

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Tuesday, February 26, 2002**

3:00 p.m.

Date: 02/02/26

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order!

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated January 23, 2002, 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]

head: Prayers

THE SPEAKER: Good afternoon and welcome.

Almighty God, author of all wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, we ask Your blessings on all here present. We ask Your guidance in order that truth and justice may prevail in all of our judgments, for the benefit of all Albertans. Amen.

Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of our national anthem. Please join in in the language of your choice.

HON. MEMBERS AND GUESTS:

O Canada, our home and native land!
True patriot love in all thy sons command.
With glowing hearts we see thee rise,
The True North strong and free!
From far and wide, O Canada,
We stand on guard for thee.
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 and ladies and gentlemen, while awaiting the arrival of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, the Royal Canadian Artillery Band will play a tribute in recognition of Her Majesty the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

[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, Their Honours the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Lois E. Hole, CM, and Mr. Hole, their party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

HER HONOUR: Would everybody please sit.

It's a good thing that I at least had some consultation with my good secretary, Mary, or you might have been standing a lot longer, which wouldn't have been too good, I must say.

I have to say that I've been very fortunate to get around and visit many communities, many schools, and it has been delightful. I went to one school in Jasper where the children were all told, "The Lieutenant Governor is coming to your school," and they were all pleased. One little boy went home and said to his mother, "I don't know what's happening at our school, but the gardener is coming and we have to call her Your Honour."

head: Speech from the Throne

HER HONOUR: Fellow Albertans, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Second Session of the 25th Alberta Legislature. It is again an honour to deliver the Speech from the Throne.

To begin, I want to take this opportunity to express to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to all members of the royal family the heartfelt condolences of Albertans for the loss of Her Royal Highness the Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon. Throughout her life Princess Margaret showed a genuine fondness for Canada and Alberta. All Albertans were saddened to learn of her passing and share the sense of loss felt across the Commonwealth.

While Albertans mourn for Princess Margaret, they are also remembering the late Hon. H.A. "Bud" Olson. His Honour, who passed away earlier this month, served with grace and dignity as Alberta's Lieutenant Governor from 1996 to 2000. He also served Alberta for many years as a member of the House of Commons and earned several distinctions through his lifetime for his many achievements on behalf of the province and the nation. To Mr. Olson's family and to those who knew him, I extend the condolences of all Albertans.

In memory of Her Royal Highness and His Honour I ask you to join me in a moment of silent prayer and remembrance. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I also wish to express the great support that Albertans have for the men and women of Canada's armed forces who are serving in Afghanistan. For thousands of Albertans these soldiers are husbands or wives, sons or daughters, fathers or mothers, friends or neighbours. For all Albertans they are living symbols of courage and high principle. We send them our prayers and our hopes for a safe and speedy return. We also extend our deepest thanks to the families of these men and women. They, too, are contributing to the future safety and security of the nation, and to them we owe the most solemn of debts.

Fellow Albertans, 2002 is a notable year. The year marks the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty Elizabeth II ascending to the throne of the United Kingdom and Canada and assuming her rightful position as head of the Commonwealth. This is an auspicious anniversary that Albertans recognize with gratitude and love. Her Majesty has been a symbol of peace and stability for half a century. Long may she reign.

In honour of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee the government of Alberta will introduce legislation this session that will officially commemorate the anniversary. The legislation will establish a new Premier's citizenship award that will recognize achievements of high school students in the areas of citizenship, community participation, and leadership. Each year five recipients of the Premier's citizenship award will be honoured with the Queen's Golden Jubilee citizenship medal, which will be accompanied by a \$5,000 award. As well, the Queen's Golden Jubilee scholarship for the visual and performing arts will be established. These awards and scholarships will together serve as a permanent remembrance of this historic anniversary.

As the Golden Jubilee reminds us, 50 years is an impressive length of service. The world has certainly changed over the past half century. That's definitely true in Alberta. But what has remained constant over the years has been the unique character and record of accomplishment that the people of Alberta have shaped through hard work, concern for each other, and the sharing of common goals for their province.

I don't think there is a prouder person than an Albertan. Whether a citizen's roots can be traced back for generations in this province or whether that Albertan just moved here from elsewhere, the pride that goes with being an Albertan is immeasurable and irrepressible. This Alberta pride is based on respect, mutual achievement, gratitude for our good fortune, caring for others, and people coming together despite their differences to confront the challenges of the day for the betterment of tomorrow.

Nowhere was Alberta pride more evident than at the recently concluded Future Summit. At the summit Albertans were asked to look five, 10, and even 20 years beyond today to imagine what their Alberta of the future could and should look like. Though the detailed results of summit discussions are still being compiled, the general theme of the summit is clear. Summit participants said that Albertans are focused on the future. They are determined to build an Alberta for their children that is prosperous, caring, secure, and that above all maintains a positive, healthy outlook to meet the challenges it will invariably face.

Indeed, in 2002 Albertans perceive health and health care to be a top priority. They have told their government that the health system they have built together must be maintained and that it must not be lost or impaired due to inaction or fleeting comfort with the status quo. Albertans go further than that. When Albertans speak about health, they don't only mean services provided in hospitals or prescription drugs or ambulance services. They know that people's health status is affected by their lifestyles, their socioeconomic status, their education, their sense of inner security and external security, their feeling of being part of a larger community, their access to jobs and safe and healthy foods and cultural experiences, and by many other factors that exceed the scope of the conventional health system.

Albertans know that people's health can be improved by events as complex as a redesign of an ambulance system or as simple as a comforting hand to hold during an ambulance trip. Albertans know that health status can be affected by forces as impersonal as monthly labour statistics or gestures as personal as a person hearing the words: "You're hired. Welcome to the team." Albertans know that healthy approaches to life are developed by institutions as comprehensive as a well-funded school system or by individuals as dedicated as the teacher who takes a student aside to say, "Good work."

It is to the betterment of people's health and the province's health that the government of Alberta dedicates itself in 2002. The government will work toward improving the province's health

system itself so that Albertans can be confident the system will be there for them and their children at an affordable cost.

But because there's more to healthy Albertans than the health system itself, the government will focus this coming year on improving all the factors and forces that come together to create a healthy Alberta. Factors contributing to a healthy Alberta are the same as those that contribute to a healthy Albertan. They are economic growth, fiscal stability, good schools, safe children receiving parenting in a caring and nurturing manner, strong communities, secure seniors, clean air and water, and confidence that the future is bright. It is these areas, all essential to the province's health, from which the government draws its goals and objectives for the new year.

Sustainable Health Care System for All Albertans

Ensuring the continued stability of the province's health care system is without a doubt at the top of the government's agenda in 2002. Sustainable health care is a formidable challenge that will test the leadership and ingenuity of Albertans. Albertans enjoy a very good health system, but change is needed if Albertans tomorrow are to have the same level of health care.

In January our government announced that it will implement the 44 recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Health for improving the health system and keeping it affordable. Based on the council's recommendations, this government will work harder to build a healthier Alberta. This work will be assisted by an implementation team led by the former registrar of the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

The government will also launch a campaign to give Albertans reliable health information and encourage them to make healthy lifestyle choices. New 10-year targets will be established to reduce diabetes, obesity, chronic heart and lung disease, and preventable injuries.

In 2002 a task force will examine options for new revenues and to provide stable, long-term funding for health care with recommendations on funding made to the government by September. Government will give consideration to raising tobacco taxes and health care premiums with the goal of using these revenues to improve health, and later this year an expert advisory panel will recommend which services should be covered by Alberta health care insurance and which services, if any, should be deinsured.

Our government will also abide by the council's recommendations in taking measures so that Alberta's health care professionals are able to practise to the full extent of their training and education. In the next year it will work with physicians and health authorities to explore new options in physician compensation. It will also develop a plan to ensure that Alberta has the right number and types of health professionals, all working to their maximum potential to the benefit of Albertans.

This government will work to improve Albertans' access to the health services they need. This work includes moving toward an access guarantee for selected services and a web site with detailed information on waiting lists for selected services.

Other initiatives to ensure that these priorities are met include implementing a provincewide organ donation and transplant program, expanding the pharmaceutical information network to improve drug therapy and reduce costs, developing community-based health projects under the aboriginal health strategy, and providing better care for people with Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

A Healthier Alberta through Learning

Along with health care, education is a key priority of this

government and a key factor in individual health and the health of the province. The government recognizes the vital role of Alberta's learning system in giving people the technical skills and the life skills essential to personal growth and good health. A good education system also gives the province the gift of a population ready and capable to shape the province's future in positive and meaningful ways. That is why the government will ensure that Alberta's learning system continues to be one of the best in the world.

In the past year the quality of the system was proven by the number one placement of Alberta students in international reading tests and their third-place finish in math and science. These results reflect the value of Alberta's educators and the commitment of this government to maintaining an effective system.

In the coming year the government will share and discuss a renewed vision for the kindergarten to grade 12 learning system which emphasizes building basic skills in the early grades and more specialized skills as students move through the system. It is an important time for all parties in the public education system to work together for the betterment of students. The government believes there is a great deal of goodwill on all sides. This goodwill guarantees that the long-term health of the public education system will be protected. Educators will be key to that long-term health. Government will do its best to ensure that Albertans' hopes and dreams for students are given every chance to be made real.

Postsecondary education is also vital to the economic and social health of Albertans. The government will continue to work closely with students and institutions to ensure that high-quality postsecondary learning opportunities remain accessible and affordable for all Albertans.

A Strong, Resilient Economy

Underpinning the health of Albertans is, of course, the health of the province's economy and of the government's fiscal plan. Alberta remains in the best position of any province to take the lead in responding to today's stagnant global economy. Alberta's economy is healthy and continues to grow. Economic growth is forecast to be about 2 percent this year, significantly higher than the Canadian average. This fundamental strength of Alberta will allow government to invest in spending increases in Albertans' priority areas, including health, learning, and children's services, increases that will be greater than the inflation and population growth rates and which will all contribute to people's health.

At all times government will stick to its fiscal principles. This year provincial revenues have fallen, affected by the aftermath of September 11 and other global forces, leaving government without the high windfall revenues of recent years. Therefore, in its 2002 budget government will present a plan that balances priorities with accountability. Government will not spend more than it takes in. It will not leave a legacy of deficits for tomorrow's Albertans to pay.

It will continue to put in place fiscal policies that encourage investment, job creation, and consumer confidence. It will also limit spending in some areas without reducing the quality of priority services.

For many years the government's fiscal policies have helped Alberta be recognized across Canada as the leader in government openness and accountability. This recognition began in 1993, when the Alberta Financial Review Commission recommended steps that fundamentally changed the way that government managed and reported its finances. In 2002 the Minister of Finance will establish a financial management commission to once again review and assess current fiscal and accounting policies to ensure that Alberta remains a leader in fiscal planning.

In the coming year development of Alberta's energy resources

will continue to contribute to the province's economy and to the delivery of critical public programs. In an energy marketplace where short-term prices can be volatile, Alberta must continue to look to the longer term. Our government will continue to promote investment in Alberta's oil sands. It will continue to work with industry and the governments of Alaska, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories on proposed pipelines that will bring gas from the north to markets in Canada and the United States.

Trade is the lifeblood of the Alberta economy, with 1 in 3 jobs depending on international trade. The government will ensure that Alberta's interests are well represented by building stronger relationships with key trading partners, establishing formal ties in emerging markets, and working on improving access for our agriculture and service industries.

In co-operation with other provinces and the government of Canada the Alberta government will continue to take an aggressive approach in international trade negotiations to improve trade rules for our exporters and to open access for softwood lumber exports to the United States.

Our government will also continue to look for opportunities to strengthen and diversify Alberta's tourism industry, which is expected to generate \$6 billion of economic activity by the end of 2005.

A Growing Agricultural Sector

Agriculture is an important part of Alberta's economic health and a vital component of its rural landscape. Our province is Canada's second-largest agricultural producer, and despite higher farm operating expenses and the worst drought in 130 years in 2001 our province saw farm cash receipt levels reach a record of approximately \$8.3 billion.

This government will work with Albertans in 2002 to implement mechanisms that will ensure that agriculture continues to thrive. It will strengthen its support for the growth of profitable businesses involved in farming and agriculture services and processing, and it will increase support for producers and processors who are looking at new products, new markets, and better ways of doing business.

The merger of the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation and the Alberta Opportunity Company will provide additional support to the industry by creating a one-window approach to commercial financing for the agri-industry and for small businesses.

Albertans want to be sure that their food is safe and safely produced. In response, the government is working with other governments and industry groups on programs to help the agriculture industry meet international standards and to ensure that the industry continues to excel in food safety, innovation, and environmental performance.

Alberta's agriculture industry is well positioned for continued growth and is working toward achieving \$10 billion in primary production and \$20 billion in value-added processing by 2010. The government is committed to helping the industry meet these goals by continuing to stimulate economic development in agricultural communities.

It will also help protect agricultural communities through implementation of the agriculture drought risk management plan. This plan will allow more timely and accurate assessment of drought impacts on the farm economy and more targeted, timely, and cost-effective response measures if needed.

Healthy Communities

Our government is committed to ensuring that Albertans continue to live, work, and raise their families in safe, secure, diverse

communities. Given new and somber concerns about security, the government will introduce legislation this session to improve the province's ability to protect Albertans, their property, their infrastructure, and their environment from potential security risks. It will also work with other governments to ensure a co-ordinated approach to security and emergency response.

Alberta's aboriginal peoples are key members of the province's communities. This year government will continue to implement the aboriginal policy framework with the goal of increasing the well-being and self-reliance of First Nations, Metis, and other aboriginal peoples.

There is no group for whom a healthy Alberta is more important than Alberta's children. They are the leaders of tomorrow's communities, but today they are our children, and their health in the broadest sense of the word is an uppermost concern. In 2002 government will take many steps to enhance the health of children, especially those who are most vulnerable. Consultation on the Child Welfare Act will continue in early 2002, followed by recommendations that will be shared with stakeholders this spring. New child welfare legislation will be drafted this year.

The government will join other provinces and territories in introducing legislation to make it easier for families living in different regions of the country to obtain court orders for child maintenance. This legislation will help ensure that children receive the financial support to which they are entitled regardless of where they live in Canada.

Through its youth in transition initiative government will work to ensure that youth acquire the skills and attitudes to live happy, healthy, and productive lives, are safe, supported, and connected to caring peers and adults, and have access to services that meet their diverse needs.

Alberta's seniors are also a key component of the province's health. Our government will continue to ensure that lower income seniors have the supports they need to enjoy their lives in security and dignity.

Housing is fundamental to the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. This year government expects to complete negotiations of a bilateral agreement with the federal government that will give Alberta access to approximately \$67 million for low-cost housing initiatives over a five-year period. Government will also review the unique housing pressures in remote and northern communities.

In the area of workplace safety the Alberta government will work with employers, workers, and their families to ensure that people are safe while on the job. This spring a forum on workplace health and safety will bring together policy experts, enforcement professionals, workers, and employers to examine measures to reduce workplace injuries. The government will also bring forward amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act to improve service delivery, enhance clarity, and increase confidence in Alberta's workers' compensation system.

A Clean and Sustainable Environment

The health of Alberta's unmatched natural environment is also critical to the province's overall health and to individual health and well-being. In 2002 the government will further encourage practices that prevent pollution and other environmental problems. Be assured, however, that government will continue to move firmly to punish offenders who fail to live up to their environmental obligations. This government is committed to ensuring that Alberta's environmental standards and regulations are and will continue to be among the most stringent in North America.

Like many provinces Alberta has grave concerns about the impact of the Kyoto accord on Canada's economy. However, the Alberta government is committed to acting on climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

One of the most important challenges Alberta may face in the years ahead is continuing to ensure a safe and secure water supply. With Albertans' input the government will develop a comprehensive provincial water strategy that will look at means to ensure safe and secure drinking water while maintaining healthy rivers and lakes. Government will also continue to work with small Alberta municipalities to upgrade their water and wastewater systems.

Conclusion: A Healthy Alberta for the Future

Fellow Albertans, in all of its endeavours in 2002 this government pledges to maintain its focus on the present and future health of Alberta in all its aspects. It is not a job that government can do on its own. Maintaining Alberta's healthy outlook requires the goodwill and hard work of all Albertans.

Albertans accept that meaningful goals cannot be met without challenges. There is the challenge of building a sustainable health care system, of keeping the education system effective and responsive, of keeping the province's children safe, of keeping on track with the government's positive fiscal plan, and of keeping the environment clean. Albertans are up for the job. So, too, is this government.

From the beginning of our Queen's reign, indeed from its first year as a province and even earlier, the unique destiny of Alberta has been charted by the leadership, character, and values of its people. Through today's changing times these qualities will guide Alberta to continued growth, peace, and good health.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and may God bless you all.

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order! All rise, please.

THE SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Mr. Paul Lorieau to lead us in the singing of *God Save The Queen*. Please remain standing at the conclusion.

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 Premier returned to the Chamber]

head: Introduction of Bills

THE SPEAKER: The hon. the Premier.

Bill 1**Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Recognition Act**

MR. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 1, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Recognition Act. This being a money bill, Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to introduce Bill 1, the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Recognition Act. If passed in this Assembly, this legislation will permanently commemorate the Golden Jubilee of our Queen, Elizabeth II. The bill is much more than a statement of respect for the Queen. It also proposes the establishment of three new government programs in the Queen's name to acknowledge the very special contributions of Alberta's young people.

It outlines a program to recognize achievement among high school students in the areas of citizenship and leadership. It provides for awards of \$5,000 to be presented to five students in these areas per year. It establishes another two scholarships per year for people studying the visual and performing arts. These areas of pursuit – citizenship, leadership, and the arts – are very much characteristics associated with the reign of Her Majesty, who has exemplified achievement in these areas during her 50 years as our monarch. For that reason I am very proud to introduce this bill in honour of Queen Elizabeth II.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

Tablings

THE SPEAKER: Hon. members, I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

Motions

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I move that the speech of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to this Assembly be taken into consideration Wednesday, February 27.

[Motion carried]

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, I move that pursuant to Standing Order 49(1) the select standing committees for the present session of

the Legislative Assembly be appointed for the following purposes:

- (1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund,
- (2) Legislative Offices,
- (3) Private Bills,
- (4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, and
- (5) Public Accounts.

[Motion carried]

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the following members be appointed to the Assembly's five standing committees.

- (1) Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund: Mr. Hutton, chair; Mr. Magnus, deputy chair; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Broda; Ms Carlson; Mr. Knight; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Marz; and Mr. VanderBurg.
- (2) Legislative Offices: Mrs. Tarchuk, chair; Mr. Ducharme, deputy chair; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Friedel; Mrs. Fritz; Ms Graham; Mr. Hlady; Mrs. O'Neill; Dr. Pannu; Dr. Taft; and Mr. Tannas.
- (3) Private Bills: Ms Graham, chair; Ms Kryczka, deputy chair; Mr. Bonner; Mr. Goudreau; Mr. Graydon; Mr. Jacobs; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Lord; Mr. Magnus; Mr. Maskell; Dr. Massey; Mr. McClelland; Mr. McFarland; Mr. Ouellette; Dr. Pannu; Mr. Pham; Mr. Rathgeber; Mr. Snelgrove; Mr. VanderBurg; Mr. Vandermeer; and Mr. Yankowsky.
- (4) Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Mr. Klapstein, chair; Mr. Johnson, deputy chair; Rev. Abbott; Mr. Amery; Mr. Cao; Ms Carlson; Mr. Danyluk; Mrs. Fritz; Mr. Graydon; Mr. Hlady; Mr. Jacobs; Mr. Knight; Mr. Lord; Mr. Lougheed; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. MacDonald; Mr. Masyk; Mr. McClelland; Dr. Pannu; Mr. Renner; and Mr. Zwozdesky.
- (5) Public Accounts: Mr. MacDonald, chair; Mr. Shariff, deputy chair; Mrs. Ady; Ms Blakeman; Mr. Broda; Mr. Cao; Mr. Cenaiko; Ms DeLong; Mr. Goudreau; Mr. Hutton; Mrs. Jablonski; Mr. Lukaszuk; Mr. Marz; Mr. Mason; Mr. Masyk; Mr. Ouellette; and Dr. Taft.

[Motion carried]

MR. HANCOCK: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Assembly now stand adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; at 4:01 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]

