



Province of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, February 25, 2020

Day 1

The Honourable Nathan M. Cooper, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature

Second Session

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New Democrat: 24

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

3 p.m.

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! All rise, please.

The Clerk: Good afternoon.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated February 12, 2020, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order! Order! Mr. Speaker.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Speaker, accompanied by the officers of the Assembly, entered the Chamber and took the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of the Legislative Assembly, and to all in positions of responsibility the guidance of Your spirit. May they never lead the province wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideas but, laying aside all private interests and prejudice, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all. So may Your kingdom come and Your name be hallowed. Amen.

Ladies and gentlemen, please remain standing. I would invite you to join Cara McLeod, accompanied by the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, to lead us in the singing of our national anthem. Please join us in the language of your choice.

Hon. Members and Guests:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all of us 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.

Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

The Speaker: Hon. members, the RCA Band will now play a brief musical interlude. The piece performed is *A Western Fanfare*. *A Western Fanfare* for brass choir is dedicated to the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California. The fanfare is a bright, bold, uplifting work, reflecting the beauty and excitement of Santa Barbara's famous music festival. In the brief span of three minutes a snapshot of joyful music-making occurs. Please enjoy *A Western Fanfare*, performed by the Royal Canadian Artillery Band brass ensemble under the direction of Captain Chris Embree.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms opened the doors, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Ladies and gentlemen, all rise, please.

Mr. Speaker, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

The Speaker: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[A fanfare of trumpets sounded]

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, and Honorary Colonel Douglas Mitchell, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

Her Honour: Please be seated.

Speech from the Throne

Her Honour: Mr. Speaker, hon. Members of the Legislative Assembly, fellow Albertans:

I speak to you as Alberta's vice-regal representative of our sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II. It is my duty to open the Second Session of the 30th Legislature with the legislative program of Her Majesty's government.

I begin by acknowledging someone here today whose ancestry vividly illustrates the origins of our province and our people. In the late 1700s a young Englishman named James Curtis Bird arrived in Rupert's Land as an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. He rose to become chief factor of Edmonton House and located the post on the North Saskatchewan River valley flats, not far from where we are gathered today. The settlement that grew up around it is now a metropolis of 1.3 million, this great capital city.

James Bird married a Cree woman named Mary Oo-menahomisk. Their children included James, a trader, interpreter, and frontiersman who lived among the Blackfoot in southern Alberta and married a Peigan woman named Sarah Bull's Heart. His brother William married a Métis woman named Venus Hay, a union that produced 12 children, including William Jr., who farmed on the river flats just east of here and in the 1870s built a mill after which the city's beautiful Mill Creek Ravine park is named.

Many thousands of Albertans can trace their ancestry to these Cree, Blackfoot, Anglo origins, including our special guest today, Roy Bird from Sherwood Park. Roy is the proud great-great-grandson of James Curtis and Mary and is president of the Northern Alberta Pioneers and Descendants Association. Thank you, Roy, for sharing your story, that says so much about who we are and where we came from.

Stories like these from Alberta's rich history remind us how far we have come together, of the great things we have achieved, and of the potential stretching out before us: a river of infinite possibilities as broad and deep as the mighty North Saskatchewan, that nurtured indigenous communities here for millennia.

In our 116th year as a province Alberta faces some of the biggest challenges we have ever met, but our history proves that Albertans are tough, resilient people. Together we will overcome these challenges. Together we will grow and prosper. Doing so will require that my government take strong measures to renew our economy, bring order to our finances, and secure a fair deal for Alberta.

Getting Alberta back to work is my government's central priority. My government will introduce a comprehensive, long-term blueprint for jobs. It will focus on restoring investor confidence by making Alberta the freest, fastest moving, and lowest taxed province. With the job-creation tax cut we already have the lowest tax rate on job creators in Canada and are on track to achieve one of the lowest rates on the continent. This plus cutting unnecessary red tape by at least one-third is restoring our competitive edge to make Alberta a magnet for investment and job creation. My government will introduce several bills making it easier, faster, and less expensive for businesses, community groups, and governments to deliver services and create jobs.

My government will also continue implementing its skills for jobs agenda to prepare Albertans for fulfilling future careers. We need more young people to recognize that there is a parity of esteem between experiential and academic learning and between trades and professions, young people like Cecile Bukmeier, who is with us today. A strong-willed, independent-minded Albertan, Cecile rejected outdated advice and chose trades training after high school. She is now a successful autobody tradesperson, an instructor at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, the Skills Canada 2015 alumni of the year, and a medallist for Canada at the WorldSkills Competition. Thank you, Cecile, for inspiring a new generation to pursue excellence through the trades.

As part of the blueprint for jobs my government will unveil the 2020 capital plan, committing \$6.4 billion to strengthen our infrastructure while creating jobs.

My government will continue to advance the diversification of our economy, catalyzing job creation and growth in energy, agriculture, forestry, advanced technology, including artificial intelligence and medical technology, aviation and aerospace, finance and fintech, tourism, and other industries. Key to our success in all of these areas will be the social and economic mobility of our people.

Through initiatives like the Indigenous Opportunities Corporation my government will partner with indigenous communities to create unprecedented opportunities for investment, jobs, and prosperity.

Opportunities for newcomers will be increased by providing faster credential recognition through the fairness for newcomers action plan and by introducing the new Alberta advantage immigration program, that will attract entrepreneurs to start new businesses and invest here.

Restoring investor confidence in Alberta's economy is essential. That is why my government will establish a new investment promotion agency with funds set aside in the 2019 budget to expand Alberta's profile in key capital markets around the world.

My government will also continue leading Canada in breaking down costly trade barriers. This includes efforts to bring more provinces into the New West Partnership trade agreement and leading by example on labour mobility by unilaterally recognizing other provinces' professional and trade qualifications wherever feasible.

Alberta is now producing and shipping more energy products than at any point in our history. However, significantly expanding our access to established and new markets remains critical to our economic future, in part to reduce oil price differentials that diminish the great value of our natural resources. That is why my government will do everything within its power to ensure the completion of the Trans Mountain expansion and Keystone XL pipelines while supporting and pursuing other projects to ship Alberta energy to the world.

Growing efforts to land-lock and phase out Alberta energy production will not succeed. My government recognizes that the global energy supply is moving towards lower emitting sources, but

that includes the oil and gas we will produce here in Alberta for decades to come. We will not surrender global energy markets to dictatorships that spread conflict and extremism around the world. The government of Alberta is prepared to do whatever it takes to develop our resources responsibly and get them to global markets to compete with and displace energy from some of the world's worst regimes.

In part, that means working with industry to continue reducing the environmental impact of our energy. The technology innovation and emissions reduction program will continue to invest in technology that makes Alberta the global leader in environmentally responsible nonrenewable resource extraction. Alberta will continue working with the government of Canada to obtain an equivalency agreement on new methane regulations that further reduce emissions while minimizing the cost for industry. Through these and other policies we will support the growing efforts of major Alberta energy producers to achieve the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

But that is not all. When regulatory uncertainty, hostility by the federal government, or pressure from special-interest groups inhibits investment in Alberta resource development, my government will act. Like the government of the late Premier Lougheed, Alberta is prepared to invest directly and support companies and indigenous groups, when necessary, to assure the future of responsible resource development. Through these and other efforts to stimulate jobs and growth, my government will do everything it can to reduce unacceptably high levels of unemployment and get people back to work.

My government's second key priority for the new session is getting our fiscal house in order and ensuring that Albertans get full value for their tax dollars. We are wasting 2 billion tax dollars this year on interest payments to bankers and bondholders, money that could be left in the hands of taxpayers or spent on health care and education. Without action, we will end up wasting billions more on debt interest payments, which means billions less on public services.

As the MacKinnon panel confirmed, Alberta spends far more per person than other big provinces, but we often get poorer outcomes for that spending, from life expectancy and surgical wait times to high school completion and university enrolment. We cannot continue to spend more for less while going deeper into debt. My government will work with the public service to contain costs and protect front-line services by carefully reducing overall spending by less than 3 per cent. This excludes the budgets for health care, Education, Community and Social Services, and Children's Services, where budgets are being maintained at or increased to record high levels.

Preserving a high-quality public health care system is essential. My government will move forward with implementation of its surgical wait times initiative and other reforms that put patients, not politics, at the centre of medicare. In doing so, Alberta will be informed by universal, publicly funded health care systems in Canada and Europe, with the goals of increasing patient choice, reducing wait times, and improving health outcomes. Albertans will never have to pay out of pocket for medically necessary care.

Our overarching goal is to make life better for Albertans. That's why my government will implement a renewed mental health and addictions strategy, backed by an additional \$140 million in support. Far too many Albertans have become trapped by addiction in recent years. Every one of them needs love and compassion. They also need access to treatment and recovery services, which is why the government is funding the creation of at least 4,000 additional treatment spaces.

With us today is a man whose life story embodies these truths. Calgarian Samuel Stordy succumbed to opioid addiction as a teenager

and overdosed many times. He did not get his life back until he undertook treatment and started down the path to recovery. Samuel now works as a youth addiction counsellor. He is living proof that treatment works and recovery is possible. Congratulations, Samuel. Thank you for being an inspiration.

My government will introduce legislation to protect the vulnerable by enhancing public safety. This includes an act to protect survivors of human trafficking, part of our action plan to fight human trafficking and combat the scourge of this modern form of slavery. My government will amend the Vital Statistics Act to prevent convicted sexual offenders from covering their tracks by legally changing their names. My government will table bills to toughen sanctions against impaired driving and to protect minors from risks associated with vaping. Amendments will be proposed to the Victims of Crime Act to strengthen financial benefits for victims.

At the heart of the Alberta advantage is our strong, pluralistic public education system. That is why my government will introduce a choice in education act, to reaffirm that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education. This law will be the first in Canada to incorporate the language of the universal declaration of human rights stating that "parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." My government will also implement recommendations of the curriculum review committee, including its call for a refocus on teaching core competencies, depoliticizing the curriculum, and standardized testing.

To further make life better for Albertans, my government will undertake significant reforms to strengthen democracy in Alberta, including the tabling of a citizen initiative act that will allow Albertans to put important issues to a referendum; a recall act allowing constituents to remove their MLAs, municipal councillors, mayors, and school board trustees from office between elections; bills to enact fixed dates for provincial elections and provincial budgets; statutory provisions to get big money out of Alberta politics by introducing donor contribution limits to so-called political action committees while prohibiting party-affiliated groups from circumventing donation limits; amendments banning foreign money from Alberta politics by making it illegal for foreign entities to contribute to third-party advertisers; and amendments to the Alberta Taxpayer Protection Act requiring a referendum before a consumer carbon tax can be imposed.

Finally, my government will do everything within its power to stand up for our province and get a fair deal for Alberta. Thank you to the members of the Fair Deal Panel and the tens of thousands of Albertans who attended their town halls or contributed to their deliberations.

Sadly, the panel's work was made more difficult by the sudden passing of one of its members, Jason Goodstriker. Chief Goodstriker was a proud leader of the Blackfoot people, an Alberta patriot who dedicated himself to the preservation of indigenous culture and to helping First Nations become partners in prosperity through resource development, but most importantly he was a loving father and husband to Tiffany, who is with us today. Thank you, Tiffany, for sharing your husband with Alberta.

My government will table legislation to advance our province's objectives for a fair deal within the Canadian federation. These will include an act to protect critical infrastructure, to address the illegal blockades we have seen across Canada, to increase the penalties for blocking roads, railways, and other infrastructure, and to clarify that in Alberta police do not have to wait for a warrant to act in the face of illegal activity and uphold the rule of law; amendments to the Constitutional Referendum Act to clarify the referendum process and allow for the holding of referendums not related to constitutional issues; amendments to the Alberta Senate Election Act to update

the election rules for the next Senate election in conjunction with the municipal elections in the fall of 2021; legislation to replace the federal Parole Board with a provincial parole board in charge of parole eligibility and terms for provincial prisoners. Following the report of the Fair Deal Panel other bills may be tabled to give effect to its recommendations.

This summarizes my government's legislative program for the Second Session of the 30th Legislature. It is an ambitious, practical program that will stimulate investment, job creation, and growth and get Alberta back to work. It will achieve fiscal responsibility, strengthen our democracy, and protect the vulnerable, and it will arm Alberta with more of the tools our province needs to stand up for our right to a fair deal within the Canadian federation.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, thank you for all your efforts on behalf of your constituents. I invite you to exercise your utmost wisdom as you chart the future course of our beloved province, and may the blessings of Almighty God rest upon your counsels as you work to keep Alberta strong and free.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise, please.

The Speaker: Ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Cara McLeod, accompanied by the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, to lead us in the singing of *God Save the Queen*. Please remain standing at the conclusion of the singing.

Hon. Members and Guests:

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen!

The Sergeant-at-Arms: Order!

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Their Honours, their party, and the Premier left the Chamber as a fanfare of trumpets sounded]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

[The Mace was uncovered]

The Speaker: Hon. members, welcome. It's a pleasure to see all of you here today and even more of a pleasure to see everyone else that has joined us today. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

Earlier today it was impossible not to recognize the thunder of the 15-gun salute to mark the opening of the Second Session of the 30th Legislature. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the 20th Field Artillery Regiment, who was responsible for the 15-gun salute today. We can trace its roots back to February 2, 1920, when it was founded in Edmonton as reserve force regiment. During the Second World War members proudly fought for king and country, serving with distinction in the liberation of the Netherlands, the D-Day landings, and the decisive Normandy campaign. The regiment continues to be based here in Edmonton, comprised of two field batteries: the 61st, based in Edmonton; and the 78th, based in Red Deer.

I know many of us here today support the cadet program, and you'll be interested to know that this regiment is also affiliated with three Royal Canadian Army cadet corps: the 180th here in Edmonton, the 1390th in Red Deer, and the 2561st in Thorsby, Alberta.

You know, when I think of public service, I am inspired by the commitment and service of both men and women serving here and

abroad. Every day they put their lives on hold to defend the freedoms that we enjoy here. It is particularly special to me in this Chamber as daily I'm reminded of our responsibility to the people of Alberta and to our shared democracy. It is the ultimate sacrifice of so many that allows us to continue here today. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women who serve our nation.

For this regiment's outstanding service to all Albertans and its incredible 100 years of service, it's my distinct honour to congratulate the 20th Field Artillery Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, 41 Canadian Brigade Group. I also wish to say a very special thank you to Brigadier General Stephen Lacroix, commander of the 3rd Canadian Division, under whose command this unit falls. Brigadier General Stephen Lacroix joined us in our official party today. Hon. members, if you would please join me in thanking him and the entire regiment for their over 100 years of service. [Standing ovation]

[The Premier returned to the Chamber]

Tablings

The Speaker: Hon. members, I have the privilege to table a copy of the speech graciously given by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier has the call.

Bill 1

Critical Infrastructure Defence Act

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 1, Critical Infrastructure Defence Act.

In recent weeks we have seen lawlessness jeopardize the Canadian economy, leading to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs here in Alberta and across the Dominion. Mr. Speaker, this is making a mockery of the principle of the rule of law, one of the foundational principles of our democratic life together. Therefore, the government tables this legislation to strengthen penalties against those who would lawlessly trespass or jeopardize public safety by seeking to block critical public infrastructure, including roadways, railways, and other important infrastructure. This reinforces public safety. It increases the dissuasive effect of law against those who would seek to hold us all jeopardy to their radical demands.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table this bill.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

Motions

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Mr. Kenney: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the speech of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration on Wednesday, February 26, 2020.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Jason Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Legislative Assembly of Alberta stand adjourned until tomorrow at 9 o'clock a.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:40 p.m.]

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