



**Legislative Assembly
Province of Alberta**

No. 70

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

First Session

Twenty-Eighth Legislature

Thursday, November 21, 2013

The Speaker took the Chair at 1:30 p.m.

Members' Statements

Mr. Jeneroux, Hon. Member for Edmonton-South West, made a statement recognizing November 22, 2013, as National Housing Day.

Dr. Swann, Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, made a statement regarding emergency medical services issues and first responders' concerns.

Mrs. Leskiw, Hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, made a statement regarding the Habitat for Humanity apartment complex in Cold Lake which opened on October 23, 2013, and recognizing the efforts of the Government and the City of Cold Lake to provide affordable housing.

Mrs. Jablonski, Hon. Member for Red Deer-North, made a statement recognizing Yvonne Johnson, who passed away in Red Deer on October 23, 2013.

Mr. Strankman, Hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler, made a statement recognizing 17 junior high school students from the Town of Veteran, who convinced Veterans Affairs Canada to replace war medals belonging to WWII veteran Dave Pennington and who represented Alberta at this year's Remembrance Day ceremony at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

Mr. Xiao, Hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung, made a statement regarding the Registered Apprenticeship Program for high school students and its recent scholarship awards.

Apology by Member

Mr. Anderson, Hon. Member for Airdrie, made a statement withdrawing and apologizing for statements made with respect to the Speaker both inside and outside of the Assembly on November 19 and 20, 2013.

Speaker's Statement – Practices of the Assembly and Challenging the Speaker

Honourable Members, as the Member referenced, a lot of unfortunate things have occurred over these past few days, and many inappropriate comments have been made, both inside and outside this Chamber. You just heard evidence of that point.

I, too, want to take a few minutes to remind all of us that once you are elected to serve in this House, and you take the oath to Her Majesty, you step into a whole new world, a world full of traditions, customs, and practices. You step into an institution that has been founded on practices, procedures, and principles that, in fact, go back centuries. Those traditions, those institutions and practices are rock solid. Honourable Members, they are extremely serious.

They and the entire parliamentary system are in turn fortified by rules, rules which we often refer to as citations, and more specifically, in our own case, we have our own Standing Orders. We should all know at least the very basic rules and Standing Orders, but if we don't, we should learn them as they are cited by our House Leaders, such as the one who just spoke, for example, when they are raising or defending a point of order, or when your Speaker or your Deputy Speaker or your Chair of Committees is making a ruling or interjects to remind you of a particular rule. These rules are not rules that any single one of us may have made, but they are rules that must guide us to help preserve the institutions that I just spoke about and of which we are all part.

These rules can, of course, be changed. They can be amended. New ones can be brought in. If you have an issue with one or more of our rules, there is a process in place that you can use to effect change. Similarly, if you have an issue with an Act or a Bill that is about to become an Act, a law as it were, there is a process in place to deal with that as well.

Finally, if you have an issue with the Speaker or whoever is chairing, there is a process in place to accommodate that as well. I want to comment very briefly on that as I wrap up.

As occurred yesterday when the Chair accepted yesterday's apology from the Member for Airdrie, the issue of criticizing the Speaker is really one of respect or disrespect for the institution.

The role of the Speaker is something that is fundamental to our parliamentary system and our entire system of responsible government. As Members may be

aware, 2015 will mark the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, which helped lay the foundation for our form of parliamentary government. As Philip Laundry says at page 11 in his 1984 book *The Office of Speaker in the Parliaments of the Commonwealth*, “The office of Speaker is almost as old as Parliament itself,” as the first Speaker was designated in 1377. So there is history, honourable Members. There is tradition for the respect that should be accorded to the office of the Speaker. This is not about me; this is about the position.

The Chair addressed the subject of criticizing the Speaker yesterday at pages 2965 to 2966 of Hansard, which is worth repeating briefly. The quotation from Beauchesne’s, sixth edition, at paragraph 167, at pages 48-49 states as follows:

The essential ingredient of the speakership is found in the status of the Speaker as a servant of the House. The Presiding Officer, while but a servant of the House, is entitled on all occasions to be treated with the greatest attention and respect by the individual members because the office embodies the power, dignity, and honour of the House itself.

If someone wants to challenge the Chair, the appropriate mechanism is to bring a substantive motion forward that can be debated in the Assembly. Your Chair, as with any Chair in our parliamentary system, will not put up with, nor should Members of the Assembly put up with, collateral attacks that bring the Assembly and the institution into disrepute and demonstrate a profound disrespect for the office of Speaker and the institution. As *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, second edition, states at page 313, “The actions of the Speaker may not be criticized in debate or by any means except by way of a substantive motion.”

For those wondering about the impact of social media on proceedings in the Assembly, the Chair is pleased to confirm that traditions that go back as far as the 14th century can adapt and be applied to our circumstances involving social media today, social media such as Twitter, for example. The Honourable Member for Airdrie referred to his tweets as being disrespectful or words to that effect. I want to remind not only that Member but all of us, all of you, that a similar situation to what we just are speaking about occurred in the Assembly of the Northwest Territories as recently as last month. There, a Member had apologized in the Assembly and then made comments in social media that conflicted with that apology. Speaker Jackie Jacobson from the Northwest Territories said this at page 3261 of the Northwest Territories Hansard on October 31, 2013:

However, I do need to strongly caution Members that statements made outside the House, whether on Facebook or in other media, can amount to a breach of privilege or even contempt of the House. This is especially so when a Member’s comments could be read as challenging a ruling of the Speaker. It’s thin ice and I urge Members to stay off of it. This is not to protect me personally. It is to keep dignity and order in the House, so that we can get our work done.

Speakers across Canada, all of whom I have met with and done an informal survey with, do their level best to be as impartial as we possibly can. We do not go to caucus meetings when session is on unless we are specifically invited to address an item such as might come up under Members' services or such as might come up in the House, and caucus is looking for some guidance or a dialogue with the Speaker. We do not go to political events when the House is in session. We do our best to invite Members to come to our offices as opposed to us going to their offices, especially Government. There are exceptions that occasionally occur, obviously, but those are some of the premises.

Similarly, with respect to a website that I have, mypcmla, during session I have asked it to be withdrawn so that I can continue the role of being as absolutely impartial as I can, and Lord help me. Thank you.

Presenting Petitions

Mrs. Jablonski, Hon. Member for Red Deer-North, presented a petition from 15,744 Albertans urging the Government to keep Michener Centre in Red Deer open for the vulnerable Albertans with severe developmental disabilities who have called Michener home for decades, which would allow them to live out their lives with peace, dignity, and stability.

Notices of Motions

Hon. Mr. McIver, Deputy Government House Leader, gave oral notice of Written Questions and Motions for Returns to be accepted or otherwise dealt with, pursuant to Standing Order 34(3):

Written Questions

To be accepted: WQ44

Tabling Returns and Reports

Dr. Swann, Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View:

Document, undated, containing emergency medical services statistics for the years 2011-12 and 2012-13, relating to comments made by Dr. Swann, Hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, during Oral Question Period on November 21, 2013

Sessional Paper 1152/2012-13

Mr. Wilson, Hon. Member for Calgary-Shaw, on behalf of Mr. Pedersen, Hon. Member for Medicine Hat:

Document, undated, entitled “Monthly Emergency Medical Services Activity Summary,” prepared by Alberta Health Services, relating to comments made by Mr. Pedersen, Hon. Member for Medicine Hat, during Oral Question Period on November 21, 2013

Sessional Paper 1153/2012-13

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Government Motions

46. Moved by Hon. Mr. Campbell on behalf of Hon. Mr. Hancock:

Be it resolved that:

1. Honourable David Alward, Premier of the Province of New Brunswick, be invited to the floor of this Chamber on Thursday, November 28, 2013, immediately following Prayers to address the Legislative Assembly;
2. This address be called for immediately after the Hon. Mr. Alward is introduced under Introduction of Visitors; and
3. The ordinary business of the Assembly resume upon the conclusion of the address;

And be it further resolved that Premier Alward’s address become part of the permanent records of the Assembly.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

45. Moved by Hon. Mr. Campbell on behalf of Hon. Mr. Hancock:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly concur in the report of the Select Special Chief Electoral Officer Search Committee and recommend that Glen Resler be appointed as Chief Electoral Officer for the Province of Alberta, effective December 9, 2013.

A debate followed.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

On the motion that the following Bill be now read a Second time:

Bill 44 Notaries and Commissioners Act — Ms Olesen

Ms Olesen moved adjournment of the debate, which was agreed to.

Third Reading

On the motion that the following Bill be now read a Third time:

Bill 37 Statutes Repeal Act (\$) — Hon. Mr. McIver on behalf of Hon. Mr. Denis

Mr. McIver moved adjournment of the debate, which was agreed to.

The following Bill was read a Third time and passed:

Bill 35 Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2013 — Hon. Mr. Horner

Adjournment

On motion by Hon. Mr. Campbell, Deputy Government House Leader, that it be called 4:30 p.m., the Assembly adjourned at 4:27 p.m. until Monday, November 25, 2013, at 1:30 p.m.

Hon. Gene Zwozdesky,
Speaker

Title: Thursday, November 21, 2013