems to me that we may be eroding the reason for this place.

Notwithstanding that, to the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks: we've discussed this several times today. I did hear it, and for the record this is what was said:

Given, Mr. Speaker, that if I had a nickel for every time the minister didn't answer the question I asked him, I could balance

the budget, but given – let's try again – that if a tree falls in a forest and no one hears it, did it really fall?

I'm finding that "given," in fact, is not the kind of comment that would help answer your initial question.

In this particular instance I was not going to rule because I was hoping that this may change through experience, because there are many masters – and maybe someone in the back there would be an example of that – who are very good at that. In this particular instance I have to agree. There was a point of order, and I urge you, hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, to hone your skills a little bit more with respect to using givens that are tied to the initial question.

Hon. members, the daily Routine is now concluded. The legislative policy committee will convene this afternoon and tomorrow morning for consideration of the main estimates. Alberta's Economic Future Committee will consider the estimates for Education in the Rocky Mountain Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:04 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]

Table of Contents

Prayers.....	643
Introduction of Guests	643
Members' Statements	
Reynolds-Alberta Museum.....	644
Conservatism.....	644
Emergency Medical Services Funding	644
Daffodil Month.....	645
Easter.....	645
Energy Industry Jobs	654
Oral Question Period	
Employment and Labour Code Consultations	645, 650
Interprovincial Relations	646
Marijuana Legalization.....	647
Labour Relations Code Review	647
Poverty Reduction Strategy	648
Educational Curriculum Redesign Arabic Language Educational Curricula.....	648
Carbon Levy Revenue Utilization	649
Agency, Board, and Commission Appointments.....	649
Health Quality Council of Alberta.....	650
Applied Research and Forage Associations.....	651
Postsecondary Education Funding.....	652
Air Ambulance Service in Southern Alberta	652
Emergency Medical Services Funding	652
Condominium Property Act.....	653
Energy Industry Jobs	654
Tabling Returns and Reports	654

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

Postsecondary Education Funding

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For many years postsecondary institutions have been severely underfunded, which has led to a buildup of significant deferred maintenance liabilities. Given that this lack of adequate funding by the previous government has resulted in much fixing up being needed, to the Minister of Advanced Education: what is this government doing to address these issues at the University of Alberta?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the hon. member for the question. In a tough economy we're working to make life better for Albertans looking to return to school to upgrade their skills, and a crucial part of that is making sure that we have the facilities on campus to deliver a world-class education. We've heard from students and from our institutions that the previous government did leave a significant deferred maintenance liability, and it's one that our government is committed to addressing. That's why Budget 2017 provides \$154 million for maintenance and repair work and identifies \$676 million over the next four years at our postsecondary institutions.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that Alberta is home to world-class postsecondary institutions which are in dire need of repairs due to previous government inaction, to the same minister: what other investments is the minister making in our postsecondary institutions across the province? [interjections]

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear the members opposite decrying the lack of toughness in the question. However, they didn't make those investments, that our government is making, for 44 years. I'm quite proud of the fact that we're investing \$451 million in new and continuing capital projects, including two major renewals of existing facilities at our two largest universities. The University of Alberta will get the new dentistry and pharmacy restoration, and in Calgary we're committed to redeveloping and renovating the MacKimmie complex, which will create more than 500 new spaces for students at that university.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Ms Woollard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that well-maintained facilities are crucial to all of our postsecondary institutions but students require many more supports than that, to the same minister: what else is the government doing to support our students?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Schmidt: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. We're committed to making sure that Alberta students are able to access affordable, high-quality education on campuses all across the province. We proudly announced in this budget that we've extended the tuition freeze for a third year, and we've been consulting with students on the creation of a long-term framework for tuition. We've also allocated \$3.6 million for mental health supports. This is a continuation of previous funding. After the completion of the pilot project, we're looking forward to rolling out a long-term strategy and funding for student mental health. We've

been working with our colleagues at the Ministry of Health to be able to deliver this important program supporting students.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

The Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Air Ambulance Service in Southern Alberta

Mr. Hunter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just as southern Alberta's ground ambulance dispatch was centralized to Calgary, diverting rural ambulances to do Calgary's day-to-day work, so too goes southern Alberta's fixed-wing medevac service. The recent award of the medevac contract has southern Alberta fearing that medevac services will be pulled from southern Alberta airports and centralized in Calgary, resulting in longer transfer times. Can the Minister of Health confirm or deny that southern Alberta's medevacs are being consolidated to Calgary?

Ms Hoffman: That's not true, Mr. Speaker. They are not.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, given that there is no hangar space in Medicine Hat, affecting the ability of the new medevac provider to set up base, and given that it will take time to set up new facilities to originate medevacs from these cities for the critical health care that southern Albertans need, what assurances can the minister give that if the medevac operator cannot establish bases in southern Alberta in a timely fashion, this service will not be impacted and consolidated to a busy and congested Alberta international airport?

Ms Hoffman: I hope that the member heard the answer to the first question. The scope of the contract that went out for RFP was to continue to have those local services provided locally. So, Mr. Speaker, that's the contract that was bid on. They certainly have an opportunity to fulfill their end of the contract, as the person who was successful in that application. He's asking hearsay questions or theoretical questions. All I can tell you is that the intent and the plan is and will continue to be to have those air ambulances housed locally.

Mr. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, we have heard these kinds of answers before, and they proved false.

Can the minister assure this House that if the awarded company is not able to establish the bases or have the new aircraft delivered in time, the contract will be retendered so that companies who have the ability to fulfill these obligations are able to vie for the work?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently in a grade 6 class they asked me about fake news, and now I'm hearing some fake questions. I have to say that we are committed to making sure that we're moving forward in an open and transparent way. There is an appeal process, I believe, under way. But everything is going to continue to be done locally, as the tender laid out.

Emergency Medical Services Funding

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, the members of this House will be familiar with the term "shell game," where skilled hands working at a furious pace attempt to confuse the observer. We all know that game and how it applies to the art of government budgeting. Now, I'm sure the government is waiting for a zinger or a gotcha-politics question, but I believe that in this case it's the government that's being deceived. To the Minister of Health. I'm speaking to you as a paramedic, embedded in that community with experience. You don't honestly believe that once you pay off an ambulance, you can

cut the EMS budget for the cost of that ambulance, do you? Please answer carefully because paramedics are watching.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. It's clear that it is coming from a paramedic, not a conservative, because the conservatives of both parties have pushed for billions of dollars of cuts. While we are working with AHS to make sure that they continue to protect and support the front lines, we've made it very clear that we want to see their budget held harmless, and we've done so by arranging a meeting, that I was happy to facilitate, between paramedic representatives as well as with AHS, and that message was delivered very clearly. We're going to continue to support our front-line workers who every day work to support Albertans.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, given that the Health Sciences Association of Alberta president, who is also a paramedic, has denounced this budget cut and given that EMS is already underfunded to the tune of \$20 million necessary to make a greater contribution to the health care system here in Alberta and given that this is over and above the \$17 million that you in the Health department are going to cut, to the same minister: Minister, do you realize that in order for AHS, EMS not to cut front-line services, you need to restore the \$17 million? Will you do that?

Ms Hoffman: Thank you for the question from the member, who does rightfully refer to the fact that the president of the HSAA is a paramedic. Mr. Speaker, the president with the HSAA sat down in a meeting with myself and the president of Alberta Health Services, and we articulated very clearly that we expect to maintain those front-line services, that it will be done by ensuring that we protect front-line workers and making sure that they have the resources that they require. We're waiting to see the AHS proposal for their budget, and when it is received, it will be posted publicly, and paramedics will be able to see that AHS is fulfilling their commitments that were made during that meeting.

2:40

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that you have said time and time again that your government will invest in the most crucial of front-line services and given that there is a fentanyl crisis, a rise in posttraumatic stress syndrome, call volumes on the rise, the seriousness of calls on the rise, increasing hospital waits that are killing the morale of paramedics, Minister, I implore you to revisit this cut to front-line services.

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I'm very proud of the work that our paramedics do each and every day. I was proud to visit a number of them just last weekend here in Edmonton. I have to say that the work they do is crucially important to saving lives across Alberta. That's one of the reasons why we had this conversation, a face-to-face opportunity to have discussions with Alberta Health Services. They have also communicated with HSAA that they're going to make sure that they hold harmless the front lines. We're going to make sure that we protect them. I'm glad that the member opposite is standing up for paramedics. I hope that he will stand up for all Albertans because his party certainly is pushing for a far more drastic reality than the one that he is arguing for.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

Condominium Property Act

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Albertans throughout the province, including many of my constituents of Edmonton-McClung, are buying new condominiums. Buyers of condos must provide a significant cash deposit toward a unit before it's actually completed. To the Minister of Service Alberta: how will changes to the Condominium Property Act protect these customers and ensure that they get the unit that they pay for?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for his question. This government cares about everyday Albertans, and we believe that Albertans deserve to be protected, especially when making a large purchase as important as a home. That's why the amendments to the Condominium Property Act will ensure that anyone holding a purchase deposit in trust is subject to specific rules and held to high standards. The act will also ensure that homebuyers have options if developers make any changes to units between the time that they are bought and the time they are actually being built.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that there may be years between the day the purchase agreement is signed and the construction of the actual unit, to the same minister: how will the government make sure that purchasers ultimately get the unit they were promised?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The act makes it clear that the developer must notify the buyer whenever there is a material change to the homebuyer's unit. Where a change happens, homebuyers will have clear notice and the ability to take action if needed. Since taking office, we began exploring and implementing ways to expedite developing these new rules. This is just one example of how we're taking action and making life more affordable for Albertans.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, given that purchasers' deposit monies may be held in trust for a long period of time, to the same minister: what is the government doing to ensure that those funds are safeguarded?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We heard from Albertans, loud and clear, that when a developer does not finish on time, buyers ought to have the option to cancel the agreement and get their deposits back. The act makes it clear that all purchase money will be held by a specific trustee. Work is currently under way to develop regulations to set requirements for these trustees. Once these rules are in place, Albertans will be able to take comfort, knowing that their purchase deposits are safe and subject to regulatory standards.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thirty seconds for members to leave the House.

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Energy Industry Jobs

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday the Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville asked a question to the Labour minister regarding the federal government's decision to close the immigration case processing centre in Vegreville. They both cited concerns about the loss of jobs, loss of students, and the impact to the local economy. I, too, am very concerned about this closure, and I have written to the federal minister of immigration, as have my local MP and many of my colleagues. Closing this centre will definitely have an impact on Vegreville and the surrounding area, much like the coal generation shutdowns have a devastating effect on communities like Hanna and Forestburg. Unlike my colleagues on the government side, we are concerned about all Alberta jobs.

Unfortunately, what we see is that governments often have their minds made up, either for political reasons or ideology, long before announcements are made. Why don't the government members concentrate on saving Alberta jobs they can actually do something about by stopping the attacks on our coal industry? I wonder if either of the members has advocated for the people in Hanna, Forestburg, or any of the other communities that will be affected by their own ideological policies, or are they just poor-policy deniers?

Fort Saskatchewan is a huge industrial economy here in Alberta, heavily dependent on pipelines and continued development in the oil and gas industry. I wonder if their local MLA has discussed the implications of the Leap Manifesto with local industry leaders and their workers.

We are seeing in the election to the west that the Leap Manifesto line dance is alive and well within the NDP even though our local NDP government pretends not to know the steps. This government as well as its dance partners to the west and federally need to come clean with Albertans on what their actual intentions are. Albertans know exactly how this group actually feels about pipelines and our oil and gas industry. It's not much of a leap unless, of course, you're a poor-policy denier.

Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Dr. Swann: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today, both from companies who feel they have not had adequate time or access to the consultation process around the changes to labour legislation. One is Mustang Well Services Ltd. from Calgary, and the other is the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise today to table eight letters from different organizations also calling for an extension and enhancement of a more robust consultation process with respect to labour and employment legislation. I have those from George Goldhoff, president and CEO of Pure Canadian Gaming; Rod Rundell, general manager of Chinook Drilling; John Voorhorst, C.V. Benefits Inc.; John Yates, director of IT for Pure Canadian Gaming . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, that information is in the report?

Mr. Gotfried: I'm tabling these.

The Speaker: How many more names are there?

Mr. Gotfried: . . . Sandra Legere, VP of human resources, Pure Canadian Gaming; Maaiké Ezinga, vice-president, human resources, Trico Group of Companies; and Mark von Schellwitz . . .

The Speaker: Hon. member, I think we got the substance. Pass it around. Let's go. We're done, okay?

Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter from the Sylvan Lake Chamber of Commerce with regard to the workplace legislation review and their concern that they were not properly informed and engaged with regard to the review. I have the five copies available.

I also have a letter from Hurley Well Service, county of Grande Prairie, with regard to employment standards and Labour Relations Code review. They are concerned that they were not properly engaged in the review process.

I have a letter here from Pure Canadian Gaming. This letter, actually CCed to me, was sent to the Hon. Christina Gray, Minister of Labour, with concerns over the labour legislation review. That's come from Jeff Craik, general manager, Casino Edmonton.

I have another letter from Pure Canadian Gaming with the same concerns. The minister has this letter; it was sent to her. It's from Tony Chen, executive manager of business development.

My last tabling today, Mr. Speaker, is from Pure Canadian Gaming. It is a letter with regard to the workplace legislation review and their concerns that there was not proper consultation done. This is from Vince Pao, executive director of marketing, Pure Canadian Gaming.

Thank you.

2:50

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

Mr. Rodney: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today to offer five copies of letters from constituents who are opposed to, as they say, the NDP slamming through workplace legislation and are pleading with the government to slow down and truly consult with real Alberta stakeholders to ensure that the Alberta labour code truly reflects their reality's past, present, and future. Now, there are 41 different constituents who wrote in. Would you like me to read each of their names?

The Speaker: No, I sure would not.

Mr. Rodney: They sure would like their names to be known. I'll be happy to table them instead, and you can all read them for yourselves.

The Speaker: Thank you. [interjections] Quiet.

The hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler.

Mr. Strankman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a letter from a friend of mine, Mr. Pak Wong, who operates a hotel and a restaurant in nearby Provost, Alberta. He employs 26 people, and he, too, has concerns over the lack of consultation regarding the labour relations act.

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

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table five copies of a letter I wrote on March 9 to the hon. Government House Leader quoting what the Premier said on the 20th of April, including that the "Alberta NDP policy is to replace the Public Affairs Bureau with a smaller group of communications professionals."

The Speaker: Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter here addressed to the Minister of Labour from the Pacific Western Group of Companies, who employs 3,500 employees just in Alberta. They're very concerned about the time they need for better consultation, so they're asking them to consider their request to extend the time with regard to the workplace legislation review. I have the requisite copies.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. members, I believe that we have one point of order today. The Government House Leader.

Point of Order

Preambles to Supplementary Questions

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rose today during question period, during, I believe, the second supplemental of a question from the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks. I didn't write it all down, but I got a fraction of it that will give the sense of it. The hon. member used "given" and then proceeded into an unrelated speech, which included "if a tree falls in a forest." You know that saying.

Now, you've ruled on this before, Mr. Speaker. "Given" is permitted and does not constitute a preamble if you're stating some premise for the question that follows or some fact upon which the question is based. Otherwise, I would ask that you rule that it's an inappropriate use and simply an attempt to get around the rule against preambles on supplementary questions.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, on April 6 in *Hansard* on page 549 you cautioned the same member: "Hon. member, I would respectfully ask that you contain the preambles. In fact, you already know that's not accepted, so please ask your question without the preamble. Please proceed." The hon. member is quite aware of this issue.

Now, *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, sixth edition, citation 410(8) says, "Preambles to questions should be brief and supplementary questions require no preambles. Supplementary questions should flow from the answers of Ministers."

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, 2009, says:

The same guidelines which apply to initial questions apply to supplementary questions. They are to be constructed as "a follow-up device flowing from the response and ought to be a precise question put directly and immediately to the Minister, without any further statement."

Mr. Speaker, in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* under principles and guidelines for oral questions it states, from Speaker Jerome in 1975, that:

Speaker Bosley elaborated further . . .

And he's talking about brevity.

There can be no doubt that the greatest enemy of the Question Period is the Member who offends this most important principle. In putting the original question on any subject, a Member may require an explanatory remark, but there is no reason for such a preamble to exceed one, carefully drawn sentence.

And, Mr. Speaker, to quote another Speaker of note, on page 472 of *Alberta Hansard* the Deputy Speaker – I'm sorry; I thought it was you – said:

I would like to offer a little bit of clarification, however, on preambles with the use of "given." It doesn't give you blanket permission to just string together a bunch of unrelated comments simply because you've said "given" in between them. I'd encourage you, hon. members, to please keep your supplementals relevant to the first question.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the use of "given" is something that I'm very familiar with in this House, but it is based upon a premise for the supplemental question and is not simply something that you can say and then go on with some unrelated speech. So I would ask that you rule that in the future the rule against preambles ought not be circumvented in this way.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Cooper: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to the point of order this afternoon. I'd like to thank the Government House Leader for providing some context, which I believe made the case for the Member for Strathmore-Brooks. The Member for Strathmore-Brooks very specifically today asked three questions with respect to the use of a particular accounting tool that the government is using, some would suggest, to not provide all of the facts to Albertans. The Member for Strathmore-Brooks was merely highlighting that fact. I know that you have provided some feedback to the member inside this Chamber, and I also know that the member is efforting to ensure that he, too, is using the tools that are at the disposal of the opposition in the form of the use of "given" in our desire and ability to put together information that is reasonable and required for the question.

In many respects I think that this particular point of order has more to do with the opposition's ability to ask questions than it has to do with the preamble rule. There has been significant debate around this Chamber over a long period of time about whether or not this rule was an effective rule to keep order inside the Chamber. Again today we're seeing that it hasn't been but that, for whatever reason, there's a reluctance on behalf of the Government House Leader to review some of these challenges. I'm a little bit surprised because when in opposition, the Government House Leader was a master at utilizing the tools that were available to the opposition just as this opposition endeavours to do. So today for the Government House Leader to say that the Member for Strathmore-Brooks was just using the word "given" to put a few sentences together isn't close to the facts. My colleague in the opposition was utilizing a couple of analogies that are very important and useful to getting the point that he was making across, and that's exactly what happened.

3:00

Also today in the Chamber, with all due respect to my hon. colleague for Vermilion-Lloydminster, he also utilized some of these tools when it came to a quip that he utilized prior to his question, which is significantly different than a preamble, Mr. Speaker. The quip that he used, my colleague from the third party, was that that's not what the ICD graduates are saying. At that point in time you had no desire to interject about preambles because quips have been used as a tool to ensure that we can respond to what the minister has said just like the use of the word "given" or "since."

In this case my colleague used multiple givens in both supplementals. They were both on topic with respect to the same question, that the Finance minister was utilizing this very unique budgeting technique.

While I appreciate that these preambles sometimes – and I know that the Government House Leader mentioned that he would be brief; however, he wasn't. This tool is a very, very, very important tool that the opposition uses and will likely need to continue to use.

The Speaker: I'm not sure that I entirely agree with the Government House Leader with respect to the use of the word "given" because in my experience here in the last two years, that seems to have been a practice that's been accepted. By the way, I think you used the word "desire."

I, too, heard the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster make that quip, as you called it, but I decided in my patience and desire for protection of freedom of speech to not correct him. It is the freedom of speech question that we are speaking about here. Once you begin to erode that, it seems to me that we may be eroding the reason for this place.

Notwithstanding that, to the hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks: we've discussed this several times today. I did hear it, and for the record this is what was said:

Given, Mr. Speaker, that if I had a nickel for every time the minister didn't answer the question I asked him, I could balance

the budget, but given – let's try again – that if a tree falls in a forest and no one hears it, did it really fall?

I'm finding that "given," in fact, is not the kind of comment that would help answer your initial question.

In this particular instance I was not going to rule because I was hoping that this may change through experience, because there are many masters – and maybe someone in the back there would be an example of that – who are very good at that. In this particular instance I have to agree. There was a point of order, and I urge you, hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, to hone your skills a little bit more with respect to using givens that are tied to the initial question.

Hon. members, the daily Routine is now concluded. The legislative policy committee will convene this afternoon and tomorrow morning for consideration of the main estimates. Alberta's Economic Future Committee will consider the estimates for Education in the Rocky Mountain Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 3:04 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]

Table of Contents

Prayers	643
Introduction of Guests	643
Members' Statements	
Reynolds-Alberta Museum.....	644
Conservatism.....	644
Emergency Medical Services Funding.....	644
Daffodil Month.....	645
Easter.....	645
Energy Industry Jobs.....	654
Oral Question Period	
Employment and Labour Code Consultations.....	645, 650
Interprovincial Relations.....	646
Marijuana Legalization.....	647
Labour Relations Code Review.....	647
Poverty Reduction Strategy.....	648
Educational Curriculum Redesign Arabic Language Educational Curricula.....	648
Carbon Levy Revenue Utilization.....	649
Agency, Board, and Commission Appointments.....	649
Health Quality Council of Alberta.....	650
Applied Research and Forage Associations.....	651
Postsecondary Education Funding.....	652
Air Ambulance Service in Southern Alberta.....	652
Emergency Medical Services Funding.....	652
Condominium Property Act.....	653
Energy Industry Jobs.....	654
Tabling Returns and Reports	654

Alberta Hansard is available online at www.assembly.ab.ca

For inquiries contact:

Managing Editor

Alberta Hansard

3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 St

EDMONTON, AB T5K 1E7

Telephone: 780.427.1875