



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Wednesday morning, March 9, 2016

Day 2

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  
Sweet, Heather, Edmonton-Manning (ND), 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), Government Whip	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	Taylor, Wes, Battle River-Wainwright (W)
Kazim, Anam, Calgary-Glenmore (ND)	Turner, Dr. A. Robert, Edmonton-Whitemud (ND)
Kleinsteuber, Jamie, Calgary-Northern Hills (ND)	van Dijken, Glenn, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock (W)
Larivee, Hon. Danielle, Lesser Slave Lake (ND)	Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND), Deputy Government Whip
Littlewood, Jessica, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (ND)	Woollard, Denise, Edmonton-Mill Creek (ND)
Loewen, Todd, Grande Prairie-Smoky (W)	Yao, Tany, Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (W)
Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)	Vacant, Calgary-Greenway

**Party standings:**

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

**Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly**

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>

## **Executive Council**

Rachel Notley	Premier, President of Executive Council
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
Kathleen T. Ganley	Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
Christina Gray	Minister of Labour, Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal
Danielle Larivee	Minister of Municipal Affairs
Brian Mason	Minister of Infrastructure, Minister of Transportation
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**

**Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund**

Chair: Ms Miller  
Deputy Chair: Mrs. Schreiner

Cyr	McKitrick
Dang	Taylor
Ellis	Turner
Horne	

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

Chair: Mr. Sucha  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Schneider

Anderson, S.	Hunter
Carson	Jansen
Connolly	Panda
Coolahan	Piquette
Dach	Schreiner
Fitzpatrick	Taylor
Gotfried	

**Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee**

Chair: Mrs. Littlewood  
Deputy Chair: Ms Miller

Anderson, W.	Nielsen
Clark	Nixon
Connolly	Renaud
Cortes-Vargas	Starke
Cyr	Sucha
Drever	Swann
Jansen	van Dijken
Loyola	

**Standing Committee on Families and Communities**

Chair: Ms Goehring  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Smith

Drever	Pitt
Hinkley	Rodney
Horne	Shepherd
Jansen	Swann
Luff	Westhead
McPherson	Yao
Orr	

**Standing Committee on Legislative Offices**

Chair: Mr. Shepherd  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Cooper	Littlewood
Ellis	Nixon
Horne	van Dijken
Jabbour	Woollard
Kleinsteuber	

**Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

Chair: Mr. Wanner  
Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Cooper	McIver
Dang	Nixon
Fildebrandt	Piquette
Jabbour	Schreiner
Luff	

**Standing Committee on Private Bills**

Chair: Ms McPherson  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Connolly

Anderson, W.	Kleinsteuber
Babcock	McKitrick
Drever	Rosendahl
Drysdale	Stier
Fraser	Strankman
Hinkley	Sucha
Kazim	

**Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing**

Chair: Ms Fitzpatrick  
Deputy Chair: Ms Babcock

Carson	Loyola
Coolahan	McPherson
Cooper	Nielsen
Ellis	Schneider
Goehring	Starke
Hanson	van Dijken
Kazim	

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts**

Chair: Mr. Fildebrandt  
Deputy Chair: Mr. S. Anderson

Barnes	Luff
Cyr	Malkinson
Dach	Miller
Fraser	Renaud
Goehring	Turner
Gotfried	Westhead
Hunter	

**Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship**

Chair: Loyola  
Deputy Chair: Mr. Loewen

Aheer	Kleinsteuber
Babcock	MacIntyre
Clark	Malkinson
Dang	Nielsen
Drysdale	Rosendahl
Hanson	Woollard
Kazim	

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

9 a.m.

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Please bow your heads as each of us in our own way contemplates the need for serenity to accept our responsibility to search for respectful solutions, courage to defend principles which may not be popular, and wisdom to understand the difference.

Please be seated.

### Orders of the Day

#### Election of a Deputy Chair of Committees

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act and Standing Order 58(2) nominations are invited for the office of Deputy Chair of Committees for the 29th Legislature. Do you wish to make any nominations? The Member for Strathcona-Sherwood Park.

**Cortes-Vargas:** Absolutely. Over the last few months I've had an opportunity to work with all of my colleagues in different capacities, in committees, and we've really seen people that have taken that leadership role, that have a clear understanding of the procedure and the context and show leadership for our members. Heather Sweet has really identified herself as one of those people, and I would like to nominate her to take this on and to continue showing that role and to be of assistance to you, Mr. Speaker, in your role as well. I believe she has all the great intentions and capacity in order to do such, and her experience has enabled her to do so.

**The Speaker:** Ms Sweet, are you prepared to accept the nomination?

**Ms Sweet:** I'll accept the nomination, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Are there other nominations? The oppositional House leader.

**Mr. Cooper:** Not oppositional, sir, just opposition.

Well, good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute pleasure to see you here this morning and all of the members of the Assembly. It's great to be back where I know we can put the needs of Albertans ahead of our own needs, and I think we have an opportunity to do that this morning. I appreciate the nomination from the government member. I just might briefly comment that the Member for Edmonton-Manning – some might address her by her first name, but in our case we'll stick to the rules – was recently appointed caucus chair of the NDP caucus, and this member plays a very important and partisan role inside the NDP caucus.

They have made a commitment to do things differently. In my opinion, appointing a caucus chair, who plays a very partisan role, to the very nonpartisan role in the Speaker's office is not doing things differently. In fact, I think you would find that many Albertans would say that this doesn't pass the smell test. While I have had the opportunity of working with the Member for Edmonton-Manning in a number of capacities and she is very capable and quite a lovely person, I'm not sure that her role as the caucus chair is an ideal fit to work inside the Speaker's office.

We can look at a number of things that they've said that they would do differently, but they're not, including by-election campaign-style announcements, finding ways to pay a caucus chair like the Deputy Chair of Committees, and other things where the government said they would do one thing and now appear to be doing it differently. But do not fret, Mr. Speaker. The Wildrose is here to help provide solutions, meaningful solutions that can communicate to Albertans that the Assembly is ready to do things differently.

So it's my absolute pleasure to rise in this place today and nominate my good friend and colleague the Member for Calgary-Foothills. The Member for Calgary-Foothills understands the importance of the role of the Deputy Chair of Committees and the need to ensure that it is done in as nonpartisan a way as possible. He has a long history, a long and proud history, of working in the private sector, where he has chaired hundreds and hundreds of meetings. As a professional engineer he understands the importance of process, the importance of following the rules that are set out by his colleagues in that sector to ensure that everyone is safe. That can easily be applied to serving in the role of Deputy Chair of Committees.

I think that we have a wonderful opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to do something unique, to do something powerful, to work across party lines, to invite a member of an opposition caucus into the inner workings of the Legislature, and I am confident that the Member for Calgary-Foothills could do just that for all members of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Hon. Member Panda, are you prepared to accept the nomination for Deputy Chair?

**Mr. Panda:** I would be pleased to serve in your office, sir. I accept the nomination.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Are there any other nominations?

Hearing none, I would therefore declare nominations closed. The nominees for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees are Ms Heather Sweet from Edmonton-Manning and Mr. Prasad Panda from Calgary-Foothills. Voting will commence after the list of nominees is posted in each voting booth. The table officers will proceed, and I think the Chamber doors will be secured after that.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

**The Speaker:** I understand that the members will have some instructions and a road map, but if you'll come forward, the voting will now begin.

[Members voted from 9:10 a.m. to 9:17 a.m.]

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

I've been advised that there may have been some misunderstandings with respect to the voting process, as raised by several members. We will, therefore, based on what I hear, now secure the doors and have a revote.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, a number of members who were not in the Chamber when you initially said that the doors would be locked have now entered the Chamber and drastically changed the face of the results of the election. The honourable thing would be that the members who weren't in the Chamber at least remove themselves from the Chamber, and we can revote.

**The Speaker:** The minister of economic development.

**Mr. Bilous:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I appreciate the opposition's comments; however, to my knowledge, the bells did not go off, and therefore the doors were not tiled. Correct me if I'm wrong, if I actually heard the bells or not. I didn't hear the bells. Therefore, the doors were not tiled. Obviously, we'll respect your decision.

I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Table counsel, could you please come to the Speaker's chair?

### Speaker's Ruling Rules and Practices of the Assembly

**The Speaker:** Welcome back, everyone. On the point raised by the minister of economic development, I've checked, and there does not appear to be in the election of officers procedure a ringing of the bells.

The Opposition House Leader has raised the suggestion, what I would understand to be a point of order, that the members who entered the Chamber after what should have been the securement of the doors exercise their option as to whether or not they choose to vote on this. I would urge the government members to consider that matter at some length.

Opposition House Leader, you raise a very good point. The dilemma with respect to raising it is that it is entirely based upon the good judgment of each individual member because I'm not sure that you could identify who actually came in, nor could I. So I would stand by the ruling. However, I would ask those members who in good conscience believe that they came later into this Chamber, after what, in fact, should have been secured doors, to consider that if you choose to exercise your vote.

I would rule that we revote. And to those members who were not here, who entered the Chamber after the House was advised that the doors should be secured, I would urge you to consider not voting.

Could we please proceed with a revote?

Hon. member, do you have a point?

**Mr. Bilous:** Mr. Speaker, I know it seems that there was some confusion this morning as far as members coming in or not coming in for this time. Normally and according to the standing orders, there is a bell before a vote, which gives members the opportunity to come into the Chamber and be present if they have business outside of the Chamber, and there wasn't any bell this morning.

So our government will do the right thing, and I will therefore be asking our members who were not present when the vote was called to take it upon themselves to make a decision of whether or not to stay in here for the revote.

Thank you.

9:25

**The Speaker:** Hearing that, could we please proceed with the vote? Are there any other comments?

**Mr. Cooper:** I have a comment, then, sir. It was our impression that the door had been locked. There was an opposition member who tried to enter the Chamber mere moments ago and was refused, in the form of the independent Member for Calgary-Elbow, the leader of the Alberta Party. Subsequently, we have seen additional members from the government side enter the Chamber. I don't think that this is the start that all of us were hoping for, sir.

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the rule cited that members are not allowed to enter the Chamber when there has not

been a standing vote called. There are no standing votes in the morning. Could someone please cite the rule?

**The Speaker:** Government House Leader, to the House, the point in question is in schedule A, subsection 8. "The doors of the Chamber will be secured during the voting process." Schedule A, under Election of Officers Procedure.

**Mr. Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, I might just add that point 9 is that "ballots will be provided to Members present in the Chamber by the Table Officers of the Assembly prior to voting."

**Mr. Mason:** Okay. Mr. Speaker, I see the rule. I will withdraw.

**The Speaker:** I notice that hon. members are departing the room. I would respectfully request that those who entered the room when they believe the doors would have been secured would exit. Hon. members, thank you. Thank you.

Could we please proceed with the vote now?

[Members voted from 9:28 a.m. to 9:35 a.m.]

**The Speaker:** Please take your seats. Have all who wished to do so voted?

Hearing none, I would ask the table officers to retire with the ballot box.

Could the doors please remain secure?

[Ballots were counted from 9:35 a.m. to 9:43 a.m.]

**The Speaker:** For the information of the House, in this very formal manner discussed, if you read the procedures that are on your desks, the reason that I determined that it would be better to keep the doors secure is the incidents that led us to this point, and I felt that that was a better decision to make. There may well be a second vote that takes place, and I choose not to jeopardize the securement of the doors. Thus, my reasoning.

**The Acting Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the number of ballots cast for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees: 59. The number of spoiled ballots: zero. The number of votes required to achieve a 50 per cent plus one majority: 30. The member having received the majority of votes cast: Ms Heather Sweet.

Ms Heather Sweet is hereby the Deputy Chair of Committees of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 29th Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. members.

Hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning, would you like to say a few remarks to the Assembly?

**Ms Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to be elected to this position by all members of the Assembly, and I look forward to working with everybody collaboratively.

Thank you.

## Government Motions

### Committee Membership Changes

2. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:
  - Be it resolved that the membership of the Assembly's committees be replaced as follows:
    - (1) Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund: Ms Miller, chair; Mrs. Schreiner, deputy chair; Mr. Cyr; Mr. Dang; Mr. Ellis; Mr. Horne; Ms McKittrick; Mr. Taylor; and Dr. Turner.
    - (2) Standing Committee on Legislative Offices: Mr. Shepherd, chair; Mr. Malkinson, deputy chair; Mr.

- Cooper; Mr. Ellis; Mr. Horne; Ms Jabbour; Mr. Kleinsteuber; Mrs. Littlewood; Mr. Nixon; Mr. van Dijken; and Ms Woollard.
- (3) Standing Committee on Private Bills: Ms McPherson, chair; Mr. Connolly, deputy chair; Mr. W. Anderson; Ms Babcock; Ms Drever; Mr. Drysdale; Mr. Fraser; Mr. Hinkley; Ms Kazim; Mr. Kleinsteuber; Ms McKittrick; Mr. Rosendahl; Mr. Stier; Mr. Strankman; and Mr. Sucha.
- (4) Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing: Ms Fitzpatrick, chair; Ms Babcock, deputy chair; Mr. Carson; Mr. Coolahan; Mr. Cooper; Mr. Ellis; Ms Goehring; Mr. Hanson; Ms Kazim; Loyola; Ms McPherson; Mr. Nielsen; Mr. Schneider; Dr. Starke; and Mr. van Dijken.
- (5) Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Mr. Fildebrandt, chair; Mr. S. Anderson, deputy chair; Mr. Barnes; Mr. Cyr; Mr. Dach; Mr. Fraser; Ms Goehring; Mr. Gotfried; Mr. Hunter; Ms Luff; Mr. Malkinson; Ms Miller; Ms Renaud; Dr. Turner; and Mr. Westhead.
- (6) Special Standing Committee on Members' Services: Mr. Wanner, chair; Cortes-Vargas, deputy chair; Mr. Cooper; Mr. Dang; Mr. Fildebrandt; Ms Jabbour; Ms Luff; Mr. McIver; Mr. Nixon; Mr. Piquette; and Mrs. Schreiner.
- (7) Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future: Mr. Sucha, chair; Mr. Schneider, deputy chair; Mr. S. Anderson; Mr. Carson; Mr. Connolly; Mr. Coolahan; Mr. Dach; Ms Fitzpatrick; Mr. Gotfried; Mr. Hunter; Ms Jansen; Mr. Panda; Mr. Piquette; Mrs. Schreiner; and Mr. Taylor.
- (8) Standing Committee on Families and Communities: Ms Goehring, chair; Mr. Smith, deputy chair; Ms Drever; Mr. Hinkley; Mr. Horne; Ms Jansen; Ms Luff; Ms McPherson; Mr. Orr; Mrs. Pitt; Mr. Rodney; Mr. Shepherd; Dr. Swann; Mr. Westhead; and Mr. Yao.
- (9) Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship: Loyola, chair; Mr. Loewen, deputy chair; Mrs. Aheer; Ms Babcock; Mr. Clark; Mr. Dang; Mr. Drysdale; Mr. Hanson; Ms Kazim; Mr. Kleinsteuber; Mr. MacIntyre; Mr. Malkinson; Mr. Nielsen; Mr. Rosendahl; and Ms Woollard.
- (10) Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee: Mrs. Littlewood, chair; Ms Miller, deputy chair; Mr. W. Anderson; Mr. Clark; Mr. Connolly; Cortes-Vargas; Mr. Cyr; Ms Drever; Ms Jansen; Loyola; Mr. Nielsen; Mr. Nixon; Ms Renaud; Dr. Starke; Mr. Sucha; Dr. Swann; and Mr. van Dijken.

9:50

**The Speaker:** Are there any other members who would like to speak to Government Motion 2, Committee Membership Changes? Hearing none, closing comments?

[Government Motion 2 carried]

3. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve into Committee of the Whole, when called, to consider certain Bills on the Order Paper.

[Government Motion 3 carried]

4. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly resolve itself

into Committee of Supply, when called, to consider supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

[Government Motion 4 carried]

#### Evening Sitting on March 14, 2016

5. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 4(1) the Assembly shall meet in the evening on Monday, March 14, 2016, for consideration of government business.

[Government Motion 5 carried]

#### Adjournment of Spring Session

6. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 3(9) the 2016 spring sitting of the Assembly shall stand adjourned upon the Government House Leader advising the Assembly that the business for the sitting is concluded.

[Government Motion 6 carried]

**The Speaker:** The hon. President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

#### Transmittal of Estimates

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have received certain messages from Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, which I now transmit to you.

**The Sergeant-at-Arms:** Order!

**The Speaker:** The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary supply estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

The Lieutenant Governor transmits interim supply estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province and of certain sums required from the lottery fund for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Please be seated.

The hon. President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the 2015-16 supplementary supply estimates. When supplementary estimates are tabled, section 4(5) of the Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act requires that an update to the consolidated fiscal plan be tabled.

Accordingly, I also wish to table the 2015-16 third-quarter fiscal update, which serves as the updated fiscal plan. The quarterly fiscal update provides a framework for additional spending authority for the Legislative Assembly and for the government. These supplementary supply estimates will provide additional spending to six government departments. When passed, the estimates will authorize an approximate increase of \$106 million in expense funding for the government. These estimates will also authorize a transfer of \$25 million of the previously approved capital investment vote to the expense vote within the Department of Environment and Parks.

Finally, I wish to table the 2016-17 interim supply estimates. These interim supply estimates will provide spending authority to the Legislative Assembly and the government for the period of April 1, 2016, to May 31, 2016, inclusive. This interim funding authority will ensure continuity in the business of the province while the Legislature takes the time necessary to discuss, debate,

and enact the full funding required for government business for the 2016-17 fiscal year. When passed, these interim supply estimates will authorize approximate spending of \$30 million for the Legislative Assembly, \$7.1 billion for the expense funding, \$864 million in capital investment funding, \$164 million in financial transactions funding for the government, and \$363 million for the transfer from the lottery fund to the general revenue fund.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Government Motions

(continued)

7. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that the message from Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 2016-17 interim supply estimates, and all other matters connected therewith be referred to Committee of Supply.

**The Speaker:** The House leader for the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my displeasure to rise today and speak to the requirement for supply. While I appreciate that we need to ensure that our front-line services – nurses, doctors, teachers, paramedics – need to be able to continue to work and that this is the necessary process to make it happen, I just wanted to take a brief moment and highlight some of my concerns around the need for supply. This new government, as I've already mentioned once today, promised to do things differently. I remember some time that I spent around the precinct area and members of the current caucus standing in this place, much as I'm doing this morning, rallying against the government of the day because of their inability to plan on time.

Mr. Speaker, the end of March comes at the end of March every single year. The government of the day lays out the agenda for the government. They knew that the end of March was coming. In fact, we just passed a budget the end of November. They've had all of this time to be working towards having this done now. Now, they used to take a fair amount of time blaming the previous government for putting them in a bad spot, for having to have them rush things. But here we are now almost a full year into the mandate of this government, and they still aren't getting things done on time.

This problem could have been solved if we had come back to this Assembly, as Albertans right across the province would expect us to do, in early February, saw a budget in mid-February, and had all of the important tasks of passing that budget completed by the end of March. But today we see that that's not going to be the case. Not only that, Mr. Speaker; we've heard from the Minister of Finance that the budget isn't going to be tabled in the Assembly until the 14th of April, well past the end of the fiscal year. So it is more than a little disappointing to this side of the House that we haven't taken the necessary steps to ensure that the budget can be passed by the year-end. It's what we expect of all of the organizations that report to us, yet it's not what the government is delivering for Albertans.

So I will not be supporting this motion, and I would expect that many of my colleagues also will not be.

10:00

**The Speaker:** Are there any other members who wish to speak to Motion 7?

The Deputy Government House Leader to close debate.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I just want to make it clear that this Committee of Supply motion only deals with six departments, extends by two months, and I encourage all

members of the House to vote in favour so that government business may continue.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Government Motion 7 carried]

8. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 61(2) the Committee of Supply shall be called to consider the 2016-17 interim supply estimates for three hours on Thursday, March 10, 2016, beginning at 9 a.m.

[Government Motion 8 carried]

9. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that the message from Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, the 2015-16 supplementary supply estimates for the general revenue fund, and all matters connected therewith be referred to Committee of Supply.

[Government Motion 9 carried]

10. Mr. Bilous moved on behalf of Mr. Mason:  
Be it resolved that pursuant to Standing Order 61(2) the Committee of Supply shall be called to consider the 2015-16 supplementary supply estimates for the general revenue fund for three hours on Monday, March 14, 2016, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

**The Speaker:** I'm sorry, hon. member. There's no debate on this motion, as I understand it.

[Government Motion 10 carried]

### Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

Mrs. Littlewood moved, seconded by Mr. Westhead, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor as follows.

To Her Honour the Honourable Lois Mitchell, CM, AOE, LLD, the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Alberta:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

**Mrs. Littlewood:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to open debate on the Speech from the Throne. I wish to thank Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor for her carefully intentioned words that laid the groundwork for this spring session.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your continued efforts and the wisdom that you bring to the chair. It is not an easy task that you have, managing the dynamics and the volume of this House, yet the balance that you show and the encouragement that you give us to work together from both sides of the floor continue to set a standard for us all.

It is my great privilege to stand in this House and share the voice of my constituents from Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville, who so generously gave me their vote and who entrusted me to speak for them on all matters before this House. It is with humility and dedication that I strive to continually earn that trust. The experience and perspective they give me are the only way I can hope to represent a vast diversity of people: dairy farmers, corrections



officers, teachers, microbrewers, grandmothers, firefighters, people of all ages, all abilities, all income levels, all nationalities, all ethnicities, all faith communities, all genders, and, most importantly, all political stripes.

I wish to acknowledge my husband, Jeremy Johnston, for his long-suffering patience and endless support in allowing me to put the constituency and those that reside within it first.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a tough winter, not for its weather, which continues to get milder each year, but for the tough economic climate that has continued to impact Albertan families from every corner of this province. We have inherited a great responsibility, and we have been directed by the voters of this great province to tread down a path in search of stability: job creation supported by our government's investment in making capital available to small and medium-sized businesses; aggressive infrastructure investment to address the growing needs of a growing population in health care, education, and industry; diversifying our economy on the road to a more mature, resilient province that can weather world market prices and decrease our dependence on a single commodity price.

All of us in this Chamber in our role as Members of this Legislative Assembly hear and see the personal impact of sustained low oil prices on Alberta families. They have invited me to sit at their table while they tell me how they are afraid for their jobs or how the family has already experienced a loss. Executives share with me how they are working to examine every way to not lose any employees during this time of low market prices. Family farms are worried about the long-term viability of their homestead due to more and more families needing to rely on off-farm income and jobs to make ends meet. However, as difficult as these situations are, they reveal the tenacity that makes us Albertans.

This is a once-in-a-generation challenge, as the Minister of Finance rightly said. I have first-hand experience of it. Born in west Edmonton at the Misericordia hospital, my father worked hard as a journeyman painter. Going into the trades when my dad did, his future seemed fairly secure. A booming housing industry and a healthy, energy-based economy: it seemed like the right time to buy and build a house in Mill Woods in order to accommodate a growing family, that had become completely dominated by women. My poor dad. My mom had given her strong personality and her fierce individualism to three girls, all of which challenged my father in many ways. Then the worst happened. My dad, like many breadwinners, lost his job during the latest economic bust. We lost our house. My parents divorced, and like many families, the only thing we could do was to continue putting one foot in front of the other.

My parents being in separate households presented me with many challenges, two different lives that set me forever on a course towards compassion, empathy, and a thirst to see fairness for others. I have learned the phrase "social justice" as an adult, but to me what that means is that we need to examine what fairness means in this province. Is it fair that our seniors in rural Alberta live in poverty and without proper access to affordable transportation for appropriate medical care? Is it fair that we continue to move our grandparents away from their communities in pursuit of affordable housing? Is it fair that our small municipalities continue to struggle to pay for failing infrastructure? Is it fair that mothers continue to be left behind in workplace advancement due to a lack of both child care space and affordability?

Now, my father will never tell me that life is fair, but that, I believe, is where government has a responsibility to come in to help bridge the gap. If anyone has heard me talk about my constituency, they have heard me talk about the need for a bridge. My father did those things that he could to move us forward. He owned his own

small painting business, and, as I've shared in this House before, he worked long hours. My dad found affordable child care. He watched every dime that went in and out of the house, but he did not do this on his own. I grew up in Edmonton housing. I attended public school. We had access to publicly funded health care. Yes, my dad did pull himself up by his bootstraps, but the ability to do that, to take care of his family, hinged on publicly funded services.

Our relatively new government has taken the role of working to address systematic inequality and extending an invitation to those in our communities that are passionate about looking for solutions that benefit all of Alberta. Leaders and advocates are not something that my constituency of Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville is in short supply of.

This past season I have had the amazing pleasure of introducing amazing people, people that work to improve their communities and continue to make these small, rural, and rurban places – yes, it's a word; rural, urban, rurban – great places to move to raise a family: Myron Hayduk, mayor of Vegreville and owner of The Garage, a classic car dealership; Taneen Rudyk, councillor of Vegreville, member of the Vegreville Region Physician Attraction and Retention Committee, board member of St. Joseph's hospital, Eskimos fan, and daughter of former Vegreville Viking NDP MLA Derek Fox, who served as agriculture critic under the leadership of Ray Martin; deputy reeve and councillor of Lamont county Daniel Warawa, proud Ukrainian, expert combine handler, and a true patriarch; Fort Saskatchewan Mayor Gale Katchur, vice-chair of Alberta's Industrial Heartland, proud grandmother, talented orator of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*; Heather Boonstra, executive director of Families First Society, Eskimos season ticket holder, best hugger on my side of the North Saskatchewan; Don Segberg, high school social studies teacher at JP II, proud new dad, Alberta politics junkie. These are just a few of the everyday people that do extraordinary things every day.

#### 10:10

I have met groups of people brought together by cultural institutions created in Alberta, groups such as agricultural societies: Bruderheim Ag Society, Lamont and District Ag Society, Vegreville Ag Society, Josephburg Ag Society, Chipman Ag Society, Andrew Ag Society, Mundare & District Ag Society, and Tofield Ag Society. These societies were created to share farm and agricultural information and education. However, over the years, as you can see, these groups have forged their ways into the identity of the community. They not only host and organize rodeos; they have country and blues music festivals. They fund raise for necessities in schools, seniors' homes, hospitals, and community centres, and they do this with small armies of volunteers.

These people more often than not are on multiple boards. Your ag society member is also the library board member, is also your museum board member, is also your Lions Club member, is also the Legion member, and is also your chamber of commerce member.

Residents of these rurban, rural, and remote areas of Alberta don't wait for help; they do. For that they deserve an enormous amount of respect, but we must do what we can to support the sustainability of these communities. This past fall AAMDC held its convention, and the tag line they used was Where It All Starts, because farming, oil and gas, and much of our tourism sectors reside in our most rural parts of Alberta. Our economy relies on these areas for jobs, tax dollars, Albertan culture, and the very food that we put on our table. Our future diversifying of the economy will depend on how we support these industries. My constituents have told me loud and clear that they want support now and for the future.

I am pleased to be able to stand and show my support for our government's new Alberta child benefit plan for low-income families. This \$340 million investment in new and direct help will make a difference for families in Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville and countless other Albertan families who need help now; 380,000 Albertan children will benefit from this initiative.

We will also help those families with legislation to protect Albertans in economic distress from predatory lending, a bold move forward to protect some of our most vulnerable.

Expanded access to workforce and skills training and retraining is integral to the financial health of our families so that people facing unemployment can upgrade their skills. Our tradespeople want to put their workboots back on.

We will address growing infrastructure deficits with \$34 billion of investment while retaining jobs: schools in Fort Saskatchewan bursting at the seams, kindergarten classes being moved into school gyms.

I'm also proud that our Premier and our ministers continue meaningful intergovernmental collaboration on pipelines. We cannot forget that we are a country made up of a federation of provinces that must work together towards the common good.

At the same time we can review how we practise consultation. Our 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. Together we can create a diversified future.

Our government announced a much-anticipated initiative in the new petrochemicals diversification program. Applauded by Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, this program will help investors get over the initial hurdle of building such capital-intensive projects and help Albertans acquire greater value for products such as propane, that are market-exposed, and turn them into higher value products such as propylene and polypropylene. We will back that up with a broad-based representative group, the energy diversification advisory committee, that can not only look at diversification but help guide our government towards resiliency.

This government's royalty review has steps towards a plan to modernize royalties, to promote innovation, transparency, efficiency, and accountability. We now have a climate change strategy that focuses on a made-in-Alberta solution to how we can address both environmental impacts of industry and how we address market access issues, issues that thus far, no matter who you try to lay the blame on, have prevented Alberta from building a new pipeline to tidewater and add rail transportation costs onto an already price-disadvantaged product. But we rally on.

We heard from industry, First Nations, and nongovernmental organizations that now is the time to build a plan that will support our energy sector and also address the needs of future generations. In support of this our government plans to create a new, broadly representative oil sands advisory group.

Next year in Sturgeon county, Alberta, we will see the first refinery built in over 30 years, the North West refinery, a true marvel that is on the leading edge of technology, where they will not only refine bitumen but will also utilize the Alberta carbon line project, 240 kilometres of pipeline that will gather, compress, and store 14.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year from the North West project and Agrium fertilizer. Stored carbon dioxide from this project can be injected into depleted oil reservoirs and result in one billion barrels of oil.

Budget 2016 will take a prudent and balanced approach to fiscal plans, ensuring the valuable front-line health care and education services are intact. We cannot build a viable future without taking care of Albertans now. We can do so carefully and judiciously. We know Albertans expect and demand that their government act in

their best interests. That's why I'm so proud to highlight our government's ongoing program for democratic reform. I look forward to hearing and reading and now sharing as chair the report from the all-party special Committee on Ethics and Accountability.

Key democratic reform issues will also be presented in the fall, affirming our commitment to openness, transparency, and accountability. This means that we will not act alone. We want to ensure that we consult with our partners and the public to build an effective legislative environment. That's why we will invite public and municipal government comment on a modern Municipal Government Act. I know my constituents and municipal representatives who have talked to me over and over again about linear taxes – I'm sure that me and my colleagues have all learned more about linear taxes than they knew before – want to come and share because they are concerned about their areas. They want to come, and they want to contribute, and I look forward to hearing what their bold new ideas are.

Our tourism industry has grown to include new ways of interacting with rural Alberta. These include farm-to-table tours and dinners, historical church tours, rodeos, bull-a-ramas, country and blues festivals, vintage tractor pulls, and parades in every town for every season. These events are possible due to the long farming history that Alberta has, and it's that tie to history that makes us so special. Our agriculture sector is world class and has been the bedrock of this province for many generations. I choose to mention this sector last as it often gets overshadowed by our energy industry, and it is my hope that these thoughts will stand out.

Our province, built by French hands, German hands, and even including my father's Ukrainian hands – this province was built on agriculture. I have met resourceful people and visited their high-tech operations in farming and agriculture and have learned that we need to do a better job of trumpeting these successes. We have grain operations such as Alan Farms partnership, that farms 10,000 acres. We have award-winning black angus cattle breeders at Northline Angus, that ship beef genetics all over the world. Thiel's Greenhouses bring shoppers from hours away that count on Thiel's high quality of product bringing both beauty and sustenance.

10:20

Mr. Speaker, as I close I would like to share a *Hansard* quote from Derek Fox's maiden speech, which he gave on June 27, 1986.

Agriculture is certainly the most basic concern in rural Alberta, and I know all members recognize that. My concern . . . comes because of the value that I place on our rural life and the realization I have about how essential a healthy and strengthened agricultural industry is to [the] vital sort of growth that we want to provide. If I may be forgiven an analogy, if the roots are strong and healthy, I think the tree will grow tall, provide shade, and bear fruit.

I am proud of my family. I am proud of where I came from. I am proud of my government, and I am proud of my Premier, and I am very proud of my province. I am proud to call myself a heartland MLA.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

**Mr. Westhead:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of this Assembly, for this opportunity to respond to the Speech from the Throne in the Second Session of the 29th Legislature. It is an incredible honour for me to second the motion to accept Her Majesty's speech.

I'd like to thank my wife, my family, and all of those who have believed in me along the way to help me get where I am today. I'd

also like to thank the voters of Banff-Cochrane for placing your trust in me. We know that Albertans in my constituency and across the province are looking to our government for action, and the time to act is now. I'm proud to be part of a government that is taking action in several key areas as outlined in the Speech from the Throne, specifically supports for families and children, job creation, and economic diversification. I support the government's spring agenda on the areas that need care and attention for the benefit of Albertans now and in the future. The legislative agenda is a bold and ambitious one, replete with important and overdue items. I'm pleased to take this opportunity to tell you about how our legislative goals align with the values of my outstanding constituency of Banff-Cochrane.

Banff-Cochrane is home to many diverse, vibrant communities. These range from ranching and agricultural lands on its eastern edge in Cochrane and Bragg Creek to the majestic foothills and the Rocky Mountains towards the west in Lake Louise and all points in between. My constituency contains much of the essence of what characterizes the best of Alberta, from cattle grazing and pastures to world-class recreational areas for outdoor pursuits. Banff-Cochrane offers something for everyone and has captured the attention and imagination of the world.

Banff-Cochrane is home to the Continental Divide, on the border of British Columbia and Alberta. The Continental Divide helps form the watersheds of our eastern slopes that supply water to millions of Albertans. This majestic landscape also provides critical wildlife habitat and wetlands. It is crucial that we take steps to ensure the integrity of our headwaters and wilderness areas so they remain intact for the enjoyment of future generations of Albertans.

During his maiden speech in 1975 the Member for Banff-Cochrane at the time identified land-use planning as a mounting concern due to growth pressures from neighbouring Calgary. Indeed, decisions respecting land use along the eastern slopes can have a major impact not only on the land itself but also on those downstream. We have begun to demonstrate our commitment to addressing these types of concerns by protecting the Castle wilderness area. The United Nations declared in 2010 that access to clean drinking water is essential to the realization of all human rights. Here in Alberta we must act as stewards of this land and especially the eastern slopes. We depend on our headwaters to produce the quantity and quality of water necessary to protect the fundamental rights of Albertans to water.

I'm proud of our government's climate leadership plan, which will take concrete steps to further protect these wild spaces. I'm pleased to report that there are many organizations within my constituency that are already acting on addressing climate change. They are implementing innovative solutions to a greener, more sustainable future and taking a leadership role in reducing our environmental impact.

Take the Biosphere Institute of the Bow Valley, for example. The Biosphere Institute is a nonprofit, charitable society dedicated to ensuring the ecological integrity of the Bow Valley for the well-being of the ecosystem through education, research, and outreach.

Yet another example of innovation is the Francis Cooke landfill, located near the community of Exshaw. The Francis Cooke landfill is considering technologies to use wood waste as an alternative heating source for buildings located on the site, thereby making them more carbon neutral. This is complementary to the Bow Valley Waste Management Commission's long-standing target of moving towards zero waste.

There are too many fine examples in Banff-Cochrane to elaborate on them all, but others include the towns of Canmore and Banff's successful Roam regional transit system and the Cochrane high

school's sustainability committee, that has installed solar panels on the school roof.

We have a lot to be proud of here, and there are many success stories to look towards that can show us the way forward to a more sustainable future. The people of Banff-Cochrane are keen to work in partnership with our government as we implement these long overdue initiatives to help reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, a sustainable future and the protection of our land, air, and water are vital to the tourism industry in Banff-Cochrane, that supports good local jobs. Visitors from around the world are attracted to the natural beauty that is found in our numerous provincial and wildland parks, not to mention Banff national park, a UNESCO world heritage site and Canada's first national park.

So, too, is the natural environment important to the visitors of William Watson Lodge, located in beautiful Peter Lougheed provincial park. William Watson Lodge was opened by Premier Lougheed and his wife in 1981 with a goal of providing barrier-free facilities to those with mobility challenges and seniors. Last summer I had the great pleasure to visit the lodge to celebrate the opening of the first of several comfort camping facilities.

The availability of seniors housing in general was identified as a priority in Banff-Cochrane as far back as 1979, when the MLA at the time commented on the topic in his response to the throne speech. I'm pleased that our government is working to address this issue by supporting construction of seniors' accommodations in Canmore and Cochrane. We have more work ahead of us to further honour the years of hard work that seniors have put into building this province we are so proud of. Every Albertan deserves to retire in dignity.

Affordable housing is not only a challenge for seniors in Banff-Cochrane; it is a pressing concern for employees and employers alike. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Bow Valley. Here a small population of local residents is pressured to supply labour for the very successful tourism industry. Tourism-based towns like Kananaskis Village, Banff, and Canmore welcome visitors from around the world to take in Alberta's natural beauty. These towns operate, build, and maintain tourism infrastructure with limited financial resources. Affordable housing to accommodate the employees who cater to visitors is a perennial challenge for these tourism-based municipalities.

Banff-Cochrane is home to many talented artists and is considered as an incubator for inspiring creativity. Nowhere is this more apparent than the Banff Centre. In 1979 during his maiden speech former MLA Stevens noted his pleasure that the Banff Centre was given approval to operate year-round. Nowadays the Banff Centre continues to play a unique and pivotal role among postsecondary institutions in Alberta and – dare I say it? – the world. The Banff Centre provides an unmatched experience to thousands of students, lecturers, artists, performers, and visitors in the area of fine arts, performing arts, leadership training, and conferences.

Another aspect that makes Banff-Cochrane unique is the Stoney-Nakoda First Nation, part of Treaty 7 lands. The nation is composed of three bands led by three chiefs and councils known as Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Wesley bands. I have had the honour of recently meeting chiefs Dixon, Young, and Wesley. I look forward to further conversations with the view to supporting the nations' interests in economic diversification and job creation.

**10:30**

Repealing Bill 22 and engaging indigenous communities in consultation is a strong sign of our commitment to reconciliation. Furthermore, consultations on a new indigenous peoples sacred

ceremonial objects repatriation act demonstrates how much we value and respect First Nations across the province.

Job creators are abundant in Banff-Cochrane, and without exception they are optimistic and entrepreneurial. This is certainly the case in the technology sector in the bustling and charming town of Cochrane. Established in 1998 in Cochrane, the company Dynastream introduced its first accelerometer-based speed and distance wearable monitor in the year 2000 for shoe giant Nike. Only six years later Dynastream was purchased by Garmin, a world leader in the field of personal monitoring technology.

Economic diversification opportunities are also now presenting themselves like never before to my hometown of beautiful Bragg Creek. Communities across the constituency of Banff-Cochrane were hit hard by the floods of 2013, including Bragg Creek. Just like Albertans across the province, the people of Bragg Creek are incredibly resilient. In good times and bad they roll up their sleeves and get to work helping one another. Flood-affected Albertans got through those difficult moments by working together. They exemplified the strength, courage, and resolve that is common among all Albertans. Shortly after the 2013 flood the hamlet of Bragg Creek persevered by installing water and waste-water services to hamlet residences and businesses.

Recently, thanks to the hard work of the community, a hamlet revitalization plan has been created. Along with over \$32 million for local flood mitigation work provided by our government, the revitalization plan has re-energized the community to look towards a vision for the future. On the doorstep to Kananaskis Country, Bragg Creek already has an internationally recognized four-season trail system thanks to the hard work of local volunteers.

The community is increasingly being seen as a destination for Albertans and international visitors alike. Local groups such as the Bragg Creek chamber of commerce and the community association have been working hard to harness the entrepreneurial energy of local business owners. They are working to draw visitors to the historic hamlet, that was home to Canada's first hostel, which is located just down the street from my house.

In closing, I'd like to thank the people of Banff-Cochrane for placing their trust in me to represent them as their MLA. I will continue to take every possible opportunity to connect with communities, individuals, and businesses across the riding. I'd also like to thank the numerous volunteers across the riding who give their own time to make our communities the vibrant places that they are.

Our legislative agenda is ambitious, but I support these initiatives to create a better, more prosperous, more diversified, and more caring Alberta, an Alberta that provides well-managed, efficiently financed, nimble, world-class health care, education, and other public services. The throne speech lays out a path forward for all Albertans, including my constituents in Banff-Cochrane, and brings hope in a time when it is needed most. It is by working together and building relationships that we can accomplish great things and make Alberta an even better place than when we found it.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

**Mr. Cooper:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an absolute pleasure to rise here today. While it might not be the first time that I've had the chance to rise in the Assembly, it is the first time that I've really had a chance on behalf of the citizens of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills to speak briefly about the outstanding constituency that is Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills.

Mr. Speaker, I arrive here thankful and gratified by the broad support of so many of my family, my friends, my neighbours. And

speaking of my family, it's an absolute pleasure to have them here in the gallery today. You know, so little can be done in this life of public service without the support of those closest to you. Today my wife, Tanya, and my dad, Harold, and my mom, Mary, are all in the gallery, and in many ways they made this day possible, because if it wasn't for their support, encouragement, long hours, with Tanya parenting our three children in such a wonderful, caring way that she does, it wouldn't be possible for me to give some of myself to public service as well as trying to be the best family co-worker and labourer and dad and friend that I can. To them I say thank you.

I also come to the Chamber on behalf of not just my family but the friends and neighbours and the people in Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills that asked me to come to work towards implementing a principled, optimistic, and truly conservative vision for Alberta. I remain fully committed to representing our province, our family, our communities to the best of my abilities in the days, weeks, months, and years, hopefully, to come.

I also want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I come to this station fully cognizant of the responsibility with which I have been entrusted. I'm just the third MLA to represent the constituency of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills in its current configuration and one of just 902 people ever elected to this Legislature, and I don't take that lightly.

When I think of the strong and capable representatives of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills that have come to this Assembly to serve, I think of people like Bob Clark, who served in many roles in this Assembly, on both sides of the House, and I will strive to serve in the manner that he did, always putting the needs of the people of Alberta ahead of his own political gain. I think of people like MLA Connie Osterman, who served the people of this province with a vision and a passion that were second to none. She often put aside political differences to assist Albertans, members of the Assembly, and in particular had a passion for protecting children while she was serving as the minister responsible for that area. That is also something that's near and dear to my heart, protecting the children right across this province, that are so important to the future of this province.

More recently there were men like Richard Marz and Bruce Rowe. I'd like to take a brief moment to particularly thank Mr. Rowe. I had the opportunity to work closely with him, and while we didn't always agree on all of the decisions that were made, I had the chance to learn a lot from him, a lot about this place. We learned a lot about public service together. Bruce and his wife, Carol, have been so wonderful to Tanya and our children over the last number of years, and I hope to serve in a way that would reflect well upon them as well.

Thanks to their passionate representation over the years, our Legislature has been home to many invigorating debates leading to monumental changes. Living up to this legacy that they have left for me will be daunting, but as Official Opposition House Leader this duty is a duty that I intend to seize with both hands. The fact is that this year, Mr. Speaker, is like none that we've seen in approximately half a century. The past election brought true change to the Assembly. The people of Alberta elected both a new government and a strengthened opposition that were and continue to be dedicated to the cause of renewal. It's in this spirit of renewal that I offer my hand in co-operation to all members of this Assembly who seek to reinvigorate the role of the Legislature.

**10:40**

Mr. Speaker, you are now well familiar with my passion for the Assembly, for its rules, for its customs, and for its traditions. A strengthened voice of the Legislature will mean a strengthened

voice for all Albertans and will ensure that legislation receives full and thorough debate, much of which I have already had the opportunity to speak about in the Chamber. I look forward to continuing to champion these important causes for democratic renewal for all Albertans. Mr. Speaker, the people have spoken, and they deserve to be heard every day, not just on election day, and that's exactly what I intend to do during my time in the Assembly.

I'm proud, Mr. Speaker, to represent one of our province's leading agricultural regions. Looking back through the archives, I found a copy of former MLA Bob Clark's maiden speech, much like I'm giving today except that this one was given in the Assembly in 1961, in which he took time to encourage rural youth to take a longer, more serious look at agriculture before leaving for the city. Today that echo and that call remain true here in this Assembly and right across Alberta as I work to try and strengthen, do everything that I can to lay my voice to the importance of agriculture and rural Alberta right across this province.

Mr. Clark was one of the youngest members of any Canadian Legislature at that time, at the age of 23, and he became a leading voice for our region, calling the region the master farming constituency of our province. He also had the occasion while defending some of that farmland during debate – the debate was on whether or not the Red Deer River should be dammed – in this very Chamber to table a bag of that rich Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills soil right here in this very place. That bag of soil can still be viewed in the Legislature Library today, and that soil, Mr. Speaker, that was just as important in 1961, is important today.

Today across Kneehill and Mountain View counties hundreds of farm families remain on the land, harnessing the power of new technologies to continue the work that Alberta's pioneers started more than a century ago. While crop prices have fluctuated in recent years, beef and land prices remain high, providing strength for our economy and a key to our future. Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. Agriculture will remain a leading industry and a backbone to our economy, and it is the bedrock upon which many communities in this province have been built, and we all need to remember that long after the oil and gas are gone, our agriculture industry must remain strong, vibrant, and diverse so that the future of our province can continue to be as strong as we have enjoyed in the past.

Across the Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills region, Mr. Speaker, I can report that the people and the businesses are harnessing that power of innovation. In Linden we are the capital of Alberta for small rural industrial manufacturers. The innovation that is provided and delivered at Olds College is second to none, not only in this province but right around the country and, in fact, in North America. They are leading changes in industry and technology, and I encourage every member of this Assembly to visit the constituency and, in particular, to spend some time at Olds College and see the incredible work that is happening there.

In an era of global trade maintaining and building Alberta's competitive advantage helps create jobs and ensures economic growth. All regions of Alberta go through booms and busts, but I'm proud to represent a region where determination and vision continue to thrive in spite of present circumstances. They know that the government doesn't make Alberta strong, that the people of Alberta make this province strong, and that is exactly what they continue to press into even today.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills do have some serious concerns about some of the things that happen in this Chamber. They are deeply concerned about this government's risky economic policies, that continue to hurt jobs. They have seen lots of talk from this government but little action, particularly on jobs. Even in this recent throne speech we had the opportunity yesterday to have some significant talk on jobs, and

when we saw Bill 1, what we saw was more of a glorified job description for the minister than it was a plan for jobs in this province. I can tell you that the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills are concerned about the direction of this government.

Another issue that is important to the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, not just those people but the people right across this province, is the issue of property rights. They were tampered with in many respects by previous administrations, and my predecessor, Mr. Bruce Rowe, was correct when he noted, and I quote: property rights are not optional; they are a basic human right, fundamental to the progress of free societies right around the world. You, Mr. Speaker, and many members of this Chamber were reminded of that when we had the absolute pleasure and honour of having the Magna Carta here just late last year. It's a reminder of the importance of these rights that all of us have. It is a cause that is important to all Albertans, not just rural Albertans, and it's a cause that we on this side of the House will continue to press forward for comprehensive reform when it comes to property rights.

While there are some significant differences between the current government and the opposition on a variety of issues, at times there has been lots of agreement around property rights. Now, unfortunately, in the last number of weeks we've seen the government vote against some concrete solutions provided by the opposition that would have moved us back in the direction of restoring these property rights. But I still have faith that a day will come when the government will do the right thing, restore the property rights that have been eroded in this province, and it will be done because of the continual pressure from the Official Opposition and the people of this province to ensure that that is taken into account and that it is an important issue not to the government but to all of Alberta. It's one that we will continue to champion.

In addition to the reinstatement of property rights, the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills also have significant concerns about the direction of this government with respect to rural health care, democratic reform, and the increase of taxes, particularly in the area of the carbon tax. Now, I look forward to working with all of my colleagues on this side of the House to provide concrete solutions that the government can adapt and adopt to ensure that we are putting the best foot forward for all of Alberta. In pursuing these policies, we must be cognizant of the fact that our province is now facing an economic downturn, that has left thousands and thousands of fellow Albertans looking for work. Moving forward, our top priority must be to take action to bolster the economy and avoid making the situation worse, which is exactly what, unfortunately, we have seen from this government.

We Albertans, Mr. Speaker, have experienced these storms before, and we know that it is Albertans that will get us back on track. We need to remember what makes Alberta different. We need to remember what made Alberta great. In recent years thousands of people and companies packed up their roots and chose to have a fresh start here in Alberta. They didn't come for government programs; they didn't come for corporate welfare. They came for jobs and for lower taxes. They came here for opportunity. And that's exactly what we need to do: ensure that we have an environment that continues to create opportunity so that Albertans can do what they do best, and that is drive our economy.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

**Mr. Nixon:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me first say congratulations to my good friend the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills on his maiden speech in this Assembly.

While, as he said, it's certainly not the first time that he has spoken in this place, it is his maiden speech.

I have the pleasure of being the member's neighbour both here in the Assembly as well as back home. Great lengths of our ridings are attached; we share many counties and many school boards. We do travel to lots of events together, so much so, Mr. Speaker, that back home they've taken to calling us Penn and Teller, the famous magicians. Both the member and I are a little bit confused as to why, but that happens. We both share some of the most spectacular areas in this province that have a tremendous impact not only on our communities back home but, as well, on the province as a whole.

**10:50**

I would like it if the member could spend the remaining time that we have under Standing Order 29(2)(a) elaborating on what has happened and, with the things that have been presented in the throne speech recently, the impact that is happening back home in our ridings on the important areas that both of us share.

**The Speaker:** Just to clarify for the House, it's 29(2)(a) that we're dealing with right now.

**Mr. Cooper:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. I appreciate the opportunity to just briefly expand on a couple of the points that I was just wrapping up, and then I'm happy to address some of the significant concerns that I've heard over the last 24 hours from the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills with respect to the throne speech.

The people in Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills have spoken about the need for opportunity in our province, not for these unnecessary interventionist sort of economic policies that we've seen from the current government but things like reducing unnecessary bureaucratic red tape, things like recognizing that strong families build strong communities and that strong communities support strong families, things like trusting Albertans to make the right choice for their family and for their community. They're talking to me about restoring the idea of putting Albertans first because the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, Mr. Speaker, have a vision for Alberta, one that's shared by people across this province. Their vision, our vision, is of an Alberta that's strong and free, where hard work and dedication are rewarded with new hope and new opportunity.

That's exactly what I and what we on this side of the House intend to do: find ways to enable Albertans to be strong and resilient and recognize that they are the solution, that a strong economy and strong jobs mean a strong Alberta and a strong Alberta means a strong Canada. That's exactly what at a time like this we need the government to do. That's exactly what we need our province to do – the people of Alberta, the people of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills – and together we can ensure that our province regains its place in Confederation, that the ideals of Albertans are once again lifted up, held high, and championed right across the world, those ideals of free enterprise, more personal freedoms, less government intrusion. These are the things that are important to the constituents of Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, and as a result they're the things that are important to me.

**The Speaker:** Any other comments under 29(2)(a)?

Hearing none, I would recognize the Member for Edmonton-McClung.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today filled with respect and humility to deliver my response to the Speech from the Throne. Let me first thank the voters of my fine riding of

Edmonton-McClung for electing me to serve them as their member in this 29th Legislature. Most of those Edmonton-McClung electors knew that I had been a perennial candidate for the NDP. In fact, I ran four times before being elected last May, the fifth, and I'm still ecstatic at being given this opportunity to fulfill a dream of elected public service that I've had since boyhood.

Begging the forgiveness of Tommy Douglas, I must admit that my first memories of public discourse which attracted me to aspire to public office were the firebrand speeches of another well-known politician that I viewed on our family's black-box style, black-and-white Emerson TV in 1963. He actually presided over the opening in March 1958 of our federal building, a month after I was born. Provincial Legislative Assembly members and staff now occupy that newly renovated structure, located just north of our Legislature.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

I refer, of course, to the passionate and often impassioned Rt. Hon. John G. Diefenbaker, the late former Progressive Conservative Prime Minister of Canada. Call me strange, but politics interested me even at age five. The deaths and televised funerals about that time of two other formidable statesmen from that era also made an impression upon me. They were of John F. Kennedy and Winston Churchill. They told me about how societies rely upon the dedication and commitment to service of their elected representatives. We are a privileged group, we legislators, with a massive responsibility placed upon our shoulders. Never must we take that lightly. We are being counted upon by this and future generations to govern well and with foresight.

I take some of this countenance from my late maternal grandmother, Winnifred Ada LaBelle, as well, who served numerous terms as councillor and deputy mayor of the village of Thorhild, located about an hour's drive northeast of Edmonton. Thorhild was my first home as well. We lived next door to what was known in Thorhild as the big house, the house my grandmother and her husband, Joseph Edouard Napoleon LaBelle, built in 1947 when my grandfather, Nap, as he was known, returned from overseas service after five years during World War II in the Canadian army. Part of the big house was leased to Canada Post. My grandparents were the postmasters in Thorhild, and the post office was built as part of the house. It was leased to the federal government. My grandmother, who was known as Winn, was an entrepreneur as well as a public servant. You can be both.

The late Michael Senych, who served two terms as a member of this Assembly with the Social Credit Party, lived in a basement suite of that house for a number of years. Mr. Senych was a pillar of community service to Thorhild throughout his life. As he could have told you after losing his seat along with most of his Socred colleagues, in a healthy, prosperous, functioning democracy governments change from time to time. His tenure at the Legislature ended in 1971, when the Progressive Conservative government led by Peter Lougheed was elected. Who knew then that it would be 44 years before Albertans finally elected new leadership to represent them in May of 2015? Yes, the fundamental rules of politics 101 apply even to Alberta. When the public loses trust in their government and there is a credible alternative party in the wings, a free electorate will vote out the stale government, and a new government will be asked to start afresh.

That is what has happened in Alberta. Our NDP government has been given a chance to effectively govern this province. We have been granted the public trust that the previous government forgot how to value. More than that, we've been asked to implement our vision for the future of this province and Alberta's place within the Canadian federation.

To turn our vision into action is something that we in the current Alberta New Democratic Party have been thirsting for since the early days of the precursor federal party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and pioneers like M.J. Coldwell, J.S. Woodsworth, Tommy Douglas, and of course later, Grant Notley. We must honour that proud early legacy by governing with our eyes clearly focused on both the current serious issues Albertans face right now as well as on the long-term obstacles and opportunities we need to prepare for to protect future generations. As we all discovered last May, Albertans expect their government to focus on their interests, not on political expedience. Our government caucus recognizes and embraces this demand. We immensely value the trust that Albertans have placed in us.

Now, the constituency that I represent is named after Nellie McClung, one of the Famous Five Alberta women activists who won the Persons Case as adjudicated by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, or the JCPC, then the highest court of appeal available to Canadians. The JCPC ruled that women were indeed considered persons under section 24 of the British North America Act of 1867 and, therefore, could be appointed to the Senate. Nellie McClung was also instrumental in the suffrage movement in Manitoba and Alberta, and she became a member of this Assembly in 1921.

I have a special favour to ask of the members as well as the pages in the House. I would ask that if any current member or page finds the name of Nellie McClung inscribed into their desk drawer to please allow me to view it.

I'm inspired daily by the steadfast commitment to principle that Nellie McClung and the other Famous Five women activists displayed in unyielding fashion in the face of overwhelming odds during a time when women were not considered legally to be persons. Nellie McClung is a strong role model to me as I represent my constituents in this Assembly.

**11:00**

Now, I've lived for almost 30 years in the Edmonton-McClung riding. I bought my first house in the Jamieson Place neighbourhood in 1987, early in my career as a real estate agent.

Over the course of my career as a real estate agent I estimate that I sold about 800 properties either as listing agent or selling agent. Most of these were residential transactions. However, I did obtain my commercial designation in 2012 to shift my focus onto raw land and land development. My licence currently is deactivated to avoid any conflict of interest while I serve in this Chamber. However, being a real estate agent was very good preparation for my new role as an elected MLA. For 30 years I've been used to working long hours in the service of individuals and families who relied upon my expertise to protect their financial interest and satisfy their housing needs.

During my real estate career I served on the board of HomeEd, the city of Edmonton's nonprofit housing corporation, for six years. HomeEd publicly owned and managed over 700 units of affordable housing. That board experience illustrated to me the need for an ongoing government commitment to provide safe, affordable housing to those in our society who are not served by market housing. I will continue to advocate for creative financing solutions and public ownership models that allow our government to properly maintain our current affordable housing stock and to build or acquire new units to address the current serious affordable housing shortfall.

I also have a continued interest in real estate industry matters and am working with industry members to bring pertinent issues to the government's attention.

Now, in Edmonton-McClung up to 30 per cent of some of the populations of the schools are First Nations. Teachers must be aware of and sensitive to the history, culture, and languages of their indigenous students. Soon after I was elected, I discovered that Phyllis Cardinal, one of the founders of the Amiskwaciy Academy in Edmonton, lived near me. Her daughter Neva introduced us, and within three weeks Phyllis had me in meetings with other educators to discuss a pilot project to teach teachers how to properly teach their indigenous student populations. Very sadly, Phyllis Cardinal died a few weeks ago. I have pledged to her family that I will continue to work with them and their project team to move forward with Phyllis's goal that no indigenous child shall be shortchanged in their education.

Now, there are a number of adult bungalow complexes and one major aging-in-place facility in Edmonton-McClung as well. All MLAs can relate to the delicate situation of seniors' housing. Almost all seniors wish to stay in their own home as long as possible. We also know that this is by far the most economical way to house our senior population. I'm committed to exploring solutions which provide supports that allow our seniors to safely reside in their own homes or apartments even when faced with increasing mobility or health challenges. This is a win-win investment, in my view.

Now, Alberta society is very diverse; Edmonton-McClung is no exception. About 70 per cent of Edmonton's 5,500-plus Jewish population lives in Edmonton-McClung, which is also home to Edmonton's largest synagogue, Beth Israel. The K to 9 Edmonton Talmud Torah School is also located in the riding. The MAC, Muslim Association of Canada, Rahma mosque operates in Edmonton-McClung as well. This thriving mosque has a thriving youth group that outreaches regularly with the community. I've worked with them and focused on efforts to deliver hampers at Christmas and engaged with another effort, that I'll talk about a little bit later, with that group and others in the riding. Six Christian churches also call Edmonton-McClung home.

Many people believe that west Edmonton has a uniformly wealthy population. While some of Edmonton's most affluent neighbourhoods are found along the North Saskatchewan River valley in Edmonton-McClung, about 20 per cent of the population in the constituency actually lives below the poverty line. Many newcomers to Canada live in rented apartments or townhouses in the centre of the riding.

Our lower income families need to be a priority for our government. Children supported well early in life have a much better chance of becoming self-sufficient adults. Therefore, the immigrant population in Edmonton-McClung as well as all the children in those families are a very big priority to me.

Now, I've always loved to travel. I hitchhiked across Canada for the first time when I was 16 years old. I've thumbed across large portions of our vast and beautiful country three other times, once in the wintertime on the way to Europe, when I flew from Gander, Newfoundland, to spend time in Europe riding the trains and hitchhiking around at age 20. I rode in the back of beer trucks, pickup trucks, and even got a ride once from Joey Smallwood's youngest brother in a dump truck that he was delivering from Port aux Basques, Newfoundland, to New Brunswick. He had no interest whatsoever in politics or much respect for his brother. Nonetheless, it was an interesting ride.

We need to encourage and support travel by young people both within Canada and abroad. There's no greater way to appreciate one's own home than to experience someone else's. Now, I've been to every continent on this Earth at least twice except for Antarctica, which I've only been to once, in 2012. I was lucky enough to get inside of Captain Scott's hut, built in 1910, at Cape Evans on Ross

Island, which is located about 78 degrees south, nearly as far south as a ship can sail on the planet. Many places I've been to were functioning democracies; many were not. I wish democracy for the world. It ain't perfect, but it beats the alternatives by a country mile. Now, I could go on for some time, but I'll finish now by saying that there is no place on this planet I would rather be than right here, right now, representing the people of Edmonton-McClung in the Alberta Legislature.

Like all Albertans, I wish that our economic circumstances were better. However, we have endured numerous economic troughs in the past, caused in large part by our overreliance on energy royalties to fund our operational budget. We all know that this has to change. Our NDP government will approach this task in a responsible manner, in what I call the Hippocratic way, by taking great effort first of all to do no harm by maintaining our public services, like education, health care, and affordable housing initiatives, through this cyclical downturn while bending the cost curve over the longer term to keep these services sustainable. All the while we know how important it will be to keep Albertans informed about our objectives and the options we have to choose from to achieve them.

Now, Albertans can rely on our government to guide them through these stormy waters. We are completely focused on our service to them, and I promise you that we will be prepared to face their judgment come the next election based on a sound record of responsible economic management and innovative approaches to the chronic challenges we face today. Let's all get to work.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Under 29(2)(a), hon. member?

**Mr. Hinkley:** Yes, please. Thank you, Madam Speaker. To my colleague from Edmonton-McClung, thank you very much. Thank you for your insight into our government's vision of a new Alberta filled with hope and change. I do appreciate your experience and passion that you bring to your job as MLA. I want to wish you all the best. What I would really like to ask you now is if you would take some time to elaborate on the engagement of youth in your riding of Edmonton-McClung.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you for the question. Thank you, Madam Speaker. I recently met with people in the riding who are going to help me in my effort to engage with groups that I've discovered, groups of young people who are really looking to assist their community, make it a better place, and engage themselves. My job, I believe, as an MLA is largely one of a facilitator, to identify groups of people and make connections between them, and this is one of the things that I'm going to do with the youth in the community.

I recently ran into a woman, named affectionately the Graffiti Granny, within the riding. She actually is Catherine Backewich, and along with Constable Trevor Henderson of the Edmonton Police Service she will engage to eliminate graffiti in the riding, which is really a nuisance as much as anything else. The students that have talked to me about it are quite excited about adopting this work.

**11:10**

Now, the Graffiti Granny has been doing this work all by herself, and it's a huge, huge effort. She and her husband will patrol the riding and actually erase and eliminate graffiti or paint over the graffiti that they've found using supplies given to them by the city of Edmonton under a program they have to accomplish this task. However, I do know that she needed help, so what we're doing is engaging the youth from mosques, churches, synagogues, schools

to create the Graffiti Granny's army, to ensure that whole neighbourhood is freed of this pest of graffiti, which is commonly reoccurring.

That's one way that we're looking to allow the youth of the community to get together and help each other make the community a better place. That I'll use as a starting point to hopefully find other tasks along with their self-appointed missions to ensure that they feel that they're making a contribution to the riding and the neighbourhood. That's really what they want to be given, an opportunity to serve.

Now, one other thing that I feel strongly about in the community as a way of engaging youth and the community is to really support the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. I grew up in a community league in Edmonton called Wellington Park. They are a real gem that is quite unique to Edmonton. In most cities, if you talk about a community league and you ask them about it, they really don't know what you're talking about because Edmonton is quite unique in having this system of community leagues, which have actually functioned very well under trying circumstances for decades.

In a situation where families now will bus their students or drive their students across communities, they won't necessarily be going to the school that's in their own neighbourhood. Therefore, you don't have the same cohesiveness and attachment to that community league that you once had. But even in the face of that dispersion of the population the community leagues have still stayed together and, I believe, now are filling needs that are different from what they initially did. You would have family members taking tap dancing lessons or going to the local arena or having other courses that were taken through the community league. Now the community league members get together and provide tennis opportunities, wading pools, splash parks, green shack programs, any program where, really, if a group of concerned citizens wants to get together at the community league level, they can actually approach each other and put it together at the community league. They deserve our support.

That's one other way that I'm hoping to serve and pull people together in the community and also engage our youth, to really make sure that the community leagues are continuing to be a vital element of the fabric of the city of Edmonton and, hopefully, maybe exporting it to other cities and communities in the province.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other speakers under 29(2)(a)?

Seeing none, I'd like to call on the Associate Minister of Health.

**Ms Payne:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my deepest honour to rise today and to deliver what is both my maiden speech and, in fact, the first maiden speech for the constituency of Calgary-Acadia. Members of this House may not realize that Calgary-Acadia was one of the new constituencies created in 2010, primarily from the former riding of Calgary-Egmont.

[The Speaker in the chair]

It is an honour and a privilege to serve in Alberta's first NDP government, with so many women and with Alberta's first openly LGBTQ MLAs. It's an honour for each of us to be here representing the people of our communities, and I know that we all take this responsibility seriously. As a mother who works outside of her home, it's also incredible to have the first sitting MLA to give birth while in office and to witness first-hand how our Legislature is becoming more family friendly, with members from both sides of the aisle supporting these efforts. Pregnant and employed mothers across Alberta can attest to the importance of a supportive work environment and supportive colleagues. With one new baby in our



midst and my own on the way, I am pleased to see the ways that our workplace is adapting to support parents with small children, and I look forward to seeing the ripple effects in workplaces across our province.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my beautiful family – my husband, Scott, and my daughter Zoe – for their love and support throughout this process. I would especially thank Scott for his encouragement to put my name forward for election and for his words of support during the campaign and, particularly, the night before election night, when he said: “Work hard tomorrow. You just might win this thing.” His support in the months since my election has been invaluable, and I couldn’t do this without his love and the work he does to keep our household running. I would also like to thank my parents, Jean and Henry Zimmerman, for instilling in me the values of hard work, of caring for others, and of public service. It is because of their unfailing love and support that I am here today.

I would also like to thank the voters of Calgary-Acadia for putting their trust in me and for selecting me to represent them in this Assembly. In the months since I was elected, I’ve had the honour and the privilege of meeting many, many people who live and work in my riding. We’ve met at barbecues, pancake breakfasts, skating parties, teas at seniors’ centres, classrooms, constituency office open houses, and everywhere in between. Hearing their stories, their concerns, and their hopes for the future has been an incredible experience, and I look forward to continuing to hear from the residents of Calgary-Acadia and continuing to represent their views as their MLA.

Calgary-Acadia is a vibrant constituency in southeast Calgary with a population that ranges from young families such as mine to seniors, who were among the original homeowners who settled when our communities were developed in the 1960s, and to everyone in the spectrum between. Calgary-Acadia includes the residential communities of Acadia, Fairview, Manchester, Maple Ridge, Riverbend, Southwood, and my home community of Willow Park. It also includes the industrial community of Alyth-Bonnybrook-Manchester and one of Calgary’s busiest retail hubs in the Deerfoot Heritage area.

We’re lucky to have two major fitness centres and recreation facilities with the Acadia recreation complex and the Trico Centre, and we will soon be home to an indoor and outdoor tennis centre. We have active and involved community associations throughout the riding as well as the FLC Seniors Club, which offers social and wellness programs to seniors in our community and throughout the city. In fact, it’s one of the largest seniors’ clubs in Canada.

Calgary-Acadia is also home to many schools of all grade levels. The schools feature a mix of mainstream programming as well as French immersion programs at all grade levels and an arts-focused middle school. It’s easy to see why families would choose to move to Calgary-Acadia, and I am proud to call Calgary-Acadia my home. I’m also proud to be elected as the first New Democrat in the constituency as well as the first woman MLA for this riding.

While I was campaigning and in the months since my election, I’ve had the opportunity to speak with constituents from all walks of life. They’ve shared with me their concerns for their families’ future and indeed for our province’s future. Parents expressed concern for their children’s education. Would there be enough teachers to meet the demands and the needs of our growing student population? Would there be enough supports for children with special learning needs?

I spoke with mothers who opted to stay out of the workforce or who limited their working hours because they couldn’t afford child care or because the waiting lists for placement were too long. I spoke with home-care workers, working hard to support the

members of our community, who are concerned about the level of supports available to our seniors. I spoke with people of all walks of life and all ages who are concerned about the future of our health care system and worried about cuts to front-line services. I spoke with people who’ve recently lost their jobs in our economic downturn or who are worried about losing their jobs and are worried about the future of our resource-based economy.

Each person I have spoken with was looking for change. They were looking for a government that represented them and was ready to listen to them, that was ready to work hard to make our province a better place to live. That is just what we will do as a government, work to implement the issues highlighted in the Speech from the Throne as well as the platform that I and my fellow MLAs on this side of the aisle ran on, promises such as working to get pipelines built to diversify our energy market, pursuing an economic development strategy to create jobs and diversify our economy, investing in a greener, more sustainable economy, taking a responsible approach to public spending, and pursuing democratic reform to ensure public accountability.

#### 11:20

We will also continue to build on our platform commitments such as building a lifelong learning system that brings out the potential in us all, building a health system that is there when we need it, and restoring stable support for health and education through a fair and progressive tax system. We’re going to continue investing in stable and predictable funding for our schools and postsecondary education and in stable and predictable funding for our health system so that universal, accessible, and high-quality health care will be there when Alberta families need it, and that’s not just for emergency and urgent care but also long-term care and home care. In order to meet the many challenges facing our health system, we as a province must invest more in prevention and early intervention in both mental and physical health.

Mr. Speaker, these are the things that Albertans asked for. These are the things that I ran on. These are the things that matter to me and that I have fought for my entire adult life. In the months since the election I spoke with many hundreds of people in the riding who continue to echo those same wishes for our province’s future and who recognize that we face difficult times and that we must make wise choices with the resources we have. This is not the first time that we as a province have had these conversations, but it is the first time the government is taking a different approach.

When I was a high school student in the early 1990s, the government of the day began cutting spending for education, for health care, and for other essential services. I saw those cuts as damaging to our social programs, to the very fabric of our society, and I began speaking out against that plan. My very first political debate was at dinner with my father, who saw things a little differently than I did, and I’d like to take a moment to thank my dad for helping me hone my debate skills.

This is the debate that is currently happening at dinner tables, coffee shops, and workplaces across our province. How do we build an Alberta we can be proud of? How do we manage a financial downturn and a tough economy in a way where we support all Albertans to reach their fullest potential, in a way that supports Albertan families? How do we encourage our small and medium-sized businesses, and how does government support the job creators and innovators in our communities and in our industries? How do we ensure that Albertans have access to the workforce and skills training and retraining they need to build bright futures for themselves and their families?

Mr. Speaker, the road ahead is not an easy one. The ongoing low international price of oil has taken a huge toll on our province and

on everyday Albertans. The decrease in royalty revenues have had an enormous impact on our provincial budget and on the business plans for our departments moving forward. There are difficult choices to be made in order to hold our departments to the growth targets that were outlined in Budget 2015.

However, as an Albertan and as someone concerned with social justice and the well-being of all Albertans I am grateful that it is this government that will be making these choices. I am grateful that these choices will be made by a government and a caucus that respects Albertans and respects our valuable social services. I am grateful that these choices will be made by representatives that believe in taking a measured and thoughtful response rather than mandating cuts without thought to the impact on Albertans and on the services we rely on. I am grateful that these choices will be made by representatives who will not sacrifice our long-term recovery for our short-term balance sheet. There are difficult choices coming, and I know that I and the rest of this team are absolutely up to the task.

In my career before this I worked as a reporter for a small community newspaper in Ontario, which gave me a strong sense of community and of the way that decisions made at all levels of government impact the lives of all people. I worked as a communications co-ordinator and campaign organizer at a students' union in British Columbia, working to reduce tuition fees so that all students could access a high-quality postsecondary education, to promote academic freedom and the rights of students to organize. I saw how education changes lives and how people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds can benefit from access to higher education.

I've also worked in the oil and gas sector, both at an engineering firm and at a junior producer. I've seen boom-and-bust cycles in our energy sector, and I am confident that our communities can move through this current cycle, as we have the ones before it. I've also had the honour of managing someone else's small business and of starting my own. I know how hard small-business owners work and how much they care for the people who work for them and ensure that their people have a living wage.

I have spent my career working in small teams with common goals and a common sense of how to get there. While the size of our caucus is a little larger than the teams I'm used to working with, I am thrilled to say that we share common goals and a sense of how to get there.

Throughout my life I've advocated for our health care system, for our education system, for supports to families and supports to seniors. I have spoken out against cuts to social services. I have spoken out against measures that increase inequality in our province and that have hurt the most vulnerable members of our society. I am so grateful to be here in this Assembly, where I have the opportunity to vote in favour of and support all of those things that I have worked for and advocated for.

I believe that a great society is one that cares for all of its members and all members of our community. I believe that the best way to a prosperous province is to work for equality for all members of our society and to remove the systemic barriers that prevent members of our community from reaching their full potential. I am so proud to be a part of Alberta's first NDP government, a government that will work hard to support these vital programs and to support all Albertans.

I look forward to all of the positive changes that we will bring to our province and the ways that we will support Albertans through these trying times. It is an honour to be part of such a diverse caucus and one that is so representative of the people of Alberta and that works hard to support everyday Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Under 29(2)(a), the Member for Banff-Cochrane.

**Mr. Westhead:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to congratulate the previous speaker on her maiden speech, and also I'd like to congratulate her on her recent appointment to the Associate Minister of Health portfolio. As a former front-line health care worker myself I'm proud to have someone who's so dedicated to serving the public and who has spent, as she said, much of her adult life campaigning for these types of things that will support families here in Alberta.

She also mentioned how she's expecting an addition to her own family and the support that she's received from her family while she's gone through an adjustment, learning to be an MLA and now as Associate Minister of Health, travelling across the province, meeting with people all over the place and helping families to cope through these difficult times. She mentioned about making sure that teachers are in classrooms for the children and that we have health care workers in our hospitals that can take care of patients. I just wanted to see if she could elaborate a little bit on what the experience has been like for her as Associate Minister of Health over the last several weeks and on how her family has helped support her through that process.

**Ms Payne:** Thank you to the member for the question. In the weeks since my appointment I've had a lot of opportunity to journey to many of our communities and meet with health care providers, whether it be, you know, in a hospital environment in Calgary or visiting the town of Milk River and meeting with the town doctor there. Ultimately, what I've seen anywhere that I've been so far in our province – and there is still very much of it for me to visit – is that the folks who work in our health care system are deeply concerned about the well-being of their patients and care very deeply to make sure that they're able to provide the best care possible. I think that a big part of our role within the Ministry of Health is going to be finding ways to continue to support that.

We know that in the current economic situation we're not going to be able to throw money at problems to make them go away, so a big piece of the work we have going forward is going to be around an analysis of the programs that we provide and finding ways to do things better in our hospitals, drawing on the experience of our front-line health care providers – our nurses, our RNs, our physicians, and, really, everyone who is in the hospital environment as well as in our primary care networks – to learn from their experience about the things that are working, things we can do better.

Also, a long-term project – you know, any journey has to start somewhere – is beginning to move towards a larger focus on preventative care and moving towards a more wellness-based approach. We know that once we see someone in a hospital, there are many opportunities to help guide their health journey in a slightly different way if we were able to maybe intervene sooner in the case of a mental health illness or perhaps for someone who is a cancer patient or a cardiac patient. More focus and support for healthy living choices would have maybe made a difference in that person's life. So continuing to build upon that and supporting Albertans in their own health journeys is, really, a key piece of our role moving forward.

**The Speaker:** Any other questions under 29(2)(a)?

The chair would recognize the Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek.

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly. It's an honour for me to rise today to speak for the first time in this Assembly as the Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek. I'd

like to extend first of all my very belated sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your elections to your demanding positions. I've thought a lot about how much we all appreciate your encouragement to all members to remember that honesty, integrity, and decorum play such a major role in the MLA job description.

*11:30*

I'd also like to congratulate all the members elected to serve in this 29th Legislature, especially those who, like me, are here for the first time. I especially want to congratulate our Premier, Rachel Notley, for her vision and her leadership. As we begin the Second Session of the 29th Legislature, I'm hopeful that we'll all be able to weather the storm of the current economic and energy downturn. The Speech from the Throne outlines some very positive measures to help us persevere and prosper.

There are so many people in the NDP who have inspired and helped me in this journey to this place that I'm not able to mention them all, but I will state my heartfelt and genuine gratitude to all of my volunteers. I'd also like to express my high regard for the hard-working volunteers in Edmonton-Strathcona who served as wonderful examples of how to be politically effective. Also, I'd like to thank my predecessor, Mr. Gene Zwozdesky, for his 22 years of service to the people of Edmonton-Mill Creek. His graciousness, his generosity, and his warmth of spirit were inspiring. I'm honoured to know so many wonderful people.

I'm frequently surprised when I stop to realize that I'm here in this distinguished building, charged with representing the people who elected me, the citizens of Edmonton-Mill Creek. That realization leaves me grateful and determined to fulfill my duties to be an active and involved representative for my constituents. I'm only the second representative in this constituency as it was formed in 1997.

The constituency that I represent is a diverse one with a growing population, many of whom are newcomers to Alberta, and changing boundaries as development continues to move south and east. The oldest of the Edmonton-Mill Creek neighbourhoods is Kiniski Gardens, which began in the 1970s and moved on from there, while the neighbourhood of Bisset was developed in the 1980s. The neighbourhood of Jackson Heights was developed after 1990. What's interesting about Jackson Heights is that it was named after Annie May Jackson, who became the first female police officer in Canada when she was appointed to the Edmonton police department in 1912. This is pretty significant the day after International Women's Day. So we have Annie Jackson.

The largest residential part of the constituency is the area primarily developed after 1995 and known as the Meadows, which is made up of seven neighbourhoods: Larkspur, Wild Rose, Silver Berry, Laurel, Maple, Tamarack, and Meadows.

Edmonton-Mill Creek supports many active businesses. The oldest business or residence in Edmonton-Mill Creek is the Millcreek Nursery, which operates from a 100-year-old family farm within Edmonton city limits. In a country atmosphere complete with a big red barn it provides a great selection of trees, shrubs, and perennials as well as decorative gift and garden decor, a coffee bar, and a children's play area. Eighty acres of field production are being maintained, meaning that they also have a wide selection of large ornamental trees.

Mill Creek also supports several breweries, one of which, Labatt's brewery, is the fifth-largest brewery in Canada, and Alley Kat brewery, which is one of the new artisanal breweries.

Edmonton-Mill Creek is also the home of many light industrial businesses, ranging from plumbing material suppliers, building suppliers, and petrochemical analysis companies, where oil and gas

samples from northern and central Alberta are analyzed. There are a myriad of other businesses and services within the constituency such as a television studio, which I toured, and several small radio stations, which I visited during the election.

In the not-for-profit sector one of the newest buildings in Edmonton-Mill Creek is the combined Meadows library and recreation centre, a facility which demonstrates the ability and willingness to collaborate to create something truly new.

The remaining part of the constituency is made up of large, light industrial parks with some scattered residences and mobile-home parks and acreages. Interspersed with the development in this area are a number of ponds and water flow collection sites, which are occupied by waterfowl, fish, and a variety of mammals in the surrounding grasslands and treed areas. What you see throughout the constituency is a variety of buildings and many open places and green spaces; what you don't see are high-rises and office towers.

Now, the question arises: how did I come to be the MLA of this growing and dynamic area of Edmonton? It all began many years ago. My family and I moved to Edmonton, just before I started school, to a small house near Hazeldean school. Our house at that time was on the block farthest south in Edmonton. Right across from us was a farm, complete with cows, which I found as a small child quite fascinating. We had no city utilities because it was too far south at that time, but there was so little affordable housing then that even a very basic, off-the-grid house was welcome as it allowed us to live and work in the city. Memories of living on the outskirts of a rapidly growing city came back to me when I drove around a new neighbourhood in my constituency and saw the houses being built on the eastern edge of the city with very few amenities in place yet. I felt that I had come full circle from my early years, and I felt again the sense of being on the edge of civilization.

I come from a long line of travellers and adventurers, with my knowledge of family journeys going back as far as the early 1800s, when one family branch came from Ireland, another came from Germany, and a third came from England. They all settled in Ontario, working in various occupations and providing their children with good educations. Many in the next generation headed west. My grandfather left Ontario in the late 1800s, first to take part in the gold rush in B.C. and later to take up ranching in southern Alberta where the village of Schuler is now, near the Saskatchewan border. He did well on the Drowning Ford Ranch raising a family, helping to support his brothers going through medical school, and serving as a justice of the peace. I still remember the pictures of him and his neighbouring ranchers taking their cattle, their Texas longhorn, through the dip after they'd been brought up to Canada on a cattle drive.

Another grandfather and grandmother came to Alberta from Manchester, England, settling in Medicine Hat to work for the Canadian Pacific Railway. They lived there, raised their family, contributed to their adopted community for the rest of their lives. All of these people left their settled lives looking for something better, knowing that they would probably never see their homes again but believing that they would find opportunities and eventual success in their new lives if they worked hard and never gave up.

I'm not that kind of adventurer, but my travels have taken me all over Alberta, where I've worked, lived, and raised my children. I come from Medicine Hat, in southern Alberta, near the Cypress Hills, moved to Edmonton at an early age, and as an adult lived and worked in Edmonton and throughout northern and central Alberta. I've stood on the edge of Lake Athabasca beside the cairn commemorating the fur traders and explorers who once lived in that area, watched the sunset over the frozen lake, saw snowmobiles hauling sleds coming off the lake in winter, followed trails marked with small trees across the lake up the Canadian Shield that flanks

the lake and into the town of Fort Chipewyan. A long distance away, in southern Alberta, I've stood at the top of Horseshoe Canyon in Cypress Hills, looking over into the Montana hills.

In the Rocky Mountains I've seen mountain sheep who chose not to move off the trail to make way for hikers; bears, both black and grizzly, who, luckily, were reasonably shy of people; elk, lots of them; the occasional coyote and eagle; and even a marmot and a pika or two.

I've been fortunate enough to have flown from Fort McMurray to Fort Chipewyan and have been truly amazed by the amount of impact humans have had on the landscape. I've also heard stories from local people about the changes they have witnessed in the north and how they've been coping with the changing world. I feel very privileged to have travelled to the places I've been to and believe my travels have led me to learn about many different ways of living.

11:40

I was not particularly political as a young person, but I did believe that everyone should bear some responsibility for ensuring that our fellow Canadians are cared for, with the poor and the vulnerable being most in need of our care and protection. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." These words reflect what I believed, and these beliefs became the foundation for my social-democratic principles.

After I retired from teaching, which had taken up a good portion of my life, I was able to become involved in politics as a volunteer for NDP campaigns and as a member of a constituency association. I also joined the Canadian Federation of University Women, an organization that's been working since 1919 to improve the status of women and to promote human rights, public education, social justice, and peace. To support education, they raised money to fund bursaries and scholarships for female University of Alberta students. I've been involved in – this is CFUW, the Canadian Federation of University Women – their active environmental group as well, looking at environmental issues such as how the neonicotinoid class of pesticides affects our bees, with the resulting information and conclusions shared with other CFUW members. CFUW provided me with the opportunity to meet and talk with women doing research in many different fields such as the effect of climate change on the northern environment, the history of Chinese restaurants in Alberta, and the role played by fungi in the pine beetle devastation.

In addition to work and family, which are always my priorities, my preretirement life focused on academic achievement, involving doing graduate work, doing a master's degree, completing the work necessary to become a registered psychologist, while my postretirement life has focused on applying my learning and experiences to issues that affect people in a variety of ways. This transition helped me to make the move from teacher and psychologist to politician, with the skills of listening, learning, and understanding being constant throughout.

I was first invited to run as an NDP candidate in Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo in 2012, where I learned how to talk to the media, and I ran again as a candidate in Edmonton-Mill Creek in the 2015 provincial election. Meeting people in my constituency and listening to their concerns gave me the resolve to work hard to be elected so that I could represent them in the Legislature in Alberta. My fellow MLAs are stalwart, supportive, and compassionate people. I feel incredibly lucky to be one of such an Assembly.

When I was preparing to write this speech, I looked for inspiration and found some in the words of former MLA Marie Laing, who wrote: as a social democrat, a feminist, an academic,

and a New Democrat I have a dream and a vision for a world founded in compassion.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to address the Assembly, and thank you, fellow members of this Assembly, for listening.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.

Any questions under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Red Deer-North.

**Mrs. Schreiner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to congratulate and thank the MLA for Edmonton-Mill Creek for her maiden speech. I enjoyed it very much. I would like to ask the Member for Edmonton-Mill Creek: in her new role as MLA what are some of the challenges and concerns that she is hearing from her constituents?

**Ms Woollard:** Thank you for the question. This is one that I've been hearing from a lot of people. With it being such a new constituency, all the services are basically growing with the development. As people come in, then they're provided with the services, so what we're seeing a need for is schools. A lot of the schools, even though they're very new, are showing signs of being overcrowded, and parents naturally are worrying about what they will be looking forward to in a few years. For instance, a parent with a preschooler was asking me: well, what will I be expecting in a few years when my child enters school? It's a good question. I visited one of the newest schools in the constituency a few days ago and had some good conversations with the teachers about the portable classrooms or manufactured classrooms, basically portables, which they're using already to be able to make their school adequate, to provide adequate space for the new students coming in.

Now, one of the things I'm pleased to say is that, visiting in the constituency and doing my work last year as a university facilitator, I was able to go to a lot of schools to supervise student teachers, and I saw some incredible work going on in the schools. That was a really positive part. The worrying part is getting enough schools up and running quickly enough to meet the needs of the people moving into the area.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Any other questions or comments under 29(2)(a)?

Hearing none, I would recognize the Member for Edmonton-South West.

**Mr. Dang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'd like to begin by quite belatedly, perhaps, congratulating all the new members of this House along with those who are returning. It's truly a privilege and honour to join everybody in this Legislature. I wish to give special thanks to my friend and colleague the hon. Minister of Education because his encouragement has been exceptional and invaluable to me throughout my political career, and I'm sure it will continue.

I'm honoured and humbled to represent the constituents of Edmonton-South West. I was elected on a platform that promised change, promised new energy, and promised to do what is truly right for Albertans.

Edmonton-South West is a constituency located in the deep south and west in the city. This is an area that has seen much growth and prosperity over the last decade. We know that 5 out of the 10 fastest growing neighbourhoods in Edmonton are in my constituency. These people, the people of Edmonton-South West, are young, they're old, they're working families, they're men, women, and children. They are people who work hard every day and demanded

better of their government, and those people made that decision in this past election.

Mr. Speaker, we enter a new chapter in Alberta history with this Legislature. Under a new Premier, under a new government this Legislature is committed to serving Albertans. This Legislature is committed to serving the people. It's committed to diversifying our economy and getting Albertans and my constituents back to work through these difficult economic times.

What the people expect – no; what the people deserve, Mr. Speaker – is a commitment to things like stable education funding. A K to 12 education requires that we spend the time and money with our students. It demands that we have enough teachers. It demands that we have enough educational assistants. It demands that we keep these class sizes down. Quality student education should never be sacrificed to save a couple of bucks, and that's what I'm committed to fighting for in this House. Good government recognizes this.

Good government recognizes that when there is an infrastructure debt, the solution is not to cut spending; the solution is to invest in a quality future. The solution is to invest in a quality future for our children. Investing in this future actually requires investing in ourselves as well. My constituents, Mr. Speaker, are working families. My constituents are people who work hard every day to provide the absolute best that they can.

How do we do this, and how can we help invest in ourselves? We can start by supporting our parents. We can start by providing an affordable child care program, and that's why I'm committed to protecting our children, our families, and our communities by fighting for a child care program that will work for our families. This affordable child care would allow parents to spend more time with their children, and Albertans simply deserve better than to be stretched thin just to meet basic child care needs. Mr. Speaker, that's what I commit to fighting for every day in this House. These small things, these ideas of investing in our children, investing in ourselves, and investing in our families are the ones that I was elected on.

Mr. Speaker, it's truly an honour and a privilege to be elected as the youngest member in the history of this great province, to bring this much-needed breath of fresh air to this Assembly. I am the youngest MLA in one of the youngest ridings with many of the youngest families, and it was truly the passion and the drive of these young people that first inspired me to become involved in politics.

I, when I first got involved in politics, spoke at a rally organized by high school students against budget cuts to education, and it was actually at that rally where I met the hon. Minister of Education. From that fateful day, Mr. Speaker, from that sunny afternoon I've committed to protecting the interests of our education system, meeting with and consulting teachers, administrators, and educational assistants because the needs of our students and the needs of our families are at the forefront of my concerns.

**11:50**

As someone who recognizes the needs of the young families in my constituency and was very recently a member of the postsecondary education programs in this province, Mr. Speaker, it is near and dear to me to commit to advocating for education, students, and teachers because when I see schools in Edmonton-South West at nearly 135 per cent enrolment, it becomes obvious to me that they deserve an advocate, that they deserve someone who will stand up for them in this House and fight for what they need.

I am proud, I am excited, and I am beyond thrilled to be a member of a party and a caucus that will allow me to bring about the positive change that this province so desperately deserves. As we heard in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker, we are facing a deep slump in the

international price of oil, and we as Albertans must stand together. This government will be forced to make difficult decisions to protect Albertan families by keeping with our core values, that Albertans are optimistic people and that Albertans care for each other and their society. This is why I'm thrilled to be able to support a government that will stabilize services in a prudent and sustainable way, a government that will stimulate economic growth and diversification, a government that supports job creation, and a government that has a plan for sustainable spending through better decision-making.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to work with a government that recognizes the necessity for promoting job creation and diversification. Alberta's New Democrat government is focused on renewing hope, listening to Albertans, and leading change to create a fair and prosperous future for our province.

In the last several months that we've been on the job, I've been able to go back to my constituents time and time again with concrete achievements that continue to make things better for everybody in this province and especially my constituents. I hear time and time again as I'm out in the community and on the doorsteps that Albertans are excited about what we've been able to accomplish. They are proud of this government. I'm honoured for the opportunity to be part of the caucus that is able to make such a profound difference in the lives of Albertans everywhere and especially my constituents back home. Mr. Speaker, my constituents deserve nothing less than the best, and I aspire to meet their expectations every day in my capacity as their MLA.

Mr. Speaker, I became an MLA because I believe in Alberta, I believe in Albertans, and I believe in this government. It is the duty of an MLA to ensure that their constituents are represented both in this House and outside of it. It's with this province's historic and first New Democrat government that we are able to bring about all of this positive change, that I can represent my constituents and bring about for them what they have asked for and what they deserve. We can provide the schools my constituents desperately need, hire the teachers that our students desperately deserve, and deliver the services that Albertans expect.

Mr. Speaker, history was made on May 5. History was made by toppling a dynasty, and history is forged every day that this Assembly brings forward legislation that strives to support Albertans where they have been ignored before. No member of this caucus put their name on the ballot because they didn't believe in Alberta. No member of this caucus put their name forward for any other reason than that they wished they could make Alberta the best province it possibly could be. I am proud to represent my constituents. I am proud to have run because I truly believe in this government. I am proud to say that I will work as hard as I possibly can to change Alberta so that it can become the best Alberta it possibly can be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Are there any questions of the hon. member under section 29(2)(a)? The Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

**Mr. S. Anderson:** You got it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to congratulate the member on being the youngest member ever elected. As you can see by his speech, his political brain far surpasses his physical time on this Earth so far, though I do, you know, use pop culture references sometimes that he doesn't get, which makes me feel quite old, and I'm only 40. So thanks for that, Member for Edmonton-South West.

Your speech was quite impassioned. It's a pleasure to hear you expound on your constituents and what you want to do for them. To

that, speaking to your constituents and what you want to accomplish, I was just wondering if you could, I guess, elaborate a bit on kind of, maybe, what your goals are or what you'd like to do out there. I'd appreciate hearing that.

Thanks.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member.

**Mr. Dang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the questions. We've definitely been doing a lot in my constituency. I've been door-knocking as often as I can. I've been meeting with constituents as often as I can because that's what matters. It's talking with the people in the communities. It's talking with the people and making sure that we can connect one-on-one, that I can bring their concerns back to this House, back to this government and represent them in a fulfilling manner.

We've been using things like MLA reports and sending notices of what we've been able to accomplish and when we will be having our town halls, Mr. Speaker, so that our constituents and my constituents can come and speak to me and say: these are the things I care about. We plan to do a lot more of these initiatives going forward, including things like MLA surgeries, where I will personally be going into communities and saying: come and see, and I will work with you one-on-one so that we can determine what we can do best to help you from our provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, we've spent a lot of time, I've spent a lot of time visiting things like seniors' centres, the schools in my riding, and when we receive the rest of them, I'll be visiting all of those as well because these are the things that matter as elected officials. These are the things that matter as MLAs. It is that we must be able to talk to the people. Hearing from constituents is what is most important to me in my job, and that's why I've done things like join constituents at community league meetings and community halls.

I will bring up one comment that a constituent made to me, the president of a community league, actually. He commented – their league has been established, I think, for 20, 30 years: Member, I think you may be the first elected official ever to stay for an entire community league meeting. That blew my mind because: why wouldn't you want to stay there for the entire time and spend time with your constituents and learn about what they care about and

learn about what's going on every day in their lives? Mr. Speaker, this is why I was elected. I was elected to serve my constituents. I was elected to go out into the community and meet with them. It wasn't to sit behind my desk all day and ruminate; it was to make sure that I understood what was happening in the community so that I could best help them be represented to the government, best help them be represented in this House, and best be able to make the decisions that we must as legislators, make the decisions that we must as elected officials.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honour to have been able to go on and do all these things, and it is going to truly be my honour to continue to go on and continue to reach out into the communities, continue to meet with constituents and continue to have conversations frankly, one-on-one with as many people as I possibly can in my tenure here in this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Westhead:** I'd like to congratulate the Member for Edmonton-South West on his impassioned speech and getting out in the community and really embodying what it means to be an MLA and listening to people. I also wanted to commend him for being, like he mentioned, the youngest MLA ever elected here in Alberta. You know, he became part of a very diverse caucus, people from all walks of life, all age ranges. We have the first LGBTQ members ever to be elected in Alberta. I wonder if he can tell us a little bit from his perspective as the youngest member ever to be elected what it's like to be part of such a diverse caucus, that really reflects the face of Alberta.

**The Speaker:** In a very short time.

**Mr. Dang:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will just note that it is truly amazing because we have this opportunity today, this opportunity to be . . .

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I note the clock. Under Standing Order 4(2.1) the Assembly stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. today. Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12 p.m.]

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