



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Monday afternoon, April 14, 2008

Issue 1

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature

First Session

Kowalski, Hon. Ken, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Speaker
 Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
 Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

<p>Ady, Hon. Cindy, Calgary-Shaw (PC), Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation</p> <p>Allred, Ken, St. Albert (PC)</p> <p>Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)</p> <p>Anderson, Rob, Airdrie-Chestermere (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Solicitor General and Public Security</p> <p>Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)</p> <p>Berger, Evan, Livingstone-Macleod (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Sustainable Resource Development</p> <p>Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)</p> <p>Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Montrose (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Advanced Education and Technology</p> <p>Blackett, Hon. 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Fred, Stony Plain (PC), Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security</p> <p>Lukaszk, Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Municipal Affairs</p> <p>Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC)</p> <p>MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (L)</p> <p>Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)</p> <p>Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP), Leader of the NDP Opposition</p> <p>McFarland, Barry, Little Bow (PC)</p> <p>McQueen, Diana, Drayton Valley-Calmar (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Environment</p> <p>Morton, Hon. F.L., Foothills-Rocky View (PC), Minister of Sustainable Resource Development</p> <p>Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP), Deputy Leader of the NDP Opposition, NDP Opposition House Leader</p> <p>Oberle, Frank, Peace River (PC), Government Whip</p> <p>Olson, Verlyn, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC)</p> <p>Ouellette, Hon. Luke, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (PC), Minister of Transportation</p> <p>Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (L), Deputy Official Opposition Whip</p> <p>Prins, Ray, Lacombe-Ponoka (PC)</p> <p>Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC)</p> <p>Redford, Hon. Alison M., Calgary-Elbow (PC), Minister of Justice and Attorney General</p> <p>Renner, Hon. Rob, Medicine Hat (PC), Minister of Environment, Deputy Government House Leader</p> <p>Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)</p> <p>Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)</p> <p>Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)</p> <p>Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Education</p> <p>Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Health and Wellness</p> <p>Snelgrove, Hon. Lloyd, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC), President of the Treasury Board</p> <p>Stelmach, Hon. Ed, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC), Premier, President of Executive Council</p> <p>Stevens, Hon. Ron, QC, Calgary-Glenmore (PC), Deputy Premier, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations</p> <p>Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (L)</p> <p>Taft, Dr. Kevin, Edmonton-Riverview (L), Leader of the Official Opposition</p> <p>Tarchuk, Hon. Janis, Banff-Cochrane (PC), Minister of Children and Youth Services</p> <p>Taylor, Dave, Calgary-Currie (L), Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition</p> <p>VanderBurg, George, Whitecourt-St. Anne (PC)</p> <p>Vandermeer, Tony, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (PC)</p> <p>Weadick, Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)</p> <p>Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Energy</p> <p>Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)</p> <p>Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Employment and Immigration</p> <p>Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Minister of Aboriginal Relations, Deputy Government House Leader</p>
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[Errata, if any, appear inside back cover]

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Monday, April 14, 2008

[The Mace was on a cushion below the table]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise, please.

[The Clerk read the Royal Proclamation dated April 9, 2008, summoning the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to convene on this date]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

Entrance of the Lieutenant Governor

[The Premier, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

The Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise, please.

His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Norman L. Kwong, CM, AOE, his party, the Premier, and the Clerk entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

His Honour: Ladies and gentlemen, please be seated.

Ms Redford (Provincial Secretary): Hon. members, I am commanded by His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor to inform you that he does not see fit to declare the causes of his summoning of the present Legislature of this province until a Speaker of the Assembly shall have been chosen according to law. He is therefore pleased to retire from this Assembly, to return at a subsequent hour tomorrow to declare the causes of his calling of this Legislature.

The Sergeant-at-Arms: All rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant Governor, his party, and the Premier left the Chamber]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

Election of a Speaker

The Clerk: Hon. members, pursuant to the Lieutenant Governor's direction and section 16(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act nominations are invited for the Office of Speaker of this Assembly for the 27th Legislature.

Dr. Swann: I nominate the Member for Edmonton Centre, Laurie Blakeman.

The Clerk: Ms Blakeman, do you wish to accept the nomination?

Ms Blakeman: Yes. Thank you. I do.

The Clerk: Hon. Mrs. Jablonski.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. It's a true honour and privilege for me to participate in the election of the Speaker of the 27th Legislature of the province of Alberta. The election of a

Speaker is an age-old process that began in 1377 in England. The Speaker was the person designated to speak for the House and represent the House to the Crown.

The job of Speaker was considered somewhat risky at times, especially during struggles between the Crown and the House. In 1642 King Charles I entered the House looking for five members to arrest for treason. The Speaker refused to co-operate with the King and said, "I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me." That is why to this day a member of the Crown must knock and ask permission to enter the House and also why it is tradition for a newly elected Speaker to be dragged in the Chamber by the leader of the government and the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

There is a member of this Assembly elected for his ninth term who has served as Deputy Premier, Government House Leader, Minister of Environment, Public Safety Services, Career Development and Employment, Public Works, and Economic Development and Tourism as well as a member of boards and committees that are too numerous to mention. He has served all Albertans with dignity and respect, believing in the integrity, honour, and the fundamental role of this Legislature in our democracy.

He has also encouraged and advocated for women parliamentarians on a provincial, national, and international level. I have experienced this advocacy as the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians' representative for Alberta for the past five years.

His experience and ability are not the only traits that qualify him for his role as Speaker. It is his passion for the parliamentary system, his love of history and the books that define our actions, and his desire to help all MLAs be the best that they can be that motivates him to be the best that he can be. We can ask for none better on this day.

On this day 11 years ago, April 14, 1997, he was elected Speaker for the first time. As Speaker for the last three Legislatures he has allowed all MLAs to function freely on behalf of their constituents, he has judged fairly, and he has opened the doors of the Legislature for all Albertans through his many great initiatives, including Mr. Speaker's Youth Parliament, School at the Legislature, the display of the Famous Five, the choirs at Christmastime, the Alberta francophone week, the Members' Way, and the virtual tour of the Legislature.

Through his distinguished career he has received numerous awards and honours. One that is very special to him was being named an honorary chief of the Alexis First Nation Stoney band in 1993. His title is Chief Wa-she-zu-Chada-oo-sheqe-na, or White Man with a Kind Heart.

He has served under the leadership of four Alberta Premiers. It is indeed a great honour for me to nominate Ken Kowalski, the Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, for the position of Speaker of the 27th Legislature of Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

The Clerk: Mr. Kowalski, do you wish to accept the nomination?

Mr. Kowalski: Mr. Clerk, I'd be honoured to accept the nomination.

The Clerk: Are there further nominations? If not, I declare the nominations closed.

The nominees for the position of Speaker are Ms Laurie Blakeman, Member for Edmonton-Centre, and Mr. Ken Kowalski, Member for Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Voting will commence after the lists of nominees are posted in each voting booth.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

The Clerk: The voting will now begin. Members will vote by printing the first and last name of their preferred candidate on the ballot paper, then placing their completed ballot in the ballot box on the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk. As indicated under the standing orders, there will be no debate during the voting process.

[Members voted from 1:45 p.m. to 1:52 p.m.]

The Clerk: Hon. members, have all those voted who wish to do so? I guess that's yes. The table officers will now retire, then, to count the ballots. I will ring the division bells for one minute to recall the members to their seats once the vote counting is completed.

[Ballots were counted from 1:53 p.m. to 2:03 p.m.]

The Clerk: Hon. members, the number of ballots cast for the election of Speaker, 80; the number of spoiled ballots, one; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 per cent plus one majority, 41; the member having received the majority of votes cast, Mr. Ken Kowalski. Mr. Ken Kowalski is hereby declared the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 27th Legislature. [applause]

[The Speaker, with apparent reluctance, was escorted to the chair by Mr. Stelmach and Dr. Taft]

The Speaker: Hon. members and ladies and gentlemen, let me at the outset say thank you to the hon. Minister of Seniors and Community Supports for moving my nomination and to all Members of the Legislative Assembly for their participation in the selection of myself as your Speaker for Alberta's 27th Legislature. This is an honour that I truly and humbly accept.

The role of a parliamentarian is paramount in the functioning of our democracy in the province of Alberta. Our traditions and our customs have seen civility and decorum as the mainstay for our conduct. It is my hope that the expectations of today will be our guide for the future. All members have an incredible opportunity to make a difference. I'm very proud to be among you. I'm very honoured to be able to serve with you as your Speaker as we go forward.

May God watch over all of us. Thank you so much.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms placed the Mace on the table]

Prayers

The Speaker: Hon. members, I would now invite everyone to stand for the prayer.

Let us pray. Father, on this day of a new beginning we ask for Your guidance in the responsibility we have undertaken and Your help in fulfilling our duties. As Members of this Legislative Assembly may we faithfully serve all Albertans and, in serving them, serve You. Amen.

Please be seated.

Election of a Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees

The Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to section 17(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act and Standing Order 58(1)(a) nominations are now invited for the office of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees of the Assembly for the 27th Legislature. The hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon.

Mr. Rogers: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me be the first to formally congratulate you on your re-election to the position of Speaker for the 27th Legislature. Your knowledge and guidance have been a great asset for Alberta over the many years that you have so effectively held this position.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to put forward the name of the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat for the position of Deputy Speaker. Before we mark our ballots for Deputy Speaker, I believe it is very important to know as much as we can about the candidates we have been asked to elect, about some of the activities and accomplishments they have undertaken both before being elected to the Legislature and also while they sit here.

Since this member has been elected, he has served as the chair of a committee to find agreement between municipalities and the railroad companies. The result, Mr. Speaker, was the first-ever complete protocol for doing this. He also served as chair of the Health Facilities Review Committee for two years. His third chairmanship was as co-chair on the Ambulance Governance Advisory Council for Alberta Health. Their findings and conclusions will no doubt be the basis for debate as we go forward with this issue.

Prior to his service in this Legislature this hon. member served on municipal council, as many here have done, with 12 years as the reeve of his county. He was also elected and served as chair of the reeves' council for the AAMD and C for three years. He found this organization so important, Mr. Speaker, that he founded and chaired the Mayors' and Reeves' Association of Southeast Alberta, the parent of what is now the Palliser Economic Partnership, a regional economic development alliance. He was appointed to the Palliser health region board and served as chair for six years, holding most of these positions concurrently. He stepped back from them all when he was elected to this Legislature in 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that his attributes along with his great work ethic and sense of fair play will stand him very well as Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure to nominate without reservation Len Mitzel, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat, for the position of Deputy Speaker, and I would encourage all hon. members of the Assembly to support his nomination.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, would you accept the nomination as presented by the hon. Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon?

Mr. Mitzel: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Member for Leduc-Beaumont-Devon for his kind words, and I'd be honoured and humbled to accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Are there additional nominations, hon. members?

Mr. Anderson: Mr. Speaker, first off I'd like to congratulate you on being elected as our Speaker. I'm confident that you'll do an excellent job, as you have done in the past, of running the affairs of our Assembly.

Secondly, to you and all hon. members of our Assembly, I would like to nominate the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort constituency, Mr. Wayne Cao, for your choice in the election of our Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort constituency is now starting his fourth term. He has served on various Legislative Assembly committees and government committees as a member and the chair. In addition to government policy and legislation work he has initiated the creation of Alberta's official song, the naming of Alberta's veterans highway, and the promotion of Canadian democracy and history studies.

I know that he had experience in the operation of the Assembly and the government during his previous three terms. Now he would like to assist you, Mr. Speaker, in serving all members of the House and the public in managing the process of law-making and debating in our Legislative Assembly. He has communicated to me some ideas, such as working with our Speaker's office to strengthen our democratic institution and to develop more public engagement in our parliamentary system.

He's proven and is widely known as a hard-working MLA, serving his constituents and Albertans very well. He will be, I am confident, Mr. Speaker, a hard-working member of this Assembly, serving all members with his dedication and fairness. I submit his name for our election of Deputy Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, a nomination has been presented by the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere. Would the hon. member accept the nomination?

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to congratulate you on your newly elected position.

I just want to say thank you to the hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere for nominating me for this prestigious position. I accept it with sincerity and with dedication to work hard for all of you.

Thanks.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to congratulate you on your election again as our Speaker.

I would like to nominate Bridget Pastoor, the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, as Deputy Speaker and Chairperson of Committees. I'm confident that if she is elected, while she is in the chair, she will be independent and impartial and will certainly judge all hon. members fairly in her role.

Ms Pastoor was first elected to the Legislative Assembly here in 2004, and before that she had a very successful career in municipal government. She is a caring, compassionate individual, and I'm sure that if she is elected, she will serve all hon. Members of this Legislative Assembly to the best of her ability.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, a nomination has been presented on your behalf. Would the hon. member accept that nomination?

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I certainly will.

Let me join my voice with everyone else in congratulating you on being our Speaker.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there additional nominations for the position of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees?

There being none, then three candidates will now participate in the selection process: the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, and the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

The Clerk: Voting will commence after the list of nominees is posted in each voting booth.

The Speaker: We will now be less formal than we were. I will vacate. Conduct your own conversations.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

The Clerk: Okay. The voting will now commence.

[Members voted from 2:16 p.m. to 2:23 p.m.]

The Speaker: Hon. members, have all voted who wish to vote?

Hon. Members: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay.

[Ballots were counted from 2:23 p.m. to 2:32 p.m.]

The Speaker: Hon. members, may I have your attention, please? The Clerk has the report.

The Clerk: Mr. Speaker, hon. members, the number of ballots cast for the election of Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees, 80; the number of spoiled ballots, zero; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 per cent plus one majority, 41. No candidate has received a majority of the votes cast. Ms Pastoor has received the least number of total votes cast, so Ms Pastoor's name will therefore be excluded from subsequent ballots.

The Speaker: Hon. members, momentarily a subsequent election will occur for two candidates: the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat and the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort. We will be prepared to go very shortly.

[The lists of candidates were posted]

The Speaker: Hon. members, the voting will now commence.

[Members voted from 2:34 p.m. to 2:40 p.m.]

The Speaker: Are there additional members who need to vote? Okay. Feel free to leave the Assembly for the next minute or two before the bells ring if you have to, and then we'll come back.

[Ballots were counted from 2:40 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.]

The Clerk: Mr. Speaker, hon. members, the number of ballots cast for the election of the Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees, 79; the number of spoiled ballots, zero; the number of votes required to achieve the 50 per cent plus one majority, 40; the member having received the majority of votes cast, Mr. Wayne Cao. Mr. Wayne Cao is hereby declared the Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for the 27th Legislature.

The Speaker: Hon. members, the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort becomes the 20th Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees in the history of Alberta. I'd invite the hon. Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees for a few brief words.

Mr. Cao: Well, I feel very, very honoured and speechless, I should say. I joined this Assembly in 1997, and I have seen excellent people here among my colleagues on both sides of the House. When I put my name forward for Deputy Speaker, I made a decision. I made a decision that I will serve. While all the members are doing

policies and politics, I will focus on how to make our democratic institution progress further, the popularity of it, the participation of our citizenship here in it. That will be my focus. Mr. Speaker, I pledge that I will work very, very hard with your office, and we will strengthen this institution for another hundred years.

Thank you.

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(1)(b) nominations are now invited for the office of Deputy Chair of Committees for the 27th Legislature.

Mr. Oberle: Mr. Speaker, it would be my honour at this time to rise and nominate Mr. Len Mitzel, the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, for the position of Deputy Chair of Committees.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, would you accept the nomination?

Mr. Mitzel: Mr. Speaker, I'd be honoured to accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Thank you, sir.

Would there be additional nominations? Seeing no further

indication from hon. members, I hereby declare the hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat elected the Deputy Chair of Committees.

I should advise both the Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees and the Deputy Chair of Committees that the first meeting with the Speaker will be tomorrow at noon, if you would pen that in in your Daytimers, and every day at noon thereafter, just so that we're attentive to the situation.

Hon. members, there's one individual in this Assembly that I would like us all to give consideration and thanks for his service in the past, and that's the hon. Member for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills, who served this Assembly with distinction as the Deputy Speaker of the province of Alberta in the last Legislature of the province of Alberta. He was a good colleague and very trustworthy and very admirable in his dedication to the parliamentary system.

We have one other thing. Okay. Should we destroy all the ballots and documents relative to the election of these three positions?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Speaker: Anybody opposed? Okay. That's done. So we'll have the burning, and there will be white smoke coming out of here.

The House now stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock.

[At 2:55 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 3 p.m.]

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