



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, March 8, 2016

Day 1

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

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

Second Session

Wanner, Hon. Robert E., Medicine Hat (ND), Speaker  
Jabbour, Deborah C., Peace River (ND), Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees  
Vacant, Deputy Chair of Committees

Aheer, Leela Sharon, Chestermere-Rocky View (W)	Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (ND)
Anderson, Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)	MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)	Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)	Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Government House Leader
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)	McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret, Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (ND)
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND), Deputy Government House Leader	McIver, Ric, Calgary-Hays (PC), Leader of the Progressive Conservative Opposition
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND), Deputy Government House Leader	McKittrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND)
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)	McLean, Hon. Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)	McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (ND)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)	Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)	Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (ND)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (ND)	Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W), Official Opposition House Leader	Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W), Official Opposition Whip
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND)	Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), Premier
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W), Official Opposition Deputy Whip	Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (W)
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)	Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)	Payne, Hon. Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (ND)	Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (ND)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition Whip	Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (ND)
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (ND)	Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)	Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND)	Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Fildebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W)	Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND)	Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)	Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (ND)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (ND)	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), Progressive Conservative Opposition House Leader
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 (PC)	Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (AL)
Jean, Brian Michael, QC, Fort McMurray-Conklin (W), Leader of the Official Opposition	Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Kleinstauber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)	Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)	van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)	Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)	Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)
	Vacant, Calgary-Greenway

**Party standings:**

New Democrat: 54    Wildrose: 22    Progressive Conservative: 8    Alberta Liberal: 1    Alberta Party: 1    Vacant: 1

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W.J. David McNeil, Clerk	Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel and Legal Research Officer	Brian G. Hodgson, Sergeant-at-Arms
Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Law Clerk/ Director of Interparliamentary Relations	Philip Massolin, Manager of Research Services	Chris Caughell, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
Shannon Dean, Senior Parliamentary Counsel/Director of House Services	Nancy Robert, Research Officer	Gordon H. Munk, Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms
		Janet Schwegel, Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>

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Sarah Hoffman	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health
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
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Christina Gray	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal
Danielle Larivee	Minister of Municipal Affairs
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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 Human Services
Marlin Schmidt	Minister of Advanced Education
Lori Sigurdson	Minister of Seniors and Housing

**STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA**

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Chair: Ms Miller  
 Deputy Chair: Mr. Nielsen  
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 Ellis          Taylor  
 McKitrick    Turner  
 Renaud

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

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 Deputy Chair: Mr. Schneider  
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 Carson         Hunter  
 Connolly       Jansen  
 Coolahan       Piquette  
 Dach           Schreiner  
 Fitzpatrick    Taylor  
 Gotfried

**Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee**

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 Clark           Nielsen  
 Cortes-Vargas   Nixon  
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**Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

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 Babcock        MacIntyre  
 Clark          Rosendahl  
 Dang            Stier  
 Drysdale        Sucha  
 Horne          Woollard  
 Kazim

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

3 p.m.

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

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

[The Acting Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated February 19, 2016, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

**The Acting 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:** Welcome.

Please bow your heads, and let us reflect or pray each in our own way. As we gather in this place of we the commoners, let us learn from our past, appreciate our present, and dream and plan for our future. When we reflect upon our past, let us never forget the counsel of our elders, elders like the great Blackfoot Confederacy Chief Crowfoot, who said: I will be the first to sign Treaty 7, and I will be the last to break it. When we experience our present, let us seek to understand each other before trying to be understood. When we plan for our future, let us dream no little dreams for it is our children, indeed our infants, who represent hope. Let us remind each other that it is hope that has always bound we commoners together. Amen.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Mr. Robert Clark, accompanied by the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, to lead us in singing 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.  
 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 Acting Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, the brass section of the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, whom we're pleased to have with us today, will now play a brief musical interlude. The piece to be performed is entitled *Another Cat: Kraken*. It's composed by Mr. Chris Hazell. The RCA Band, Canada's oldest regular army band, was formed in Quebec City in 1879. It was subsequently stationed in Montreal and in Halifax. It has seen service in both world wars

and in Korea, and it has travelled across our great country of Canada and beyond our boundaries. Reconstituted in 1997 in this city of Edmonton, the band is under the direction of Captain Patrice Arsenault, CD, who is in the Speaker's gallery.

We're very fortunate to have a band like that at an event like this. I think it warrants another applause from the entire Assembly.

As we await our protocol, let us enjoy this time together.

[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 Mr. Mitchell, their party, the Premier, and the Acting Clerk entered the Chamber. Her Honour took her place upon the throne]

### Speech from the Throne

**Her Honour:** Please be seated.

Friends, today is the first day of a new session of this Legislature, and it is also International Women's Day. It is therefore right to begin this address by remembering the remarkable achievements of Alberta women. There is much to tell, like, for example, the story of Alberta's Famous Five, who are remembered in a display on the fifth floor of this House.

In 1927 Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Edwards went to court to ask the following question: "Does the word 'Persons' in section 24 of the British North America Act . . . include female persons?" Their fight was a fundamental one, the principle that no public office should be barred to women because of their gender. Courtesy of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London women were indeed found to be persons, which was a good start.

I think you'll agree with me, looking at this House, at the ministerial bench, and at the seat from which I speak, that we are still making progress. The fact that my government's new Ministry of Status of Women is led by a new mother tells us that further barriers are beginning to come down.

As UN Women puts it well, International Women's Day is a time to reflect on the progress being made. It is a time to renew our call for change, and it is a time to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

Today, on International Women's Day, we recommit ourselves to carrying on this work. And today we return to this House to carry on our work for all the people of Alberta.

### The Latest Energy Price Shock and Its Consequences

As I speak, we are facing another deep slump in the international price of oil. Let there be no doubt; Albertans are going to get through this together as we have done before. We will address the difficult choices that lie before us, in keeping with our deeply held values. Albertans are an optimistic, entrepreneurial, can-do people, and Albertans are community minded, caring, and neighbourly. Ours is a society of friends. In tough times we always pull together.

We have each other's backs. We support each other in these times instead of making a bad situation worse.

We don't need to put our short-term bottom line over the interests of long-term recovery. We do need to understand that this latest price bust is prolonged, deep, and driven by important and fundamental changes in the world market. And so we do need to act.

We are currently overdependent on a single commodity, a single price, and a single market. Alberta will address this in a number of ways.

First, we will diversify our energy markets. Second, we will pursue a coherent and effective economic development strategy at last. Third, we will invest in a greener, more sustainable economy. Fourth, we will pursue a responsible approach to public finance. And fifth, we will pursue ongoing democratic reform to ensure public accountability in all of this work.

### **Diversifying Our Markets**

Canada's inability over the past 10 years to pursue a strategic energy policy supported by Canadians has made it impossible so far for our country to diversify our markets, and the result is that Canadian energy exports are heavily discounted even at these low prices. That must change.

Canada's energy industry, which is so important to the livelihoods and futures of Alberta families, must have safe and efficient pipeline access to tidewater so that the energy production that is permitted under our climate leadership plan can command the highest possible value on world markets.

Furthermore, Canada's energy industry needs access to the Canadian market itself. Canada currently imports almost a million barrels a day of oil from other countries. It makes no sense to finance the economies of other countries in this way, when it would be both more economically and more environmentally responsible for Canada to rely on its own abundant energy resources.

My government has been pursuing these issues since its first days in office and will continue to do so with focus and determination.

We will erase any doubts about Alberta's environmental reputation within Canada and around the world through our climate leadership plan, which places our energy economy in the ranks of the world's most progressive energy producers.

As I will detail in a few minutes, a key enabling bill giving effect to this plan will be presented in this session of the Legislature.

Alberta will also continue to strongly engage with the federal government and with all other provincial and territorial governments on these issues.

We are making progress.

The Canadian energy strategy adopted by the Council of the Federation last July provides Canada with a balanced framework both to protect the environment and to develop our country's energy industry.

At a meeting of first ministers in Vancouver last week every government in Canada committed to the view that these issues are urgent and must be dealt with in a timely fashion.

As a first step to that end, the government of Alberta welcomes a new interim federal assessment of the environmental and climate issues that arise from new pipelines, because the strength of our climate leadership plan places Alberta in the ranks of the world's most progressive energy producers.

We will continue to work towards a permanent regulatory regime that is effective and predictable and that has a beginning, a middle, and a timely end.

### **Action on Income Security, Diversification, and Job Creation**

There is much that needs to be done here in Alberta in the face of the current economic shock. First, we must help the many Alberta families who are facing immediate financial hardship. Albertans are rightfully concerned about their livelihoods and their income security.

At times like these we must think of our children first.

Starting this summer, my government will implement an important new Alberta child benefit plan for low-income families, a \$340 million investment in new direct help to the Alberta families who need help most. So, for example, a low-income single parent with two children will begin to receive just over \$3,000 a year in benefits from enhancements to the Alberta child benefit and the family employment tax credit. In all, 380,000 Alberta children will benefit from this initiative, direct help now, to the most vulnerable and needy among us.

Alberta is also vigorously urging Canada's new federal government to reconsider federal employment insurance rules that exclude too many Albertans from benefits. These rules must be updated as quickly as possible to take account of the current economic shock affecting the resource industry and related industries in western Canada.

Measures will be introduced in Budget 2016 to expand access to workforce and skills training and retraining so that many people facing unemployment can upgrade their skills.

And we will protect Albertans who are experiencing economic distress from being preyed upon by unscrupulous lenders. In some cases these lenders are charging exploitative interest rates of up to 600 per cent a year to Albertans least able to afford such fees. This has been allowed to go on for too long. Albertans need a government that will stand up for them when they are most vulnerable. To end these abuses, my government will introduce an act to end predatory lending.

Second, we must do everything we responsibly can, as quickly as possible, to promote job creation and economic diversification.

Alberta is investing \$34 billion into our provincial capital plan to help build the roads, transit, schools, and other facilities our province needs to support the economy and create jobs.

A province-wide slowdown in the construction industry has accompanied the drop in oil prices. Timely, worthy investments in infrastructure today will help keep thousands of tradespeople, equipment operators, engineers, and other professionals at work, giving them the means to support their families.

Our province is also making \$1.5 billion available to Alberta Treasury Branches to support lending to small and medium-sized businesses and has directed AIMCo to earmark half a billion dollars for Alberta companies with growth potential.

In an economic slowdown businesses, whether large or small, new or established, often find their access to credit or investment capital restrained when they need it most to maintain or grow their operations. These programs will help give entrepreneurs the stability they need to weather this economic storm and create new opportunities for employment and growth.

The government of Alberta will do more to promote economic development in Budget 2016. Alberta will introduce further measures to promote access to capital for job creators. My government will set out plans to build on strengths in our economy, including in our agriculture and forestry industries, and to partner with communities and regions so they can act on their local economic strengths and opportunities. And my government will work with leaders in Alberta's \$23 billion credit union system to ensure they have the business tools necessary for their work and to encourage them to support small and medium-sized businesses in their communities.

After a careful consultation with the credit union system my government is aiming to modernize and strengthen Alberta's credit union legislation in the fall sitting of the Legislature.

My government will introduce the Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act to provide the minister of economic development with tools to pursue these initiatives and to report on results.

Third, we will build on our strategic partnership with Canada's new federal government. The government of Canada has committed to a significant new investment in Canada's infrastructure. Alberta will work closely with Ottawa to ensure that federal investment in Alberta infrastructure promotes diversification and job creation as quickly as possible.

Finally, we will work closely with our province's energy industry to ride out this storm and look for opportunities within it. My government recently completed a review of Alberta's royalty system and will now proceed to reform it. This modernization will promote innovation and efficiency. It will remove disincentives to develop different forms of hydrocarbons, and it will provide full transparency and accountability to the public in the operation of royalties. As prices improve and costs decline, the public return from our resources will also improve.

Alberta will work with focus and determination with partners to create new jobs and diversification in the energy industry. Our aim is to move the energy industry up the value chain, to process and add value to our resources, and to diversify the energy industry into new end products.

As a first step to this goal a few weeks ago my government introduced a \$500 million Alberta petrochemicals diversification program. In further pursuit of these goals my government looks forward to the advice of a new, broadly representative energy diversification advisory committee to drive this priority forward and advise my government on additional steps Alberta can take to build a more diversified and resilient energy economy.

#### **Investing in a Clean Energy Future**

My government will introduce the Climate Leadership Implementation Act to give force and effect to key elements of Alberta's new climate plan. Every penny raised by this plan during this period of low energy prices will be reinvested back into the economy to create jobs and to promote diversification in our economy.

Key elements of Alberta's plan include a phase-out of emissions from coal power generation, reducing pollution and the harm it causes to the health of the very young and very old; a carbon levy to create a market-based incentive to build a more efficient and less emission-intensive economy; an investment plan that will fully recycle revenues from Alberta's carbon levy into renewable energy, innovation, public transit, and other measures that will reduce the carbon intensity of our economy; and an adjustment program to assist coal-dependent communities, indigenous communities, low-income families, and small business to adjust to and succeed in a diversified, lower carbon economy.

A new, lean agency called Energy Efficiency Alberta will help families, businesses, and entire communities reduce both their energy costs and their greenhouse gas emissions.

We will work with the energy industry and with civil society to implement Alberta's climate leadership plan, which is strongly supported by key industry leaders in the oil sands, to help Alberta's energy industry achieve the goal of being one of the most environmentally progressive in the world.

To that end, my government looks forward to the advice of a new, broadly representative oil sands advisory group to ensure measures are effective and widely supported.

#### **Responsible Public Financial Management**

The collapse of the price of oil and therefore of public resource revenues has gone directly to our province's bottom line. In these circumstances the government of Alberta cannot meet current deficit targets because the commodity price crash has proved to be deeper and of longer duration than projected. Alberta's fiscal plans must therefore be revisited as part of the prudent, balanced approach my government will set out in its budget later this spring.

We will protect health care and education services. In the circumstances we face, we will also ensure that all public spending, including on these services, is carefully and efficiently managed and that all possible economies are found.

Further to this goal, my government will introduce the Reform of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Act. Over the years compensation practices between the public service and our province's agencies, boards, and commissions have diverged, in some cases significantly so. This reform will address this issue by introducing a framework to narrow and rationalize this growing divergence.

This act will also improve public oversight and stewardship over these important public bodies, which will become more transparent and accountable and follow good governance practices.

My government will have a great deal more to say on all of these issues when its budget is put before the House.

#### **Ongoing Democratic Reform**

My government is looking forward to the report of this Legislature's all-party Special Committee on Ethics and Accountability. The new minister of democratic renewal will receive that report and lead early action on it. My government's aim is to present legislation on the key democratic reform issues addressed by the committee in the fall sitting of this Legislature, with a view to adoption before the end of this year.

#### **Other Measures**

My government will introduce a number of other measures this session.

At the request of most of Alberta's indigenous governments my government will repeal Bill 22 and will engage indigenous communities on how the Crown should fulfill its consultation duties and support the capacity of indigenous people.

My government will consult indigenous people on a new indigenous people's sacred ceremonial objects repatriation act, that would facilitate the return of sacred objects to the nations to whom they belong.

My government will introduce an act to implement a Supreme Court ruling governing essential services to comply with recent rulings by the Supreme Court of Canada and Alberta's Court of Queen's Bench, which invalidated existing provincial labour legislation.

My government will introduce draft legislation this spring modernizing the Municipal Government Act and will then invite comment by citizens and municipal governments with a view to adopting a final version of the legislation this fall.

An act to modernize the enforcement of provincial offences will help police and the judiciary to focus on major offences, by simplifying and streamlining how minor offences are managed.

And amendments to the Securities Act will permit the further modernization, national harmonization, and streamlining of securities legislation.

### Conclusion

Friends, Albertans want to build an economy that is widely diversified and resilient to energy price swings, an economy that captures the full value of our resources, holds the promise of prosperous futures for our children, and shares its benefits widely and fairly among all Albertans; Albertans want to build a society that provides well-managed, efficiently financed, nimble, world-class health care, education, and other public services; and Albertans want to build a society that gives a hand up to people who need it, cares for the vulnerable, and opens doors for our children and our grandchildren. This is what we wish for ourselves and for all.

We have seen oil price drops before. We will get past this one, and we will draw the right lessons from it and act on them.

That is exactly what my government intends to do in the budget and legislative program it will put before this House this session.

Thank you, friends.

God bless Alberta.

God bless Canada.

And God save the Queen.

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

**The Speaker:** Ladies and gentlemen, I would now invite Mr. Robert Clark, accompanied by the Royal Canadian Artillery Band, 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!

[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:** Ladies and gentlemen, it is truly an honour for me to stand here before you today as the Speaker of this Assembly and also on International Women's Day to relate to you events that I consider to be significant historical facts which occurred nearly 100 years ago. On April 19, 2016, Albertans will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in this province. April 19 is a momentous date in our history.

The campaign for women's suffrage, or Votes for Women, as it was called, was a long struggle in Alberta, as it was elsewhere in Canada. From the time of Confederation to the First World War only men could vote in provincial and federal elections. The movement of equal suffrage, which began in the 19th century, was clearly motivated by the drive for equality in public life, a sense that women deserved to participate fully in the democratic process. It seems so strange to us that in this 21st century we ask why it took so long.

By the way, it was pointed out to me that we refer in Canada to suffragists, which are significantly different than suffragettes, which are our southern neighbours.

Suffragists such as Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy, and Alice Jamieson also believed that women could spearhead social reform if only they could access the levers of political power. The equal suffrage movement in Alberta was highlighted by the lobbying efforts of a number of dedicated suffragists. Alberta suffragists first brought their demands for the vote to this building to Premier Arthur Sifton, and the petition was rejected in their call for votes.

A campaign of protests and petitions continued the following year, in 1914, when suffragists returned to this Legislature. This time they had in hand a petition with some 12,200 signatures demanding that women be included in the Alberta Election Act. Although they were praised for their tenacity and their organization, Premier Sifton again rejected the suffragists' demand for the vote.

The most dramatic event of the Alberta women's suffrage campaign took place on February 27, 1915, when Premier Sifton and his cabinet agreed to meet with a small number of suffragists that afternoon. When the cabinet arrived in the Chamber – ladies and gentlemen, this very Chamber – for that meeting, we of my gender were shocked to see suffragists occupying the ministers' seats, and their supporters filled the gallery.

The government of the day was impressed by this show of solidarity and by the persistent campaign. Accordingly, in 1915 the Premier ordered the preparation of a statute placing men and women in Alberta on a basis of absolute equality. On April 19, 1916, the Equal Suffrage Statutory Law Amendment Act was granted royal assent. Alberta joined Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which had given women the right to vote earlier the same year, as the provinces where women could vote and hold public office.

It is of note that Roberta MacAdams and Louise McKinney, both elected in the provincial general election of June 7, 1917, were two of the first women to be elected to the Legislature anywhere in the British Empire, the forerunner to what we now call our Commonwealth.

However, it should be noted that the cause of women's equality in public life was not complete in 1916, as was demonstrated by the efforts of Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby, the so-called Famous Five, who fought for the inclusion of women as Senators in the Persons Case of the late 1920s. This Legislature, which represents all of our people, has a wonderful exhibit dedicated to the Famous Five on the fifth floor of this building in which you will note: we are persons.

In addition, Voices for the Vote is a special exhibit that the Legislature will be hosting commemorating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in Alberta. With a little bit of marketing on behalf of all of the Assembly members, I want you to invite your friends and neighbours to come and see this exhibit. The exhibit will run from early June to mid-August at the Borealis Gallery in the federal building, and I hope that all of you will plan to attend.

Hon. members and esteemed guests, it should be noted, in conclusion, that the injustices concerning the vote continued for other groups for a number of decades after 1916 and may well be continuing. It was only by the 1950s that in Canada electoral disqualifications on racial and religious grounds had been eliminated altogether. Only by 1960 were all status First Nations people finally granted the unconditional right to vote. We must again ask ourselves: why did it take so long?

### Tablings

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to table a copy of the speech graciously given by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

### Introduction of Bills

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

#### Bill 1

#### Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and privilege to rise today to request leave to introduce the government's first bill, the Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act.

In the upcoming budget the government will continue to move forward with our economic diversification and job-creation plan. This bill gives government additional tools to carry out the plan we will lay out in the budget and the requirement to report on progress.

Mr. Speaker, there is no minimizing the impact the collapse in global oil prices is having on our families, workers, and businesses. But while Alberta's economy is experiencing a major setback, I know that this is something we can and will recover from, and we will do it by supporting each other, making prudent decisions, and taking action instead of making a bad situation worse. That's why our government's number one priority is on protecting and creating jobs for today and building on our strengths for a stronger and more diverse economy for tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, Albertans want an economy that is resilient to energy price swings, captures the full value of our resources, offers prosperous futures for our children, and shares its benefits widely and fairly among all Albertans. Bill 1 will provide the government with additional tools to do just that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a first time]

### Motions

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

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the speech of Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to the Assembly be taken into consideration on Wednesday, March 9, 2016.

[Motion carried]

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

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I consider this to be a very auspicious beginning of the session, so I am pleased to move that the Assembly adjourn until Wednesday, March 9, 2016, at 9 a.m.

**The Speaker:** For those of you who are watching, I've learned that when I stand up, the pages stop handing out the documents. So I've learned to sit.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 3:53 p.m.]



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