



**Legislative Assembly
Province of Alberta**

No. 49

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Third Session

Twenty-Ninth Legislature

Monday, November 6, 2017

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

Members' Statements

Mr. Horne, Hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert, made a statement regarding the history of grain elevators in Alberta, which are slowly diminishing in number, and the efforts of some communities to preserve them.

Mr. Stier, Hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, made a statement regarding the upcoming Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties convention and the annual Alberta Urban Municipalities convention, and the services provided by Alberta municipalities.

Mr. Carson, Hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, made a statement regarding the priorities of constituents in the Edmonton-Meadowlark constituency and Government priorities that address these issues and that value the public sector.

Mr. Smith, Hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon, made a statement recognizing 15-year-old Philippa Madill, who suffers from scoliosis, and has undertaken several fundraising efforts, including for the Stollery Children's Hospital, and was named an ambassador to the Stollery and recognized as the Stollery Superstar of the Year.

MLA Drever, Hon. Member for Calgary-Bow, made a statement regarding access to safe, legal abortions and barriers women and abortion clinics still face, especially women in rural and remote communities.

Mr. Schneider, Hon. Member for Little Bow, made a statement regarding the recent fire at Bindloss and Canadian Forces Base Suffield caused by a controlled ordinance explosion on the base, the damage and loss of cattle resulting from the fire, how local fire departments were not allowed on the base to assist, and the Government being ill-equipped to deal with time-sensitive matters.

Hon. Mr. Carlier, Deputy Government House Leader, requested the unanimous consent of the Assembly to waive Standing Order 7(7) in order to complete the Daily Routine.

Unanimous consent to proceed was not granted.

Introduction of Bills (First Reading)

Notice having been given:

Bill 25 Regulated Forestry Profession Amendment Act, 2017 — Hon. Mr. Carlier on behalf of Hon. Ms Gray

Speaker's Statement – Oral Question Period and Members' Statements Rotations

Honourable Members, before we proceed to the next item of business, I would like to make some additional remarks on the rotation of oral questions and Members' Statements.

As you will recall in my comments on Thursday respecting the rotations, I encouraged House Leaders to come to an agreement on new rotations to reflect the changes to the composition of the Assembly. At 1:03 p.m. today my office received a House Leaders' Agreement; however, I have not had the chance to review it in any detail. Therefore, for the time being I have prepared both an Oral Question Period and a Members' Statements rotation for the Assembly which reflects the current composition of the Assembly and is fair to all.

Before I delve into the details of the rotations, I would like to note that I take very seriously the first principle of parliamentary law, which, as articulated in paragraph 1 of Beauchesne's, 6th Edition, is that it is the Speaker's role to protect the minority against the majority. I made similar remarks to these in June of 2015 at the beginning of this Legislature in light of the first House Leaders' Agreement on the Oral Question Period and Members' Statements rotations.

Additionally, I wish to implement these new rotations starting tomorrow, Tuesday, November 7, on what will be day one of the Oral Question Period rotation. As mentioned earlier, the House Leaders in consultation with the other Members provided another agreement. I am prepared to consider it. Nonetheless, Members will be provided copies of this rotation along with a revised Projected Sitting Days Calendar, which outlines the Members' Statements rotation.

For those Members who may be wondering why it is the Speaker who determines the rotation of questions, I wish to quote from Speaker Kowalski's ruling from February 8, 2010. Facing a similar situation, Speaker Kowalski explained:

By convention, history, and practice the rotation of questions is not found in the Standing Orders, nor should it be. This absence is due in part to a recognition that it is the Speaker's responsibility to recognize Members to participate in debate and the question period. The Chair is fully aware that it is the Members themselves who make the rules through the Standing Orders, and this Chair has given effect to House Leaders' Agreements, but it is ultimately up to the Chair to recognize Members during question period.

His remarks may be found on page 17 of the Alberta Hansard for that day.

Additionally, Speaker Kowalski on April 11, 2001, said that:

the practice of caucuses submitting lists to the Speaker's office ... of those Members wishing to ask questions that day will continue. In accordance with traditions of the Assembly, the Speaker will ultimately retain discretion when it comes to recognizing Members during question period.

As to that reference, please see page 11 of Alberta Hansard for that day.

Before I outline the details of the Oral Question Period rotation, I would like to alert the Assembly as to the key considerations I examined in arriving at the rotation. The context for this allocation, the current composition of Assembly, is of great importance. First of all, currently the Assembly has the largest Official Opposition since 1993. There are 32 private Members from the Government caucus, 26 from the Official Opposition, two from the Alberta Party caucus, and one each from four single-Member or independent caucuses for a total of 64 private Members. It was with this context in mind that the Oral Question Period Rotation was devised.

Starting with the Alberta Party caucus, I have determined the allocation for that caucus by considering the overall standings of private Members in the Assembly. The Alberta Party caucus, which has two Members and will be the Third Party opposition, is entitled to receive 10 questions per two-week period. The Alberta Party comprises approximately six per cent of private Members but will be entitled to approximately 10 per cent of opposition questions.

With respect to the single-Member caucuses and independent Members, in this grouping, each Member is allocated one question per week, which reflects each group's standing in terms of seats in the Assembly. I would also add that one question per week for this grouping aligns with the well-established practice of the Assembly, prior to the 29th Legislature.

For instance, starting in February 2011, the then Member for Calgary-Currie, the sole member of the Alberta Party caucus at the time, received one question per week. In 2004 the Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner, the lone representative in the Assembly for the Alberta Alliance, similarly received one question per week starting in March 2005. This also occurred in October 2009 with the same Member when he was the Member for Calgary-Glenmore, at that time the sole member of the Wildrose Alliance caucus.

There are many additional examples of instances in which independent Members received one question per week. To name but a few, in March 2014, the Members for Calgary-Varsity, Calgary-Foothills, and Fort-McMurray-Wood Buffalo each received the sixth question once per week.

The specifics of the rotation are as follows. With respect to the details of the Oral Question Period rotation to be implemented starting Tuesday, this rotation is based on an eight-day, 16 questions-per-day format.

The Official Opposition is entitled to the first three main questions each day. Additionally, the Official Opposition receives questions seven through nine and questions 13, 14, and 16 each day. The Official Opposition also receives question 10 on days one, three, five, and seven as well as question 11 on days two, three, four, six and eight. Lastly, the Official Opposition is entitled to question 12 on day two and days four through eight. This amounts to a total of 87 questions over the eight-day rotation.

The Alberta Party caucus – the Third Party Opposition – receives question four on each day of the eight-day rotation. The Alberta Party caucus is also entitled to question 11 on days one and five, for a total, as noted, of 10 questions over the eight-day rotation.

The Liberal Member, Progressive Conservative Member, and independent Members will each receive one question each four-day period, as follows: the Member for Calgary-Mountain View on days one and five; the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster on days two and six; the Member for Strathmore-Brooks on days three and seven; the Member for Calgary-South East on days four and eight.

Private Members of the Government caucus are entitled to questions five and 15 on each day of the rotation. They also receive question 10 on days two, four, six, and eight as well as question 11 on day seven and question 12 on days one and three. As a result the Government caucus receives a total of 23 questions over the eight-day period.

Now, as I turn to the question of how the questions have been reallocated as compared to the rotation that has been in force since the Fall Sitting commenced, the increase in the number of questions for the Alberta Party caucus to 10 for the eight-day rotation has resulted in a decrease of three questions for the Official Opposition, one question for the NDP caucus, and one fewer for the Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

The re-allotment is justified based on the aforementioned allocation of one question per week to single-Member caucuses, on the fact that the size of the Official Opposition has been reduced by one Member with the departure of the Member for Calgary-Lougheed, and lastly because of the reduction in the number of private Members in the Government caucus by one, with the appointment of the Member for Calgary-North West as the Minister of Infrastructure.

I would like to remind Members that questions and responses should be succinct, being up to 35 seconds in length, and that preambles to supplementary questions are only allowed for the first four sets of questions each day.

With respect to the Members' Statements rotation, the House Leaders' Agreement for October provided for a three-week rotation. As Standing Order 7(4) sets out, up to six private Members may make statements of up to two minutes in length each day.

Private Members of the Government caucus are entitled to three statements each sitting day. The Official Opposition receives three statements every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, except for week three, when this caucus receives two statements. They also receive one statement on Thursdays. The Third Party Opposition will receive one statement each week on Thursdays.

This allotment accords with past practices whereby two-Member caucuses received one Member's Statement per week. In March 2010, the NDP opposition, which was a two-Member caucus, received one Member's Statement each week. The same allocation was applied with respect to this two-Member caucus in April 2008. In this current arrangement the Official Opposition will be entitled to one fewer Member's Statement per three-week cycle. The one-Member caucuses and independents each receive one statement each three-week period. Please consult the Projected Sitings Day Calendar for further details.

As noted, let me say again that I will review the House Leaders' Agreement and make further comments at a later date. If there are additional suggestions, I am prepared to discuss those with the House Leaders and others who are impacted by this decision.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Written Questions

The following Written Question was accepted:

WQ17. Asked for by Mr. Ellis:

How many charges have been laid under section 4 of the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act since this section came into force?

Public Bills and Orders Other Than Government Bills and Orders

Committee of the Whole

According to Order, the Assembly resolved itself into Committee of the Whole and the Speaker left the Chair.

(Assembly in Committee)

And after some time spent therein, the Deputy Speaker assumed the Chair.

The following Bill was reported with some amendments:

Bill 206 Child, Youth and Family Enhancement (Adoption Advertising) Amendment Act, 2017 — Mrs. Aheer

Ms Woollard, Acting Chair of Committees, tabled copies of all amendments considered by Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

Amendment to Bill 206 (A1) (Hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View)
— Agreed to

Sessional Paper 484/2017

Amendment to Bill 206 (A2) (Hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs)
— Agreed to

Sessional Paper 485/2017

Second Reading

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

Bill 207 Regulatory Burden Reduction Act — Mr. Hunter

A debate followed.

Debate adjourned, Mrs. Aheer speaking.

Motions Other Than Government Motions

508. Moved by Ms Kazim:

Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government to recognize the first week of February as World Interfaith Harmony Week in support of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/5.

A debate followed.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

Adjournment

On motion by MLA Cortes-Vargas, Hon. Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, the Assembly adjourned at 5:12 p.m. until Tuesday, November 7, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.

Hon. Robert E. Wanner,
Speaker

Title: Monday, November 6, 2017