



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature  
Second Session

# Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, May 3, 2016

Day 21

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)	Loyola, Rod, Edmonton-Ellerslie (ND)
Anderson, Shaye, Leduc-Beaumont (ND)	Luff, Robyn, Calgary-East (ND)
Anderson, Wayne, Highwood (W)	MacIntyre, Donald, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (W)
Babcock, Erin D., Stony Plain (ND)	Malkinson, Brian, Calgary-Currie (ND)
Barnes, Drew, Cypress-Medicine Hat (W)	Mason, Hon. Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (ND), Government House Leader
Bilous, Hon. Deron, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (ND), Deputy Government House Leader	McCuaig-Boyd, Hon. Margaret, Dunvegan-Central Peace-Notley (ND)
Carlier, Hon. Oneil, Whitecourt-St. Anne (ND), Deputy Government House Leader	McIver, Ric, Calgary-Hays (PC), Leader of the Progressive Conservative Opposition
Carson, Jonathon, Edmonton-Meadowlark (ND)	McKittrick, Annie, Sherwood Park (ND)
Ceci, Hon. Joe, Calgary-Fort (ND)	McLean, Hon. Stephanie V., Calgary-Varsity (ND)
Clark, Greg, Calgary-Elbow (AP)	McPherson, Karen M., Calgary-Mackay-Nose Hill (ND)
Connolly, Michael R.D., Calgary-Hawkwood (ND)	Miller, Barb, Red Deer-South (ND)
Coolahan, Craig, Calgary-Klein (ND)	Miranda, Hon. Ricardo, Calgary-Cross (ND)
Cooper, Nathan, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (W), Official Opposition House Leader	Nielsen, Christian E., Edmonton-Decore (ND)
Cortes-Vargas, Estefania, Strathcona-Sherwood Park (ND), Government Whip	Nixon, Jason, Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre (W), Official Opposition Whip
Cyr, Scott J., Bonnyville-Cold Lake (W), Official Opposition Deputy Whip	Notley, Hon. Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (ND), Premier
Dach, Lorne, Edmonton-McClung (ND)	Orr, Ronald, Lacombe-Ponoka (W)
Dang, Thomas, Edmonton-South West (ND)	Panda, Prasad, Calgary-Foothills (W)
Drever, Deborah, Calgary-Bow (ND)	Payne, Hon. Brandy, Calgary-Acadia (ND)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC), Progressive Conservative Opposition Whip	Phillips, Hon. Shannon, Lethbridge-West (ND)
Eggen, Hon. David, Edmonton-Calder (ND)	Piquette, Colin, Athabasca-Sturgeon-Redwater (ND)
Ellis, Mike, Calgary-West (PC)	Pitt, Angela D., Airdrie (W)
Feehan, Hon. Richard, Edmonton-Rutherford (ND)	Renaud, Marie F., St. Albert (ND)
Filtebrandt, Derek Gerhard, Strathmore-Brooks (W)	Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)
Fitzpatrick, Maria M., Lethbridge-East (ND)	Rosendahl, Eric, West Yellowhead (ND)
Fraser, Rick, Calgary-South East (PC)	Sabir, Hon. Irfan, Calgary-McCall (ND)
Ganley, Hon. Kathleen T., Calgary-Buffalo (ND)	Schmidt, Hon. Marlin, Edmonton-Gold Bar (ND)
Gill, Prab, Calgary-Greenway (PC)	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)

**Party standings:**

New Democrat: 54      Wildrose: 22      Progressive Conservative: 9      Alberta Liberal: 1      Alberta Party: 1

**Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly**

Robert H. Reynolds, QC, Clerk	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
Stephanie LeBlanc, Parliamentary Counsel and Legal Research Officer	Brian G. Hodgson, 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**

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Deputy Chair: Mr. Malkinson

Cooper	Littlewood
Ellis	Nixon
Horne	van Dijken
Jabbour	Woollard
Kleinsteuber	

**Special Standing Committee on Members' Services**

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Deputy Chair: Cortes-Vargas

Cooper	McIver
Dang	Nixon
Fildebrandt	Piquette
Jabbour	Schreiner
Luff	

**Standing Committee on Private Bills**

Chair: Ms McPherson  
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Babcock	McKitrick
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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  
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Barnes	Luff
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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

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 3, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

### Prayers

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, let us reflect. Let's reflect on the power of knowledge and the impact we have on each other. Let us encourage one another to not be afraid to make mistakes. Let us also commend one another for their opinions, their ideas, and their thoughts, for as a community we are stronger when we work together. Let us remember that what we can achieve together far exceeds what we might do as individuals.

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Visitors

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, I would just take this opportunity to ask the members to particularly be conscious of the amount of time during introductions, and I would appreciate that members abide by that.

The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly Chief Tony Alexis, the grand chief of Treaty 6, seated in the Speaker's gallery. When he was just 25 years of age, Chief Tony Alexis was first elected to the council for his nation, and he was elected chief of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation in 2013 and appointed grand chief in 2015 of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations. Grand Chief Alexis has recently returned from Rome, where he met with Pope Francis. Grand Chief Alexis practises a traditional way of life, taught by his father, which motivates the people he represents, advocates and promotes indigenous heritage and ongoing treaty dialogue with all governments. Grand Chief Alexis enjoys serving his people and community, specializing in business and policy development. With Grand Chief Alexis today we have Beatrice Carpentier, the CEO for Treaty 6, and Jerry Saddleback, grand chief liaison. If you could all stand and enjoy the warm welcome of the House.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

**Dr. Turner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I rise to introduce to you and through you to all members of this House 36 very bright and energetic students from one of the best schools in the great riding of Edmonton-Whitemud. This is the Monsignor William Irwin school, that I've had the pleasure to visit several times. We have 36 students, and they're joined by their teacher, Mr. Nick Freeman. I would ask them to rise and please receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The hon. Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Mr. Bilous:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly members of the Alberta and Africa's Great Lakes Foundation who are joining us today in the gallery: Francky

BigomoKerolll Katana, Sara Raguz, Clotilde Nsimine, Justine Maman Katana, Sophie Uzoma, and Rosalie Rosie. Together they work in my riding of Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview to help newcomers from across Africa do several things: master English while celebrating their mother languages and cultures, learn how to use public transportation, access immigration services, and find libraries, schools, and other services. But, most importantly, they help them get good jobs to earn a good living for themselves and their families. I'd ask my guests to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

**Mr. Carlier:** Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly the president and CEO of the Alberta Forest Products Association. Last Sunday my beautiful wife, Michèle, and I planted trees at Hawrelak park in Edmonton as we highlight Alberta Forest Week. Today the AFPA and its partners have distributed seedlings to each and every Member of this Legislative Assembly, inviting all of us to be part of the important work of forest stewardship. I would like to ask Paul Whittaker to now rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

The Member for Edmonton-Decore.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly several guests representing 20 Vic Management Incorporated, or the administration team of Londonderry Mall, located in my constituency of Edmonton-Decore. Londonderry has long been the shopping destination for the surrounding area since opening in 1972 and recently embarked on a striking \$130 million renovation, which includes full renovation of all common areas and the addition of exciting new retailers and full-service dining experiences, all of which will help to continue creating economic growth and diversification in northeast Edmonton. Joining us today are Nancy Jarnevic, Jordon Adams, and Olga McGonigal. If I could have you please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** Welcome.

Are there any other guests? The hon. minister.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly Councillor Fabian North Peigan from the Piikani band in the southern parts of the province, who is here today with his council and Chief Stanley Grier. If Fabian could please stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

Thank you.

### Members' Statements

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

#### Chartier Restaurant in Beaumont

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and speak about a unique and beautiful local restaurant, Chartier, which is a true jewel in the heart of the town of Beaumont. Chartier brings to Beaumont a rustic, warm feeling through its delicious French-Canadian cuisine. Its interior is uniquely decorated. You'll find a blend of eclectic flea market fare, mismatched chairs, plates, cutlery, beer mugs from me, reclaimed barn wood, and warm Edison light bulbs hanging from a ceiling and

wrapped around large beams, that creates a warm, inviting, homey atmosphere which draws you in as you walk down Main Street Beaumont.

On entering, you are either greeted by the fantastic and friendly restaurant staff or by the pleasant and welcoming owners, Darren and Sylvia Cheverie. It feels like being invited into a family member's home. Once you are in, you are immersed in delicious smells that will delight your senses. Some of their bestselling, in-demand dishes are pork jowl cakes, Montreal smoked meat carpaccio, and flank steak, all brought to you by the fantastic chef, Steve Brochu.

Mr. Speaker, what makes this restaurant even more unique is that the owners, a couple, raised \$107,975 for this dream project through crowdfunding, a mercurial form of fundraising typically used for projects like start-ups in tech or other types of unique entrepreneurship ideas. Chartier is here today partly due to the 550 people who graciously donated to the compelling Kickstarter campaign. But I think it was Darren and Sylvia's passion for wanting to bring a truly special food experience to their hometown that made Chartier a reality.

Darren and Sylvia have shown once more that Albertans are enterprising entrepreneurs. They are the heart and soul of this new jewel in Beaumont, and we are truly better off for having them and Chartier warming the centre of our beautiful little town. I want to wish them continued success and all the best in the future and welcome everyone to come and visit this fantastic place. Bring your family and have nice French cuisine.

Thank you.

### Charities

**Mrs. Pitt:** I beam with pride when I say that I'm an Albertan. Albertans are generous in spirit, independent, and always willing to help a neighbour. In my own community of Airdrie I know the deep and meaningful impact that volunteer organizations and charities have. When an individual faces adversity, there are a tremendous number of organizations in Alberta to lend a helping hand.

Charities like the Mustard Seed, Calgary Dream Centre, Inn from the Cold, and the Zebra centre rely on donations to run their invaluable services. Of course, with the economic downturn, many Albertans won't have as much money left in their pockets at the end of the month to donate. Starting in early 2017, Albertans will have even less, with the typical family expected to be an additional \$1,000 out of pocket each year because of the NDP government's risky carbon tax. When you consider that Albertans donate a median of \$420, charitable donations are sure to decrease because of the carbon tax and NDP ideology.

1:40

To make matters even worse, the NDP government has also turned its back on the hard-working charities in communities across Alberta and has decided that they will be subject to the carbon tax, too. Many of these charities are on fixed budgets, with little overhead or room to spare at the end of the year. These well-meaning charities will now have to choose between providing meals to the homeless and keeping the building warm enough during an Alberta winter. Organizations that deliver meals to vulnerable individuals will see a sharp spike in the cost of gas for their volunteers. Through no fault of their own, charities will be paying the price for NDP ideology.

The NDP government needs to commit that nonprofit organizations that work tirelessly each and every day to help Albertans when they are down will be exempt from the risky and ideological carbon tax, plain and simple.

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

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

### Alberta Beef

**Mr. Drysdale:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise in this Assembly and stand up for Alberta beef. Alberta and Canadian beef ranks among the best in the world. I can attest to that first-hand because I raised cattle most of my life.

Beef producers adhere to strict antibiotic guidelines as set out by Health Canada. In Canada no cattle may be slaughtered for processing until a specified, standardized amount of time has passed since the animal has finished a course of antibiotics, which means that no cattle are processed that contain antibiotic residue. Antibiotic treatment of sick cows limits the extent of their sickness and suffering. Let's be clear. It is the humane thing to do to treat a sick cow so they can get better instead of letting the animal suffer.

The Canadian beef industry uses a comprehensive traceability system. We are able to trace an animal throughout its life cycle, which is essential for tracing animal health emergencies that may arise.

The hormone and steroid levels of beef from cattle raised with hormone implants are less than one nanogram, different than cattle raised without hormone implants, and there are thousands of times more steroids in the bun than in the beef. Also, Canada beef is regularly tested for BSE, and we continue to increase sample testing size every year.

Our producers take tremendous pride in their product. Cattle are grain fed and given space and freedom to roam, which is why Alberta beef is the best tasting. Canadian law ensures that cattle are handled and slaughtered humanely. If beef producers weren't raising their cattle with the care and attention that they are, Alberta beef would not be top rank in the world for flavour. It's because of that care and attention that our beef tastes so amazing. Alberta beef has the highest certification, and I proudly choose Alberta beef every time.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### Sexually Transmitted Infections

**Mr. Connolly:** Mr. Speaker, last week I took the opportunity to do what many young people need to do more often: yes, I got an STI test. Getting tested for STIs, also known as sexually transmitted infections, is an important part of comprehensive health care. In Alberta some of the highest rates and increases in STIs are in young people aged 15 to 24. According to information from Alberta Health Services the number of cases of gonorrhoea in 2015 is up 80 per cent from 2014, and cases of infectious syphilis in 2015 doubled from 2014. Syphilis rates have risen most notably in MSM, or men who have sex with men, and gonorrhoea rates have increased in young indigenous females.

It's important that we break the stigma associated with getting tested for STIs. Health care professionals don't perform STI tests to judge you; they are there to make sure that you are the healthiest you can be.

But it's not just youth who are at risk, Mr. Speaker. Any Albertan who is sexually active is at risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection. The good news is that many STIs can be treated and cured but only if you are aware that you are infected. If you are having sex, thinking about having sex, single, partnered, married, straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, cisgendered, transgendered, or gender queer, you need to know how to avoid contracting an STI and what to do if you have one. It's important to take a holistic approach to

health. Albertans should know how to avoid contracting an STI and what to do if they have one. Fortunately, there are plenty of clinics across the province where Albertans of all ages, Mr. Speaker, can get an STI test for free. There are also community organizations doing great work to help fight stigma, raise awareness, and even offer free testing such as the Calgary Sexual Health Centre and the Pride Centre of Edmonton.

I would strongly encourage every sexually active Albertan and member of this Chamber to get tested. If anyone would like any more information about STIs or STI testing, I would invite them to visit Alberta Health Services' new website [sexgerms.com](http://sexgerms.com).

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The Member for Calgary-Bow.

### Constituency Week in Calgary-Bow

**Ms Drever:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Returning to my riding of Calgary-Bow last week reminded me of the dynamic role that we as MLAs have been asked to fulfill by the people.

Over the course of the constituency week I met with stakeholders big and small, constituents, and neighbours in boardrooms and living rooms, from the small group of roommates who have made it their goal to have a place at their table for whoever may need to share a meal, like the House of Commons in Bowness, or Marilyn Gunn and the countless volunteers of the Community Kitchen program, which aims to feed with dignity and provides a connection for those who may be isolated, like seniors or new Canadians. This program serves a number of seniors in my constituency, and it was very nice to meet the people behind it.

I met the folks of the southern Rockies Alberta Environment and Parks office, where they work 24 hours a day to keep our forests healthy, available, and safe for the many Albertans who enjoy them. I also met with teachers from a number of schools to hear directly from them about their concerns and their hopes for the future. It was easy to see the commitment and genuine love these teachers have for their students and the role that they play in so many of their lives.

Constituency week is a reminder to me of the countless hours of time and effort that people pour into our communities. While the work that they do may differ from group to group, the intention is always the same: to give back, to lift up, and to nurture our communities with support.

I am truly inspired by the people I get to meet every day, and I would like to say thank you to every constituent in Calgary-Bow for the opportunity to be here on your behalf. As we approach the end of year 1 and the beginning of the next year, I recommit my promise to listen, to learn, and to work hard on your behalf.

Thank you so much.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lacombe-Ponoka.

### Red Tape

**Mr. Orr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like a snare, red tape is a trap to the good citizens and businesses of Red Deer and area. It's an offence under the Wildlife Act to use snares in Red Deer and Alberta, and it should also be an offence to use red tap to entangle Alberta's good citizens. Indeed, this has some of them seeing red. Red tape has trapped our good citizens. But the government, like every poacher caught red-handed, claims no knowledge of red-tape entrapment, so let me present some evidence.

Bill 6 is a shining example of creating more red tape for farmers and ranchers. Without our help, small family farms would have been tangled in this trap forever.

School boards were caught on April 4. They used to produce quarterly and annual audited reports to Education. Now, suddenly, the minister has the boards in a stranglehold of red tape and requires monthly statements. Boards have to hire new employees to untangle themselves from this red-ink snare.

Lacombe county recently sent a letter to the government, crying out to be released from red tape. Road project approvals for simple routine maintenance take months and months to get approved.

A business in my riding of Lacombe-Ponoka had to request help regarding costly delays to a major project due to waterway assessments becoming entangled in more red-tape delays.

Meanwhile guide outfitters tell me that they are subject to three different interpretations for permits to ship trophy hunters' trophies for tourist expeditions.

We should save government and business time and money by reducing the amount of red tape that is hurting Alberta's businesses and families. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently gave Alberta a D on our red-tape report card. Unacceptable. This government could help Albertans by reducing the amount of red tape. Instead, they are intent on making everything worse, strangling the advantages that make us the greatest place in the world to live, work, and raise a family to the point of extinction.

Thank you.

1:50

### Oral Question Period

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Jean:** First of all, Mr. Speaker, our thoughts and prayers go out to the families affected by forest fires across the province.

### Government Policies

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, at the Ritchie Brothers auction last week a record was set for energy companies selling off their machinery. Almost 60 per cent of all purchases went outside of Alberta. It's just the latest sign that things aren't working in Alberta like they should and like they did. Getting Alberta working again requires a plan to attract investment and create jobs. Instead, the Premier has talked Alberta down, brought in a carbon tax, and raised taxes on just about everything else for all Albertans. When can Albertans expect a real job-creation plan instead of . . .

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

The hon. Premier.

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As you know, our government is very concerned about job loss, and we're very concerned about doing whatever we can to stimulate the economy in this province during this very, very difficult economic shock. That's why our budget invests in infrastructure, something that very clearly will create and preserve jobs and something which is in direct opposition to what the folks over there would do. That's why our government invested in a 1 per cent small-business tax cut in order to support small business and innovators. That's why our government has put forward significant amounts of financing authority for innovators and new and emerging businesses in order to give them the support they need, both . . .

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

**Mr. Jean:** The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP are moving ahead with a budget that takes money away from Albertans at a time when they just can't afford it.

In Calgary Enmax is renewing a grant program to social agencies to help at-risk families cover their utility bills as a result of this government. Distress Centre Calgary has had demand increase 59 per cent in 2015 over the previous year. This carbon tax will only make things much worse, making utilities and everything else more expensive. How will taxing families and taxing charities make things any better for Alberta's most vulnerable citizens?

**Ms Notley:** Well, actually, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to Alberta's most vulnerable citizens and most vulnerable groups, the rebate that is planned through our carbon levy program within the climate leadership plan will result in more money being in the pockets of low-income Albertans because they actually use less greenhouse gas emissions than wealthy ones. In fact, it will support those very families that the member opposite claims to be so concerned about.

**Mr. Jean:** The family rebate, Mr. Speaker, is far less than the family will be taxed. The Premier knows that, and she should be honest with Albertans.

The fact is that the NDP did not do their homework on this carbon tax. Charities that help Albertans recover from addiction or other family tragedies spend a lot of their resources on shelter, on gas, on heating. Those undergoing rehabilitation need a warm bed, but this carbon tax would mean less resources to spend on those things at a time when charities need them the most. How can the Premier stand behind this tax, a tax that makes life much more difficult for all Alberta charities and Alberta's most vulnerable?

**Ms Notley:** You know, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. The minister of environment just finished three hours of estimates. It would have been very helpful if the members opposite might have actually asked her questions about the climate leadership plan, at which point they might have received some facts in response, which might have ensured that the questions asked were not so hyperbolic and so engaged in fearmongering and so unaware of what our program actually is going to achieve.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker. We will support Albertans, we will support charities, we will invest in energy efficiency, we will diversify the economy, and we will do that by acknowledging the need to act on climate change.

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP is punishing charities and Alberta's most vulnerable.

### Fentanyl Use

**Mr. Jean:** Fentanyl abuse touches every type of family and impacts communities in every corner of our great province. The deadly drug wraps individuals up in addiction, tearing apart families, ruining careers, and almost 500 times since 2012 has resulted in overdoses and deaths of Albertans. This morning I met with staff at the Boyle Street community centre and Streetworks to discuss ways to combat the fentanyl crisis and to learn more about their efforts to improve safety. Will the Premier now declare, today, a public health emergency to better equip the government and social agencies across this province . . .

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

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, we do believe that the members opposite are sincere in their desire to help with the challenge of opiate addiction and the fentanyl crisis, but I believe that they could contribute more if they did a bit more research. The fact of the

matter is that the powers to declare a provincial emergency in B.C. are different and used for different things than they would be under our legislation here in Alberta. In B.C. they need it in order to coordinate communication between a number of different regional health authorities, which isn't a problem here. Well, you know what it does here? It gives the medical health officer the power to quarantine people, seize private property, enter into private homes, and conscript Albertans. That's not what we need . . .

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

**Mr. Jean:** News flash, Mr. Speaker: legislation is controlled by this NDP government, and they can change it.

In March of this year Health Canada changed the status of naloxone to a nonprescription drug to save more lives. Social agencies that distribute the drug would benefit greatly from removal of the requirement for a prescription on this drug. Yesterday the Premier said that her government is working with the federal government to ensure naloxone doesn't require prescriptions, but the ball is in her court. She has control. Will the Premier today set a firm timeline of when naloxone will be available without a prescription, which will save many Alberta lives?

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again I thank the member opposite for his concern around this issue. We are working diligently to get this matter in front of cabinet so that we can move on our piece of this issue along with the federal government to make sure that naloxone is more available. In the meantime we have distributed more than 9,000 naloxone kits throughout 600 locations in the province. We've expanded access to dependency treatment and detox. We take this issue very seriously. The fact of the matter is that we've actually acted on almost every item in their plan except the ones that don't make sense.

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, the cabinet is here today. The Premier can make that decision today. We need it today.

Two-thirds of fentanyl overdoses in Calgary occur in suburban communities, meaning that this is not a problem that only affects vulnerable people in the inner city. Fentanyl is sold as OxyContin, heroin, Xanax, and is a lace in cocaine and is getting into the hands of many who don't simply fit the typical profile of an addict. It's affecting all Albertans. When two grains of sand worth of fentanyl is lethal, we must educate on how deadly this drug is. We need more than stories or news or bus buys. How will the Premier improve her government's awareness campaign and save the lives of Albertans?

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

**Ms Notley:** Well, again, Mr. Speaker, just recently our government approved a further expenditure for public education on the dangers of fentanyl because we know that that's an important part of any kind of public education plan. In addition, we've increased funding to ALERT. We have also increased, as I said, treatment. We've increased access to naloxone. We've increased distribution centres around the province. And we will continue to do this work. We're all very concerned about this issue, and our government is taking action.

**The Speaker:** Third main question.

### Wildfire Management

**Mr. Jean:** In Fort McMurray neighbours, friends, and oil sands workers have either had to leave their homes or watch as fires burn very closely to them on the border of our city. Albertans are worried



that the NDP doesn't know what a serious threat these wildfires are. We are down from 22 tankers in 2014 to only 16 today. Cutting back contracts from 123 days to 93 days is scaring bidders and Albertans away and could shrink our tanker fleet even further. It means that all of these contracts will expire by early August with less resources. How can the Premier possibly defend these types of decisions, putting our communities in Alberta at risk?

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

**Ms Notley:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have to defend those types of decisions because we didn't make those types of decisions. The member opposite once again has his facts wrong. We have the resources that we need. They are in place in Fort McMurray. I get briefed at least twice a day. We are very concerned about this issue, and every single resource that is needed to fight that fire will be dedicated, no holds barred.

**Mr. Jean:** Mr. Speaker, they cut the budget for fighting forest fires. They did it. Nobody else did it. They need to take responsibility.

This is serious. It's only May, and we can't just hope for wet weather to come around and to help. We need to get these decisions right. In February a tender was issued for a water-skimming air tanker group. On April 29 this government cancelled the tender. All water-skimming aircraft currently contracted are from Abbotsford, B.C., based Conair. Can the Premier please explain right now to Albertans why this contract was scrapped and why we are settling for slower, short-range, smaller, and less capacity water tanker aircraft?

**Ms Notley:** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to the member opposite a number of different times, the overall number of resources that will be dedicated to fighting fires is exactly the same as they were before, and in fact they could go up if the need goes up. The fact of the matter is that this is about budgeting, how we profile the budget. But we've made it very clear and all the contractors know full well that when we need them, they need to be there. They are there. They are being hired. Every resource that is required is being dedicated to this fire, and the members opposite should stop the fearmongering.

2:00

**Mr. Jean:** This is not fearmongering, Mr. Speaker. You can't cut \$400 million from wildfire management and say that you're serious about fighting these fires. As a Member of Parliament I saw the Slave Lake fire and the result of it first-hand on the ground. Today Fort McMurray has seen these same types of fires on our borders. We have fewer tankers today than two years ago. Bids for new water-skimming air tankers are being scrapped by this government. It's clear that this government has made many mistakes, some even regarding fighting fires and leading up to this wildfire season. Will the Premier today reverse these terrible decisions so we can make sure that our communities and Albertans are safe?

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

**Ms Notley:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I will simply say that the member opposite is wrong in almost everything in that previous question. We did not cut \$400 million from the firefighting budget. I urge them to learn how to read a budget because, really, it would be very helpful. We have the same number of tankers, and we have access to the same number of tankers and all the same amount of equipment that we had before, and we will use that and more, if necessary, because we are concerned about getting the job done in

Fort McMurray. We are not interested in engaging in political grandstanding and fearmongering.

**The Speaker:** The hon. leader of the third party.

### Budget 2016

**Mr. McIver:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Budget 2016 continues to be a disappointment. This NDP government has a track record of ignoring Albertans while pretending they listen. Ipsos-Reid, who does listen and reports on Albertans' opinions, this morning released a poll severely critical of this government. When asked if the NDP is presenting the best plan for long-term prosperity, 67 per cent of Albertans disagreed and 42 per cent strongly disagreed. To the Premier: in the face of this overwhelming rejection will you now admit that you have never listened to Albertans in the first place?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are listening to Albertans, and we know that this economy is what they are most concerned about. What we are doing will diversify the economy. It'll invest in the economy when private investment is pulled back. We will build this economy and protect the services that this opposition would cut and this one would cut more.

**Mr. McIver:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for the segue. Ipsos-Reid this morning also reported that the majority of Albertans do not believe that the NDP plan will diversify the economy. Given that the majority of Albertans do not believe your plan will diversify the economy and you now know they have no faith in the budget you put forward, will you now go back to the drawing board and create a plan that actually works for Alberta?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, what Albertans will start to receive soon is the Alberta child benefit. That will lift children out of poverty. They believe in doing the best for our province and the children that are in poverty. We are diversifying the economy. There will be investments across the economy. That is what Albertans believe. They also believe in infrastructure development, which this government will be doing.

**Mr. McIver:** Well, Mr. Speaker, what Albertans will start to receive soon is a carbon tax bill.

Before this NDP government there was hope, and now there is none. The Ipsos-Reid poll also indicates that 65 per cent of Albertans say that the NDP economic plan will cripple future generations with debt. NDP policies have already hurt the present, so it's time to protect the future. To the Premier: for the sake of our children and grandchildren and knowing that Albertans are not only not with you but want something different, will you please listen now and restore the hope that your policies have destroyed up to this point?

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.  
The Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much. You know, there's a growing consensus that the best way to deal with climate change is to put a price on carbon. People that the Leader of the Opposition knows well – Brian Pallister, Patrick Brown, Christy Clark, Preston Manning, and even Brad Wall – say that the carbon price is worth considering. That's what we're going to do. People believe that it's the best way to fight climate change. We're doing that, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont.

### Employment Insurance Program Changes

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am deeply concerned about people in my constituency who have lost their jobs because of the drop in the price of oil and are still in need of an income to care for their families. The federal government's changes earlier this year to employment insurance were definitely welcome, but they didn't go far enough for my constituents, and they still do not include the Edmonton region. I'd like to ask the Minister of Labour what she and our government are doing to convince the federal government that it needs to do the right thing and include the Edmonton area in these EI changes.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Labour.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, we were pleased that Ottawa listened to our call to make changes to the employment insurance program. However, we were very disappointed that the Edmonton region was not included. So as well as speaking out publicly about that, I have written to the minister of employment, workforce, and labour, and in that letter I asked her to revisit the government's decision. I know that our Premier also made the case very strongly when she met with the federal cabinet last week. This is a very important issue to us because it affects families who are facing real hardship through no fault of their own.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that many residents of the Edmonton region are feeling real hardship and given that they have paid into EI and should be able to get benefits when they need them and just want a hand up, again to the same minister: are there any signs that the federal government may change its policy?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I made the case to the minister of employment, workforce, and labour that changes should come immediately, I also asked her to make sure that any changes associated with unemployment statistics be made in real time. Last week the federal minister indicated to media that Edmonton is one of several regions that could see changes depending on changes in workforce reports, labour force reports. While I would like to see the changes made right away, I see this as encouraging news for Edmonton families.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. S. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the most up-to-date data can help businesses and other agencies in my constituency plan ahead, I would like to then ask the minister: when will the next labour force report be released?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Gray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The next labour market report will be released this Friday, and we will be looking for any changes in numbers that would make the case that the Edmonton region should be included and that workers who have been laid off during this downturn should be included in the enhanced employment insurance changes.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Devon.

### Carbon Levy and Education Costs

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. School boards have begun estimating how much the punishing carbon tax will cost them. CBE estimates \$1 million; Calgary Catholic, \$350,000; Edmonton public, \$1.8 million; Black Gold, \$131,000. These school boards alone are facing millions in extra costs, and they don't know who's going to pay. To the minister: when you thought about who would pick up the carbon tax tab, did you envision punishing parents with extra fees, leaving students with fewer teachers and aides, or downloading the cost onto taxpayers by reversing your stance on exempting school boards?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Education.

**Mr. Eggen:** Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the question. In fact, when we looked at the climate leadership plan, the very first place we looked was with our children to make sure that they see the vision, the education for us to move forward on a coherent plan for the future. The children are watching us now, and we want to make sure that they know that we are doing something about the carbon future and reducing our pollution.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the minister's budget doesn't account for the carbon tax, school boards, which have only so many options to deal with such a huge drain on their limited resources, face a big problem. Given that the full cost of the carbon tax on individual school boards will become evident when they submit their budgets in June, does the minister plan to help school boards with borrowed taxpayer money or supplementary supply funds, or will he simply leave school boards and parents on the hook for his government's bad planning?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of environment.

**Ms Phillips:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. Of course, as we discussed in budget estimates this morning, this province will be making a substantial number of investments in energy efficiency, and that will come about as a result of our co-operative consultation with schools, municipalities, with indigenous communities, with hospitals, the postsecondary sector, and the charitable sector. We are finally undertaking an energy efficiency strategy in this province as a result of the carbon levy, something that the other two parties reject.

2:10

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think I heard a single idea about how schools will be helped.

Given that this carbon tax is a tax on everything and everyone and given that it will go far beyond transportation costs and will also affect power bills and heating costs for school boards like the CBE, which is now trying to figure out whether to increase fees, cut services, or face millions in budget deficits, has the minister done any studies or consultations that could let school boards, taxpayers, parents, and kids know how much this worrisome carbon tax will cost in dollars, in quality of education, and in reduced extra-curricular activities?

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.  
The minister of environment.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. Of course, in addition to energy efficiency investments, in the budget estimates, which the hon. member will know because he has reviewed them, I'm sure, in great detail, there will be \$2.2 billion in new green infrastructure investments so that we can ensure that we are making our economy carbon resilient, including schools. We will undertake a detailed consultation with many different sectors over the next few months as we design our efficiency and other infrastructure investment programs.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

### Alberta Beef

**Dr. Starke:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past week Albertans witnessed a different brand of cattle stampede. Debate surrounded the decision of a major restaurant chain to source its beef from a Kansas supplier rather than its current Alberta supplier. Clearly, businesses are free to procure from any source that reflects their marketing strategy, but Alberta beef producers were dismayed by the silence from the agriculture minister during the debate. To the minister: what measures are you taking to demonstrate your confidence in the humane rearing, safety, and wholesomeness of Alberta beef?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of agriculture.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the member for the question. Nobody produces better beef in this world than Alberta producers. We know, everyone in this House knows, and Albertans know. I think eventually Earls will know as well that the best beef they can find is going to be in Alberta. Going forward, we are going to be able to work with producers, ranchers, and everyone else to find those little niche markets that are out there that we can take advantage of, that producers can take advantage of to grow their industry across the province, across the nation, and across the world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Dr. Starke:** Mr. Speaker, I have to describe that as rare support where it should be well done.

He wants to consign Alberta producers to niche markets, yet Alberta beef is one of our proudest items for export. Having any question on our beef market could jeopardize our share of the world trade. What is the minister doing to combat the unfounded concerns and misconceptions about the wholesomeness and safety of beef products? Why are you not effectively combatting them, and what are you doing to ensure that our foreign beef customers are getting factual, science-based information to substantiate the quality of Alberta beef?

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

**Mr. Bilous:** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. Quite frankly, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and myself are championing Alberta beef; we have and will continue to. Recently I was in Asia, where I was promoting Alberta beef to not just a number of different food chains but looking at opportunities to increase the amount of beef we export to Asia. There is significant room to increase our capacity, and we are using our international offices to ensure that they get the message that Alberta beef is not just the safest and the highest quality but that it's also the best-tasting beef in the world.

**Dr. Starke:** Mr. Speaker, the verisimilitude of both of these ministers is staggering.

The entire Earls decision hinged on a certification program that calls for practices that are already widely followed by Alberta beef producers. Given that consumer demand for verification of production practices is likely to continue to increase, what action is the minister of agriculture taking, working with Alberta producers, to establish a made-in-Canada certification program to address consumer concerns and reinforce confidence in Alberta beef?

**The Speaker:** The minister of agriculture.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We help fund the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, an ongoing project that all of us should be proud of; we have called for a swift certification process for beef so that those consumers choosing our beef know that in Alberta they've got the best product possible. I think that Canadians right across, from coast to coast to coast, know that Alberta products are the best and will continue to be so while maintaining our certification around the globe, which is bigger.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo.

### Carbon Levy and Seniors

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Most seniors live on fixed incomes. They budget carefully to make sure that their limited savings and pensions can cover the cost of food, basic living, and transportation. Seniors will be one of the hardest hit demographics when the NDP's massive carbon tax raises the price of everything. The government's cost estimates don't take into account or blatantly ignore that food will cost more and power bills will go up. Seniors are worried about these extra costs. Will the Minister of Finance come clean with seniors about how much this carbon tax will cost them?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Ceci:** Thank you very much. You know, we have had information available on carbon pricing. The Minister of Energy and the minister of environment have both had serious discussions with people all across the province about how much it will cost. We know that 60 per cent of Albertans will be rebated. Seniors will be amongst those that receive the full rebate for the carbon pricing.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the maximum rebate on the carbon tax isn't even enough to cover the government's own lowball estimate of what the carbon tax will cost and given the fact that increased costs won't be offset by an increase to the federal pensions or to the Alberta seniors' benefit, how does this government expect low-income and fixed-income seniors to afford to maintain their quality of life while paying for this punishing carbon tax?

**Ms Phillips:** Thank you for the question. Of course, the direct cost for the average family, including heating, gasoline, will be \$340 in 2017 and \$500 in 2018. That's for a family of four. Certainly, the rebates will be given for folks who are earning less than \$106,000 per year as a net family income. The fact of the matter is that low-income seniors will receive the same rebate, based on average use, as anyone else regardless of where they live. Many low-income seniors will in fact come out ahead as a result of this. In addition to that, they will be able to avail themselves . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
Second supplemental.

**Mr. Yao:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the government seems to think a lot of their rebate program even though they'll be taking more money out of seniors' pockets than they will get back and given that these inadequate rebates will only be paid out once, twice, or four times per year depending on income levels, how does the minister expect our fixed- and low-income seniors to wait months for this government to return their own money, which they would otherwise have had to pay for their prescriptions, food, and rent?

**Ms Phillips:** Well, once again, Mr. Speaker, the Official Opposition is wrong in almost everything they say. First of all, the first cheques will appear in January, even before folks start to pay the carbon levy, because we wanted to make sure that no one would be unduly affected by this. In addition, two-thirds of Albertans will receive that rebate, and that is based on average use. Many, many seniors are far below the average, so they will end up with a little extra money in their pockets. At the end of the day, we are very confident that these efficiency programs . . .

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
The Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Mr. Speaker, I'll just begin by saying that the Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert looks very good in a Brooks Bandits jersey today.

#### Emergency Management Funding

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** Every year in Alberta somewhere there is a natural disaster, whether it is wildfires, tornadoes, flood, hail, or drought, but rather than budget and plan for this, the government always seems to need to come back for an emergency spending bill every single year. The wildfire budget is \$200 million lower this year than the average actually spent over the last decade and \$100 million lower than the lowest of those years. Why is the minister not budgeting for spending that we know will take place?

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. member.  
The minister of forestry.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. The member might recall that last year the budget came out – we had a late budget because of the election – on October 27. You might notice it in there. You know, it's something they haven't caught yet, but they haven't perhaps read the estimates. It took me a couple of minutes to understand it as well. That \$200 million that was allocated for emergency funding in the budget last year was because of a late budget. This year is a normal cycle. Much like all the other provinces, like Alberta has done for 10 years, the emergency funding will be there to fight the fires, to fight drought when we need it.

Thank you.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** It's very clear that the minister still doesn't understand it, Mr. Speaker.

Given that the province always ends up spending hundreds of millions of dollars a year on emergencies without actually budgeting for them, it's an old trick to be able to blame the deficit on disasters at year-end even though we know that the money will be spent. This is not optional or discretionary spending, so we may as well just budget for it. The annual ritual of supplementary supply

for emergency spending is like asking for a payday loan to cover off your overdraft. If the government is so confident that they have budgeted responsibly for disasters, will they commit to not bringing forward a supplementary supply bill later this year?

2:20

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of forestry.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Of utmost importance, obviously, is to keep Albertans and their communities safe. We're committed to doing that. Emergency funding will be there when and if we need it. Funding like this has been done in Alberta for the past 10 years. It's done in most provinces this way. It's proven effective, and we'll continue to do so, making sure that the number one priority is protecting Albertans when and if they need it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Fildebrandt:** The minister thanks me for the question; I would like to thank him for an answer.

Given, Mr. Speaker, that the Flat Top Complex response to the Slave Lake fire was estimated to cost about \$500 million and that when the former government accepted the recommendations but only allocated \$18 million, the now Premier said in the *Edmonton Sun* on September 26, 2013, "That's not accepting the recommendations, that's paying lip service," will the Premier now admit that she, too, is paying lip service to the Flat Top Complex and the rest of the disaster response budget by hiding the true cost and not properly budgeting for anticipated disasters?

**The Speaker:** The minister of forestry.

**Mr. Carlier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. The Flat Top Complex recommendations were made from the Slave Lake fires. Since then there have been 250 more firefighters hired every year from that, so in those short few years we're up to over 700 firefighters. Those men and women: their boots are laced; they're ready to fight. We also will have 80 more trained by Sunday. We're going to have 22 air tankers. We have 88 helicopters and 126 lookouts operational. We also have 88 pieces of heavy equipment. To think otherwise, I think, is irresponsible. Our firefighters are out there. Our resources in humans and equipment are there, ready to fight.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
The Member for Calgary-Lougheed.

#### Indigenous Relations

**Mr. Rodney:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 18, 2015, I asked the Premier about her government's professed commitment to implementing the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. Both of these initiatives by their very nature involve co-ordination of many provincial ministries. The Premier agreed that this poses serious challenges, but way back then she assured this House that her government would move forward on both of these in the next few months. To the Premier: now that it's been almost a year, can you please tell us what the strategy is exactly for implementing both of these pivotal sets of recommendations?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister of indigenous affairs.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the member for the question. We are very proud of the fact that we

started this government by saying that we were going to define a new relationship with the indigenous people in this province, and indeed we have. I have lots of important things to report. We adopted the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, and we asked all of the treaty organizations, all of the Métis organizations, and the Women's Institutes to contribute to a discussion, first by starting with an internal review and then by bringing all that together. That has arrived, and we have put that into a full package, which is now distributed back.

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

**Mr. Rodney:** Given that the Premier directed her ministers to start co-ordinating a crossministerial plan to implement UNDRIP and that in a letter she told her ministers to have the results of this comprehensive strategy ready for implementation by February 1 and given that we've all seen that so far it's been photo ops and agreements for future agreements and given that in the past few months you've changed the timeline eight times regarding balancing the budget, to the Premier: you're not going to do the same thing with UNDRIP and TRC, are you? In other words, what's your government's newest timeline for implementing these crucial recommendations?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I love the question because it betrays the fact that they clearly don't understand the process of consultation with indigenous communities. The very point of having a consultation with indigenous communities is to sit down at the table with them and talk to them until they themselves have decided that they have been consulted with. The opposition, when they were in the government, continually found themselves in the place of making a decision ahead of time, shipping it out to the community, and saying: this is what you're doing. We're not doing that because we truly want to consult.

**Mr. Rodney:** On this very day check out Ipsos-Reid. The majority of Albertans definitely disagree with you, sir.

Given that the critical aspect of any government's plan for addressing recommendations of historic documents like UNDRIP and the TRC report involves setting benchmarks and given that if there's going to be any real action or accountability, this government has to provide mechanisms for monitoring progress on each goal, to the minister: what specific timelines and performance measures are available that will allow Albertans to hold this government accountable for its promises to its indigenous peoples?

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you very much for the question. I'd like to point out the fact that we are working with the indigenous community, and our promises to the indigenous community are to consult with the indigenous community, and we are indeed doing so. I am very proud of the fact that the Minister of Education and I signed the Kitaskinaw agreement earlier this year. I'm very proud of the fact that we have involved every indigenous community in the UNDRIP program. I'm very proud of the fact that we have a consultation agreement with the settlement Métis, which that government never did. I'm also proud of the fact that we have consultation agreements going on with the nonsettlement Métis. We have a number of . . .

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

The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

**Mr. Hinkley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an open letter to the cabinet on July 7, 2015, the Premier asked ministers to conduct a review, including budget implications, of the government's policies, programs, and legislation that may require changes based on the principles of the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. So for a second time you can explain to the opposition: what is the status of this work?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the very timely question. I'm very proud of the fact that we've been in the consultation process with the indigenous community, and one of the things that we have done in this consultation process is that we have ensured that not only the outcomes of the consultation process but the process itself are actually consultation. Sometimes it is hard for people to understand that actually sitting down with the community and asking them the question "How do you want to go about the consultation process?" needs to be done before you actually engage in the consultation process. Understanding that kind of process is our forte.

**The Speaker:** Thank you again, hon. minister.

First supplemental.

**Mr. Hinkley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for the update. I am glad to hear that the internal review is complete.

Again to the same minister: given that respect and consultation with indigenous peoples on decisions that impact them are key parts of renewing relationships, how are you engaging indigenous peoples on the implementation of the UN declaration?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We are very happy to be able to say that over the last year we've engaged in a number of activities with the indigenous community, including, of course, my participation with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women conference in Manitoba, where Alberta has taken the lead in the socioeconomic forum to work with the community to actually change circumstances for the women in the community. We're also proud of the fact that we've signed the Kitaskinaw agreement with the tribal councils, and we also have completed the Métis settlement consultation agreement.

Thank you.

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

Second supplemental.

**Mr. Hinkley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad to hear that the government intends to engage fully with the indigenous leaders, and welcome to the leaders that are here already.

To the same minister. It has almost been a year since the government committed to the implementation of the UN declaration. Is there anything concrete you can share with us to demonstrate progress in this commitment?

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I am very happy to stand today to talk about the fact that we have recently signed the protocol agreement for the Treaty 8 indigenous communities, which constitute 24 of the 48 indigenous communities in the province, because in that protocol we have set up a series of tables so that the members of the community can meet with all of the ministers that you see here.

They will be sitting at the table, meeting face to face with chiefs, again something that never happened with the previous government. [interjections]

**The Speaker:** It seems, hon. members, that spring has sprung.  
The hon. Member for Highwood.

### Clinical Information Systems

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's change gears here a little bit. Alberta's clinical information system is badly in need of updating. The current system is over 30 years old and lacks the ability to share information across various platforms. Patients are often left having to explain their health stories to different professionals over and over again. This can lead to mistakes and needless duplication. Wildrose has called for upgrades to the clinical information system for years. You know what? It's refreshing to hear that I think this government is finally taking our advice and bringing our health care system into the 21st century. Will the minister confirm that this upgrade is in fact taking place, and if so, when?

2:30

**Ms Payne:** Thank you to the member for the question. We haven't yet had a chance to talk about our Health estimates, so I guess we'll talk a little bit more about that there. We are indeed committing funding in Budget 2016 for the implementation and upgrade of the CIS. Actually, it's an ongoing process, and the work is beginning immediately.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Well, thank you. Given that this particular upgrade has been long promised by successive governments but has always been scrapped, the government can forgive Albertans if they're not willing to take their word at this time.

Was an RFP issued and/or awarded for this project? If so, when? When can we expect the initial introduction of the system?

**The Speaker:** The hon. associate minister.

**Ms Payne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. As I noted, the upgrades for CIS are included in Budget 2016. As soon as we get that budget through the House, we can begin spending that money.

I would also like to note that, unlike previous governments, we make a decision, and we commit to it. We put the money in, and we move forward.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. W. Anderson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that there's no denying that our health care system is in dire need of an upgrade, at a price tag of \$400 million you owe it to Albertans to ensure that this upgrade is done right. Will the minister confirm that a detailed cost-benefit analysis was completed and a market assessment was undertaken, and if not, why not?

**The Speaker:** The hon. associate minister.

**Ms Payne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. A detailed market analysis, the tender process as well as a number of cost-containing measures are all part of the bid process that we will be undertaking as part of this implementation.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

### Carbon Levy

**Ms Jansen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Calgary school board is deeply concerned about the effects the NDP's carbon tax is going to have on them and the families they serve. The cost of operating schools is going up. It's going way up, and they're worried that they're going to bear the brunt of the increase and that this supposedly revenue-neutral tax is being passed down to families. To the Minister of Education. These folks are worried. Are you willing to sit down with them and have a conversation about how to get through this?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Education.

**Mr. Eggen:** Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks very much for the question. Certainly, it's very important that we work together with all of our school boards to ensure that the impacts of our climate leadership plan are dealt with in a reasonable and equitable sort of manner. We know as well, of course, as I mentioned before, that it's very important for us to use this as a teaching moment. We know that parents and teachers and school boards want to work through this in a mechanism by which we can increase energy efficiency and, of course, to teach kids about that responsibility.

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

**Ms Jansen:** Mr. Speaker, given that nonprofits like the YWCA, with whom I also spoke, are facing astronomical new bills for heating and running their facilities – they've got 19 of them in Calgary – to the Minister of Finance: are you willing to sit down with them and try to figure out a solution to their pain?

**Mr. Ceci:** You know, Mr. Speaker, the climate leadership plan that we have put forward is far-reaching. It will improve Alberta. It'll give us social licence. We want all of those charities, nonprofits, and organizations such as schools to know that their new energy-efficiency program will have \$645 million in it and that they can access that as long as we reduce the use of carbon going forward.

**Ms Jansen:** Mr. Speaker, these folks have to pay their bills now. They need answers now. You're talking about things that are happening in the future. To the minister of environment: are you willing to sit down with these stakeholders and help them through their pain?

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Environment and Parks and climate change.

**Ms Phillips:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My office has been in communication with charity organizations about the climate leadership plan. As we design our energy-efficiency programming, there will be a number of targeted stakeholder engagements, in particular with school boards, not-for-profits, housing authorities, and municipalities, to ensure that we are directing those energy efficiency efforts in the right place. There will be a number, hundreds of millions, in fact, of investments in energy efficiency. As we invest in efficiency, we bring down our emissions and, therefore, our costs.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, hon. minister.  
The Member for Edmonton-McClung.

### Seniors' Lodges

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More than 9,000 Albertans are living in seniors' lodges. Although these lodges provide needed services to low- and moderate-income seniors, the state of some of these lodges is not the best, so despite the hard work of the dedicated staff that work there, seniors are not always living in the best conditions. Many of the lodges are old, the rooms are small, and many seniors, including those with mobility challenges, are sometimes forced to shower or bathe in communal washrooms. To the Minister of Seniors and Housing: what strategies are in place to improve the conditions in seniors' lodges?

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Seniors and Housing.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. We know that seniors' lodges are the cornerstones of many of Alberta's rural communities. Ensuring that these lodges are not only preserved but also improved means Alberta seniors can stay in home communities near their loved ones. I'm pleased to say that this government is investing more than \$196 million in seniors' housing through Budget 2016. The lodges will be built to upgrade them to modern standards that include larger rooms, full in-suite washrooms, and modern fire suppression and safety systems. This funding is in addition to the nearly \$400 million already committed to 38 lodge projects throughout Alberta.

**The Speaker:** First supplemental.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I am pleased to hear about the seniors' lodge upgrades and renewal, can the minister explain why the majority of Alberta's lodge projects are in rural communities given that urban centres have larger populations?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. Approximately 70 per cent of the lodge units are in smaller centres – that is correct – not in the larger centres. Rural lodges are vital to small communities. They provide homes to older residents who want to stay in their towns and villages where they live and are close to their loved ones and their community. By investing in rural lodges, we are giving seniors the chance to age in the community, in their home communities, where they're supported by friends and family. There are seniors' lodges in 115 communities across Alberta, and that includes some of the bigger centres also: Edmonton, Red Deer, Lloydminster, and Calgary.

**The Speaker:** Second supplemental.

**Mr. Dach:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the minister as well. Given that many of these lodges are more than 40 years old and given that this can put elderly residents, especially those with mobility issues, at risk, what is the ministry doing to reduce this risk?

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Ms Sigurdson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member points out, many of the lodges were built long before 1990, when the sprinklers became mandatory under the Alberta building codes. We've allocated \$60 million through Budget 2016 to complete the fire and safety system upgrades in 6,600 seniors' lodges and continuing care units across Alberta. We plan to invest \$30 million this year, which will accelerate the timelines, and we are making good progress. I

am confident that we will reach our goal of making more than 100 facilities safer for our seniors by 2018.

**The Speaker:** The hon. Member for Chestermere-Rocky View.

### Springbank Reservoir Flood Mitigation Project

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Residents of Springbank are worried about the government's plans to go full steam ahead with flood mitigation plans that would have disastrous effects on their community. By diverting the Elbow River to the reservoir at Springbank, the government would flood an area where people live, work, and have a history. There's no question that flood mitigation is of utmost importance, but can the environment minister please explain her plan for consulting affected landowners and ensuring that she's not protecting some Albertans at the expense of others?

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

**Mr. Mason:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to tell the hon. member and the House that there has been extensive consultation. Thirty or more meetings have been held, going back to 2014. They are ongoing. A number of stakeholder meetings are planned going forward. We've consulted, and the previous government, when it made plans, also did some consultation. I'll give them credit for that. To claim that there's been a lack of consultation just flies in the face of the facts.

**Mrs. Aheer:** I think the people of Springbank would disagree with you.

Given that the government seems to have retained the same company to do the environmental impact assessment and the design and engineering of the project and assuming that this company will have a strong incentive to return favourable impact assessment because otherwise they'll miss out on millions of dollars for this engineering and design, how can the residents of Springbank trust that this government will manage that apparent conflict of interest and consult with them in good faith?

2:40

**Mr. Mason:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is just casting aspersions not only on the good name and reputation of the firm that's been engaged but on the entire process. There is extensive consultation. Of course, we're hiring a company and we're going to pay them for doing the work, but they're going to provide us with the accurate and up-to-date information that is needed in order to ensure that this project is environmentally sound as well as protecting – and the member should remember this – hundreds of thousands of people downstream, including in the city of Calgary. Those people need protection, and the hon. member is forgetting that.

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

**Mrs. Aheer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, everyone needs protection. Let's be clear about that.

Given that some of my constituents have lived on the land of Springbank for generations and given that the ranch and farm there is part of Alberta's natural heritage and would be washed away if or when a flood event happened and the Springbank plans go through, what does the environment minister have to say to the families in my riding who will lose their homes as a result of her government's plan?

**Mr. Mason:** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member and her constituents that we are negotiating on a very fair basis, and we'll

continue to do that with all of the landowners to acquire the land for this project, which is needed in order to protect hundreds of thousands of Calgarians and other Albertans downstream of the Elbow River. If the hon. member would like to see a repetition of the flood that took place in Calgary a few years ago, she should just stand up and say so.

### **Introduction of Bills**

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

#### **Bill 12 Aboriginal Consultation Levy Repeal Act**

**Mr. Feehan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave today to introduce a bill, being the Aboriginal Consultation Levy Repeal Act.

Developed and passed by the previous government, Bill 22 intended to establish a levy on industry as a way to increase funding available to First Nations and potentially other indigenous communities to engage in consultation activities. Many First Nations felt they were not adequately consulted on the development or passing of the bill and were vocal in the opposition toward it. One of our government's platform commitments, the repeal of Bill 22 is an important step in renewing the consultation process to make sure it responds to the evolving needs of First Nations, industry, and other stakeholders.

As you know, our government committed to a renewed partnership with indigenous people, and we intend to follow through on that commitment. We have heard loud and clear from First Nations that the current consultation policy does not meet the needs of their communities or respect First Nations constitutionally protected treaty rights, which is why my ministry is reaching out to First Nations in conducting a comprehensive review with the aim of reviewing Alberta's consultation policy.

Budget 2016 includes \$750,000 to engage meaningfully with First Nations and Métis to enhance the consultation process. Part of that funding will support the renewal of the First Nations consultation policy. We look forward to working together with indigenous peoples and industry. We will help to shape the future direction of consultation in this province.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 12 read a first time]

**The Speaker:** Hon. members, it appears that the daily Routine is now concluded. A legislative policy committee will convene this afternoon for consideration of the main estimates. Families and Communities will consider the estimates for Education in the Grassland Room.

[The Assembly adjourned at 2:45 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(5)(b)]







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