



Province of Alberta

The 29th Legislature
Second Session

Alberta Hansard

Tuesday afternoon, March 15, 2016

Day 5

The Honourable Robert E. Wanner, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta
The 29th Legislature

Second Session

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Westhead, Cameron, Banff-Cochrane (ND),
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Party standings:

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

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Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

[The Speaker in the chair]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: I'll recognize the Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly the Member of Parliament for Edmonton Centre and parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Randy Boissonnault. If you would rise while I continue the introduction. Mr. Boissonnault was elected in the 2015 federal election, and he's a passionate Albertan who has a long history of giving back to the community as a Rotarian and as cofounder of Literacy Without Borders. A francophone, our guest has worked as a lecturer at the University of Alberta's Campus Saint-Jean and served as chair of the board of directors for the francophone economic council of Alberta, the francophone sport federation of Alberta, and the Canadian Francophone Games.

Every member of this House knows the challenges and responsibilities and the rewards which come with representing our communities, and I'm sure that Randy can count on each of us to wish him all the best in his new role as Member of Parliament and for him to be a good partner to us as well when it comes to the many areas where our province and the federal government need to work together.

I ask that we give an official round of welcome to our honoured guest. Thank you.

The Speaker: The leader of the third party.

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Steve Clark, Ontario Progressive Conservative MPP, and his son Mitch, who lives here in Edmonton and is a member of the Edmonton Police Service. Steve Clark was first elected to the constituency of Leeds-Grenville in a landslide by-election in March 2010. He is the deputy Leader of the Official Opposition, a member of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, and the critic for tourism, culture, and sport. Steve and Mitch Clark are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and I'd ask all members to join me in giving them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks, have your visitors arrived now? Please proceed.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly Martin Shields. Martin Shields is the former mayor of Brooks, in my constituency, and is now our proud Member of Parliament for the constituency of Bow River. I might add that in my neck of the woods federal Conservatives get north of 80 per cent of the vote. We're very proud to have him here.

I will also add my thanks to the deputy leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario for joining fellow Conservatives here today.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: We have school groups first. The Member for Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville.

Mrs. Littlewood: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I proudly stand in this House to help represent Fort Saskatchewan Christian school. They are led by Miss Natalie McIntyre, their teacher, along with helpers Mrs. Linda de Koning, Mrs. Mary Rietveld, and Mrs. Jill Burns. They came to the House today and brought me a wonderful picture that says Bright Through Nobility. Of course, because I did not clear it through the Speaker's office, I won't show it to you at this time, but I will proudly display it on my desk. I just want to quickly say that I really appreciate the letters that they brought with it. I'll just mention a couple of names: Avery, Ethan, Carter, Aliya. Thank you for your letters, and I look forward to continuing to, you know, earn their ...

An Hon. Member: Trust.

Mrs. Littlewood: ... everything. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to introduce to you and through you today two classes from Muriel Martin school in St. Albert. Teachers Mr. Pawsey and Mrs. Surmon are joined by Mrs. Kennett, Miss – I'm scared I'm going to mispronounce it – Amyotte, and Mrs. Clarke as well as their students. If they would please rise to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any other school groups today?

The Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal.

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have three groups of introductions today. First, it is my delight to introduce to you and through you well-respected labour lawyer Andy Sims. Andy was instrumental in leading the government's consultations on our essential services legislation, which I will rise to introduce in the Assembly later today. Andy is an experienced arbitrator and mediator, practising throughout western Canada. Based in Edmonton, he served nine years as the chair of the Alberta Labour Relations Board plus 21 years as a vice-chair. Andy worked hard to ensure that our government found an essential services model that works for employers, employees, and for all Albertans.

Also here today are Liane Lawford and Justine Hetsler, who have worked on essential services for years. Mr. Speaker, they've exhibited the highest level of dedication and professionalism in their work, and I'm proud to have them working in my department.

I would also like to introduce to you some members of Alberta's labour community who will no doubt be interested in the legislation I'm introducing today. From the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees I would like to introduce Guy Smith and Carl Soderstrom, and from the Alberta Federation of Labour I would like to introduce Gil McGowan, Siobhán Vipond and Gwen Feeny.

I ask them all to stand and receive the warm welcome from the Assembly.

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

Mr. Nixon: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the

Assembly some constituents from Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre. There are several of them, so I'll ask that they rise as I say their names. Sarah Gander and Diana Kleinloog are nurses whose colleagues are facing cuts at the Sundre hospital, and they're here to see the proceedings of the House today and hear the minister's thoughts on the matter. They're accompanied by Dr. Robert Warren, who also works at the hospital and is an active leader in our medical community; as well as Mr. Terry Leslie, the mayor of Sundre; Councillor Verna McFadden, whose offices are being flooded by distressed residents worried about the long-term care of their parents and loved ones; also, Mr. Gerald Ingeveld and Mrs. Shelley Ingeveld, who are concerned citizens who took the time out of their week to come and join us today; as well as Ms Heidi Overguard, a member of the Sundre chamber of commerce.

These are the faces of my community, Mr. Speaker, these are my neighbours, and these are the fine folks that stand to lose from the closure of half the hospital in Sundre. I ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm thrilled to be able to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a couple of my constituents from Edmonton-Decore, Nicholas and Kathy Fonseca. Nicholas and Kathy have lived in Edmonton for over 30 years and are a devoted couple focused on giving back to the community. After a trip to the Legislature, they contacted my office and asked if they could come view a session of question period. I sincerely hope that you enjoy your time today here at the Legislature, and I thank you for your interest in the political process. I would now ask that Nicholas and Kathy please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two councillors from the greatest city in Alberta, Grande Prairie, Kevin O'Toole and Kevin McLean, as well as a constituent of mine and a member of NADC, Andre Harpe. Please stand and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any other guests or visitors that we have today?

Then on behalf of the Assembly welcome, all, to our event today.

1:40

Members' Statements

Women's Equality

Ms Fitzpatrick: Mr. Speaker, last week we acknowledged International Women's Day with some celebrating. For my entire life, whether consciously or unconsciously, I along with many sisters, mothers, daughters, aunts, grandmothers, and some brothers fought to gain equality for women. The Famous Five right here in Alberta fought to have us acknowledged as persons and won, and that is part of the reason that there are so many women here in the Legislature. But why did they even have to fight that battle?

I became a public activist for equity in 1984 when I signed a pay equity complaint against the federal government. Equity does not necessarily mean equal. Equity means the levelling of the playing field, and it is a step towards equality. The question is: how do we level that playing field?

Mr. Speaker, one organization in my community provides an example. Since 1993 the Womanspace Resource Centre has focused on community education, advocacy, referrals, and programming for individual women. Womanspace also conducts research on women's issues and serves as a recognized source for media on issues surrounding domestic violence. Womanspace has undertaken numerous large-scale projects and programs in our community, including women and AIDS, women and nonstandard work, and the good food club. In 2007 Womanspace began providing financial literacy training and workshops for local women, which continue to be a focus of the organization today.

When we reach a point in our society where attitudes have changed and women are treated with real respect . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

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

Long-term Care in Sundre

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week Alberta Health Services announced the impending closure of 15 long-term care beds at the Sundre hospital and care centre. Over the next three months patients face a choice between leaving the community in hopes of finding comparable care elsewhere or trying to secure a bed at a lower level of care at a new housing facility in Sundre which is set to open this summer.

While Sundre certainly welcomes this new facility, it does not cover the full range of community care needs. Let's be clear. This facility isn't open yet, and it's already full. Worse, it does not actually have any long-term care beds or any beds near the level of the long-term care beds that are being closed at the Sundre hospital. While the hon. minister deflects questions about the closure of these beds, she fundamentally misunderstands the needs of our community. It's not about the numbers she throws around; it's about the level of care these people need.

Now, our community fought for 12 years to reach our goal of having a holistic community of care for our seniors. In 2013 we were finally able to take a real step towards this goal, and now the new facility will be operational in June. Yes, this new facility will accommodate levels of care from independent living to SL 4 care, and we're proud of that. However, it does not provide long-term care beds. We need the hospital for those, and those are exactly the beds this government is closing in Sundre.

Not only will these closures affect our ability to take care of our seniors within our own community, but we recently learned that they will also trigger layoffs for up to three dozen front-line workers. The announcements of these front-line cuts came with no warning and no public consultation. Mr. Speaker, the AHS central bureaucracy is building quite a reputation for disregarding the will of rural communities. At the very least the people of Sundre deserve a public meeting where their questions could be answered.

As it stands now, AHS stands ready to pull the plug out from under the people of Sundre, and we want to know if this government intends to do anything about it. If the government cared to listen to our communities, they would realize that Sundre needs these long-term care beds. As such, I urge the government to reconsider the closure of these beds and to come to grips with what communities like Sundre really need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

Agriculture

Mr. Drysdale: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Life in rural Alberta is far different than anywhere else in Canada. The days are different, the work is different, and the lifestyle is also very different. I feel honoured to be a rural Albertan and to be able to raise my family on a farm outside of Grovedale.

The Alberta agricultural community has long been one of the driving forces behind Alberta's economic success and behind the Alberta advantage. In communities from Manning to Milk River the farms and ranches are the lifeblood of the local economy. Across Canada Alberta's agricultural industry is the envy of every other agricultural community. Around the world Alberta's agricultural products are held in the highest esteem. Alberta's agrifood exports account for almost \$10 billion annually and employ over 80,000 people. As Alberta is one of the lowest cost regions to feed livestock, we remain the largest cattle-producing province in Canada. The majority of Canadian beef processing also occurs in Alberta. Alberta's agricultural producers are among the best in the world, and agriculture is the largest renewable industry in the province.

I hope that even though there was little attention paid to our ag industry in both of the government's throne speeches, they'll see our ag industry as an essential part of Alberta's economy. Our farming industry is brimming with talented entrepreneurs who are proud Alberta businesspeople. Alberta families can find a huge selection of high-quality local agriproducts at their neighbourhood grocery store and thriving farmers' markets.

I will continue to advocate for good policy and expanded market access for ag producers. With 50 million acres used for crop and livestock production, Alberta is one of the world's most productive agricultural economies. Canada remains one of the few countries in the world to produce more food than we consume. The growing world population is an abundant market of mouths to feed for Alberta-produced foods. The question is: will this government allow the ag sector to keep up?

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Pink Shirt Day

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On February 24 I had the honour of taking part in Pink Shirt Day. Pink Shirt Day was started when two Nova Scotia high school students united youth and teachers in their school to wear pink shirts in support of a classmate who had been bullied for wearing a pink shirt at school.

I was approached by the Kinsmen Boys & Girls Club in my riding as one of their children had asked if they could hand out free hot chocolate in front of my constituency office as a random act of kindness. Well, of course, I said yes. My constituency office was full of happy children who spent their evening giving out hot chocolate to anyone interested. It was cold that night, but not a single person complained. The children wore their pink shirts with pride, and it was a wonderful evening filled with joy, laughter, and love for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, my staff and I strive to ensure that my constituency office is a safe place for our constituents, one that is welcoming, caring, and respectful for everyone in my riding. As the MLA for Edmonton-Decore I strongly support a safe and inclusive society, whether it be in schools, at work, or in the home. I'm very proud of the children from the Kinsmen Boys & Girls Club. We can

work towards a society free of bullying, discrimination, and intimidation in any form.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week

Mr. S. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, celebrated from March 13 to 19. I'm proud to see that each year this week is dedicated for producers and their families to reflect on the importance of farm safety in their lives. This year's theme is Keeping Kids Safe.

My constituency, the beautiful riding of Leduc-Beaumont, is ranked the second-largest in the county and the region for farm receipts. We grow barley, oats, hay, alfalfa and raise livestock, poultry, cattle, and calves.

Education and awareness are important in preventing hazardous incidents while working on the farm, especially when machineries are involved. I'm proud of my government, which continues to work closely with producers and industry stakeholders to promote children's farm safety and on-farm risk management for caregivers and supervisors. Our farm safety co-ordinators distribute safety resources and co-ordinate education and awareness programs for children, teens, and producers. They also developed the farm safe Alberta program, which is now available to producers. I must stress that these interactive educational resources are available free of charge to producers, and we will make the best of these in Leduc county.

Last fall the government introduced new enhanced legislative protection for waged farm workers. I'm happy to see that the government is in the process of consulting stakeholders in the ag industry to help develop recommendations and regulations. It is a priority for the government to ensure that farm workers come home safely at the end of the day to be with their family and their children. I and our government know that the safety of their children is paramount to farmers, and we will continue to work with them to promote safety awareness.

Mr. Speaker, I know that producers keep farm safety for the whole family top of mind throughout the year, and I know they will continue to do so, and I commend that.

Thank you very much.

1:50

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: The Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition.

Job Creation

Mr. Jean: Albertans are worried. They're watching businesses close down, friends lose work, or they themselves are out of a job. What they're looking for is hope, leadership that understands Albertans aren't looking for a handout but a hand up. That's why Wildrose today released our 12-point jobs action plan to get Albertans working again. Our plan would help restore confidence and bring stability back to Alberta's economy. Will this Premier tell Albertans when they can expect a real jobs plan from this government instead of more ideological experiments?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms. Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've had a chance to review the opposition's jobs plan, and I will say that I'm pleased. It's very clear they've been listening to a great deal of

what's been said by our minister of economic development as well as myself because there is a lot within it with which we agree. There are, however, some things with which we don't agree. For instance, we believe that Alberta's energy future includes phasing out health-attacking coal emissions, but they think we should keep right on polluting. That's not the way forward. That's not going to create jobs, and that's not going to create a bright future for Alberta.

Mr. Jean: This week job creators asked for a moratorium from this government on further red tape and tax increases. Wildrose's action plan for jobs is exactly the type of leadership and policies that Albertans are asking and looking for. Policies like a small-business tax cut, cutting red tape by 20 per cent, and stimulus through a WCB premium holiday for new hires make sense. These policies would stimulate the economy and restore business confidence in Alberta. Will this Premier implement any of these Wildrose policies to get Albertans working again, and which ones?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting because when asked at his press conference about this very issue, reducing red tape, the Leader of the Official Opposition couldn't come up with one example of what he would do. When we talk about red tape and regulations, let's be clear what some of those are: minimum wage, environmental protection, health and safety, speed limits. These are not the kinds of things that Alberta needs to arbitrarily reduce. What we need is thoughtful governance working together with job creators to help diversify the economy and create new jobs going forward.

Mr. Jean: The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the only job-creation plan the NDP put forward created zero jobs, not one single job in all of Alberta except for the minister. To date the NDP has rejected an emergency debate on the economy, they rejected a jobs summit, and they rejected several reasonable proposals from Wildrose that would help all Albertans. It's evidence that this government is keen to follow its risky ideological agenda on the economy instead of doing what's right for all Albertans. Why can't this Premier just accept good ideas instead of putting forward an economic agenda that continues to hurt all Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One thing I can say that I definitely disagree with the Leader of the Official Opposition on is that in his press conference today he said specifically: I don't think right now that diversifying the economy is the number one job. Well, you know what? I think Albertans disagree. You're not going to be able to create new jobs from businesses that have closed. We have to move forward. We cannot do more of the same. It's time to abandon the dinosaur approach that some of our science friends over there are still embracing, and we need to move forward to move all of Alberta forward.

The Speaker: Second major question.

Pipeline Construction

Mr. Jean: Since May I have been saying that pipelines are the first step to Alberta's future prosperity. I've pressed the Premier continuously to fight for pipelines right across the country. She hasn't. She tells us that she prefers quiet diplomacy. Well, it's so quiet that you'd be forgiven if you didn't hear it. Since she was elected, B.C., Manitoba, Quebec, and Ottawa have all thrown new

roadblocks at pipeline projects. Can the Premier give us one single example of a pipeline – any pipeline – that is closer to construction or approval as a result of her quiet diplomacy?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, I've had eight months, and the government that that member was part of had eight years, and they didn't get a pipeline built, so I really think it is time for them to rethink their talking points. Tweeting adolescent name-calling at mayors in Quebec is not the strategy to build the nation. We will engage in negotiations, we will engage in respectful conversations, and that will bring about a change.

Mr. Jean: Mr. Speaker, Prime Minister Trudeau isn't supportive of our pipelines. He doesn't even like to say the word "pipelines." Premier Clark of B.C. is opposed to both of our pipeline projects in her own province. Trudeau announced a tanker ban on the B.C. north coast, but B.C. will need federal approvals for LNG tankers for its liquefied natural gas terminal at Kitimat. It seems like B.C. might just need the tanker ban lifted as well. Will this Premier remind Premier Clark that it is in both our interests to have the federal government lift the B.C. tanker ban?

Ms Notley: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, I've been working very hard on the issue of improving everybody's understanding of why getting access to tidewater is so important for Albertans and, quite frankly, for all Canadians. I make that case at every possible opportunity. I also made that case with Premier Clark, who is very keen to talk with us about selling hydroelectricity. I indicated to her that that was a wonderful conversation for us to have and that we'd be happy to do that when she was interested in talking about us getting our pipeline and our energy to tidewater.

Mr. Jean: The Premier has an opportunity right now to get B.C. onside with pipelines. Both Alberta's and B.C.'s energy products are ridiculously called dangerous by some of the NDP's radical friends, and both Alberta and British Columbia need Prime Minister Trudeau to lift the tanker ban. We have a chance to form a common front on an issue that is of mutual concern. If Ottawa treats us differently, then we have a very different issue. Will the Premier make it clear to the Prime Minister that the B.C. north coast tanker ban has to be lifted if only for the sake of national unity?

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, as I've said a number of times already, I've been having ongoing conversations with both representatives of the federal government, including the Prime Minister, as well as other Premiers, and that's what I will continue to do. I won't do it on Twitter. I won't do it by grandstanding. I won't do it by calling people names. What I will do is that I will engage in constructive dialogue, and I will also remind all those folks about our climate change leadership plan, which has very much changed the conversation and changed the willingness of people to consider that Alberta has a progressive, modernized energy product to offer to the world.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Foothills.

Mr. Panda: Mr. Speaker, today we released our 12-point jobs action plan to get Albertans working again. One of our key points was to fight for pipelines. Every day Canada loses up to \$50 million because of lack of market access for our oil. The throne speech said that this government would work towards solid timelines for approvals for pipelines. What, if any, progress has the Premier made in getting the federal government to set predictable timelines for pipeline approvals?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In fact, two weeks ago in Vancouver, when we were discussing primarily climate change at the request of the Prime Minister, I made it very clear that we also had to talk about market access and pipelines. As a result of that, we got all of the Premiers and the Prime Minister to sign onto a declaration that specifically said that they understood the urgency and the importance of timely, predictable, stable decision-making with respect to pipeline approvals across the country. That was language that we put in there, and now we're going to keep pushing them on it. I welcome the constructive effort . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.

2:00

Mr. Panda: Jobs matter. In Calgary and all over Alberta people are losing their jobs or taking pay cuts to keep their jobs. Maybe this isn't important to the NDP, but in Calgary and across our province it's a big deal. The fastest way to improve job prospects is to get the pipelines built. There is no better shovel-ready infrastructure project than a pipeline, and it won't cost the taxpayers any money. Why won't the Premier be a strong supporter of market access and get these pipelines built?

The Speaker: The hon. minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. I think the member needs to listen more closely to what the Premier has already said, that we are strong advocates of market access. The Premier as well as myself and the Minister of Energy have been working with our counterparts both west of us and east of us as well as our federal counterparts, looking at having a constructive dialogue. The end goal is to get our product to market. It's not about jumping up and down and screaming in the media. That approach clearly has failed. It's failed for 10 years when the Leader of the Opposition was a federal MP, and it's also failed the previous PC government in Alberta.

Mr. Panda: Believe me, people in Calgary want to get back to work. They want their NDP government to have an actual jobs plan. This government had one – just one – job-creating idea, and it was a bad idea. And then the NDP went from a bad plan to no plan. This Premier could actually show Albertans that she's serious about jobs by wholeheartedly – wholeheartedly – taking up the fight to get pipelines built. Will the Premier do so, or can we expect more silent diplomacy from her?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that on the issue of pipeline advocacy I've answered the question several times.

But I would like to speak to the other issue. You know, all last fall the opposition over there said that a plan with rules that gave a \$5,000 grant to employers to create jobs wouldn't work, and now they're introducing a \$6,000 grant to employers with no strings attached at the cost of billions of dollars, which, suddenly, they think will work. Which side are these guys on? I can't figure out if they're coming or going. It just doesn't make any sense at all.

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

Carbon Pricing

Mr. McIver: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last November this government announced a climate change policy that will push out coal and

bring in a carbon tax. We've heard that the carbon tax will be revenue neutral, but the details don't support this. One key partner has been completely left out of the conversations on how this carbon tax will affect them, and that partner is Alberta's municipalities. To the Municipal Affairs minister: please tell your municipal partners what assistance they will receive to deal with escalating costs caused by your NDP carbon tax.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we're very proud of with respect to our revenue-neutral carbon levy is that we will be reinvesting money back into the economy and that, quite frankly, municipalities will be very generous beneficiaries of this plan, so we are moving forward with it. When we introduce the budget, the details of the overall amounts of money will be demonstrated, and then we will engage in very active consultations with our municipal partners on how best to work with them, and we look forward to that.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Thank you. More revenue-neutral double-talk.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this government will allow large emitters in the oil sands to offset the carbon tax through a royalty reduction and incentives for large producers to reach lower thresholds. What we don't know is how small and medium-sized oil and gas companies and oil field service companies will be able to weather this government's policy storm. To the Minister of Energy: what specific programs have you implemented that will help small drilling and supply companies and operations, prevent them from shifting their business east to places that are more business friendly, starting with Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy.

Ms McCuaig-Boyd: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, first of all, let's be clear; 79 per cent of Canadian oil and gas is in Alberta. We were working through the royalty plan. We have status quo for oil sands. They go the same. We've harmonized liquids for the smaller companies. And the cost of carbon will be calculated as expenses moving forward.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. McIver: Well, thank you. Mr. Speaker, given that this government's approach to energy development in rural areas will mean that many people will lose their jobs – some have already lost their jobs – and some will need to change industries or learn new skills, to the Premier or one of her ministers: what changes to your climate change plan will you make to have explicit long-term provisions that could stimulate local skills development in green tech or some other industry so people can continue to be employed as they were before you became government?

The Speaker: The hon. Premier.

Ms Notley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the first thing, to be clear, is that the loss of jobs in the oil and gas sector is because the price of oil has dropped by over 75 per cent. Let's not forget that. The carbon levy has not even been introduced, so that's scaremongering, and it has nothing to do with the very serious job loss problems that our whole province is facing and we are very, very aware of. That being said, the carbon levy will actually provide us with an opportunity to incent and to generate green infrastructure and additional work that will provide job opportunities for people who've lost their jobs in the energy industry.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. Premier.
The Member for Red Deer-North.

Physician-assisted Dying

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As someone who has worked in end-of-life care for many years I feel very honoured to rise and ask these questions today. Since the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling in the Carter versus Canada case last January the issue of physician-assisted dying has become a matter of open public discussion. While I am heartened to see that both the federal government and the government of Alberta are finally acting to ensure that there will be laws put in place to uphold this recognized Charter right as of June 6, what is the ministry . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much to the member for the important question and for her service to Albertans. Certainly, following the Supreme Court of Canada's decision, the federal government needs to bring changes to the Criminal Code, and we also need to make sure that we move forward in a way that respects people's values, that brings about compassion, and that supports families in what is clearly a very difficult time of their lives. We know and agree that it's a profoundly difficult and touching situation for many individuals. That's why I'm really proud that I have an associate minister and an MLA panel that are receiving feedback and hearing presentations from individuals on this perspective as we continue to move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
First supplemental.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for outlining the consultations under way.

Knowing that many Albertans are concerned about the issue of conscience rights related to physician-assisted dying, can the Minister of Health please address what will be done to ensure that the rights of physicians who may object to participating in this procedure are protected?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. I'm happy to assure the member and all Albertans that the conscience rights of physicians and any other health care professional will be without question protected. Just as physician-assisted dying is a Charter right, the moral beliefs of any individual are equally protected by the Charter. Physicians who object to the procedure will see their rights respected. Our work going forward will be to balance these rights with a commitment to providing informed and compassionate care for patients and ensuring that their rights are respected as well.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mrs. Schreiner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for her response. I have been directing my constituents of Red Deer-North to the online survey to share their views on physician-assisted dying. After speaking with many of my constituents, I'm finding that their number one concern is regarding the vulnerable populations. What safeguards will be in place to ensure that vulnerable people are protected?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We need to ensure that no one ever feels coerced in making a significant decision, especially this one, and we also need to be certain that any patient assessing physician-assisted dying is fully competent and aware of all of the options that they have. These are questions that we are asking about in our consultation, and they are questions that are familiar to the medical professionals in all aspects of the care that they provide. As we prepare social policies around this issue, I believe that we will arrive at a solution that will reflect the values and compassion of Albertans.

The Speaker: Hon. members, I would remind you again about the standing order with respect to preambles.

2:10 Rural Physician Action Plan

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, one of the most pressing health issues that we face in rural Alberta is access to primary care and doctors. The rural physician action plan receives funding to place medical students and residents in underserved communities. Through these initiatives and others RPAP promotes physician recruitment and retention in our towns and small cities, but there are questions swirling around whether the NDP supports this program at all. Our communities are already hurting. Let's end this uncertainty. Can the minister commit right now to leaving this vitally important program in place?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. Certainly, RPAP is one of the programs that we're very proud of and has brought about many great outcomes for Albertans, just as the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary, being physician-training universities, have also brought about great outcomes. So I think the responsible thing for a government to do at the end of a funding cycle is to review the objectives and review the outcomes. Certainly, RPAP will continue to exist, and we have continued their funding at the current level until the fall while we continue to figure out how best to use the resources we have to make sure that physicians and all health care professionals are available throughout Alberta.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, given how important this program is to families across the province, it's a shame that we can't get a real answer out of the minister. Seeing as she talks a great deal about giving Albertans access to the right health provider at the right place at the right time, will the minister take this chance to reassure rural Albertans and guarantee that our smaller communities will have the local access to doctors that they need?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me be very, crystal clear. RPAP will continue to exist as we move forward. I've said that in my first answer; I'll say it in a second and a third if you need to hear it. I think the responsible thing for us to do at this point is to look at all the health professionals and how we make sure that we can attract and retain them in communities throughout Alberta. Physicians are certainly an important component, but so are nurse practitioners; so are midwives. We're working on those instead of threatening to cut billions of dollars from the public's treasury.

Mr. Loewen: Well, at least she's actually committed to it, too. It wasn't what she said in the first answer. She said that she was reviewing it.

This government spends a lot of time boasting about reviews, but it finds itself paralyzed with fear when it comes to taking real action. Why can't the minister bring herself to make a firm commitment to rural Alberta, promise families in our towns and small cities that she will not gut their access to doctors, and promise to leave this plan in place and other plans to make sure that we have access to doctors in rural communities?

Ms Hoffman: I've answered the question. We're absolutely committed to making sure that we have a stable health care system. That's why when we were first elected, we restored \$800 million that was proposed to be cut from health care. That doesn't make sense. Members opposite keep proposing more cuts. They keep talking about how important it is for us to make sure that we don't run deficits. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. The only way that's going to be happening is if we were to cut every nurse, every doctor. That's not going to be happening. The people of Alberta elected a government that stands up for public health care, and that's what they've got.

Coal-fired Electric Power Plant Retirement

Mr. Gotfried: Mr. Speaker, the coal industry has been a steady source of gainful employment for thousands of Albertans for generations. In any economic climate holding onto these jobs would be very important to the affected communities but critical to their survival in the current economic and policy environment. Many of these affected communities are here with us this week for the AAMD and C conference. To the minister of environment: with mayors and reeves from across Alberta expressing significant concerns from fallout from your plan to rapidly phase out coal, will you consider taking a more balanced, job-protecting, and taxpayer-conscious approach on this issue?

The Speaker: The Minister of Environment and Parks.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. It's very clear that over the next 15 years there will be some coal-fired electricity retirements. Those are under the federal coal regulations that were brought in by the Stephen Harper government, that were supported by the Leader of the Official Opposition. The only difference between the 2016 and 2030 plan – that is, the federal coal retirements – and the post-2030 provincial NDP plan is that for everyone there will now be investments in those communities for transitioning those communities. The Leader of the Official Opposition, when he was in federal government, would have left those communities with nothing.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
First supplemental.

Mr. Gotfried: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems that we're saving Albertans while killing their jobs. Given that a number of the municipalities who signed the open letter to the Premier expressing concerns around economic fallout, high electricity rates, and lower tax revenues are from NDP-held ridings and given that this makes them constituents of your own MLAs, one would hope that these concerns are taken seriously. To the minister of the environment: given that community leaders have publicly called for caution in the government's approach, will you heed their concerns and take what could be characterized as rash actions back to the drawing board?

Ms Phillips: Well, Mr. Speaker, if rash actions are Stephen Harper's coal regulations, then I don't quite – I'm just not getting

the connection here. The fact of the matter is that our government has made commitments to those communities for transition plans, including all of those areas that were covered under the federal coal regulations. Now, what is avoided by those Harper coal regulations? Let's see what was gazetted by the federal government in 2012 when they passed those regs. Over the next 20 years it is estimated that 590 premature deaths could be avoided in Alberta, 530 emergency room visits in hospitals . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Mr. Gotfried: It's nice to see that the Phillips plan is now the Harper plan.

Given that the PC caucus has been advocating for an innovative approach combining industry research and their commitments with government objectives and given that 30 municipalities signed the open letter to the Premier advocating for a common-sense, dialed-down, dialed-up strategy as advanced by TransAlta, ATCO, Maxim, and others, again to the minister: given that a balanced strategy could achieve positive emission outcomes while maintaining jobs and grid stability, why are you rejecting this approach brought forward by conscientious leaders of both community and industry?

Ms Phillips: Well, Mr. Speaker, the climate leadership plan, which was praised by many of the electricity generators . . . [interjections] Well, it was; that's a stone cold fact.

It was clear that we needed to do something about the remaining six plants after 2030. Now, the commitment that we have made to Albertans is that we will assist all of the communities, not just those who are affected by the post-2030 closures, with economic development. We have made those commitments clear to them.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie.

Employment Training

Mrs. Pitt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People across Alberta are worried. They're frustrated that they can't get back to work and upgrade their skills. I hear about it in Airdrie, people coming into my office dejected and confused about why the NDP doesn't understand the importance of growing our economy. Many Albertans are finding that they do not qualify for existing government programs because they must already have a job offer in their hands in order to receive funds for training. To the minister: how many people are applying for learner income support, and how many are being turned away?

Mr. Sabir: Thank you, Member, for the question. Let me begin by saying that we are committed to ensuring that Albertans falling on these tough times have the needed and necessary supports, and that's why we have increased funding in our last budget for the Alberta income support program, and we have been providing those supports to Albertans. I can provide the specific numbers in terms of caseloads. The overall increase in the program is 50-plus per cent.

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, the fact is that many workers have suddenly found themselves without a job and want to upgrade their skills, and NDP policies are not working. Seeing as the Wildrose job action plan calls for investing in Alberta's knowledge infrastructure and increasing apprenticeship usage on government projects and maximizing the use of existing training programs and given that employers are receiving hundreds of applications a day for a single job, what plan does the government actually have to

keep workers in Alberta and get them the skills they need to get back to work?

The Speaker: The minister of economic development.

Mr. Bilous: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll thank the member for the question. As the Premier outlined initially, there are a couple of points in the Wildrose plan – actually, they've been listening to our Speech from the Throne and to many speeches that I've been giving as far as investing in Alberta. When the Finance minister tables the budget on April 14, there are a number of initiatives that our government is rolling out, partnering with the private sector, the job creators, in order to get Albertans back to work. To the member: as well, I'm working very closely with the Minister of Labour, and we are looking at opportunities and ways to support workers through retraining programs.

Thank you.

2:20

Mrs. Pitt: Mr. Speaker, what Albertans want is a hand up, not a handout. Considering that education and training has proved to be one of the best methods to combat unemployment and that the average Alberta Supports centres are seeing increases in demands between 50 to 70 per cent over the last year and given that the NDP has failed to maximize the use of existing skills training programs that could make a difference here today, will the NDP adopt the Wildrose's 12-point action plan on jobs, that will get these workers the skills that they need?

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that we fundamentally disagree with the opposition on. As far as their 12-point plan, first of all, we believe that phasing out cancer-causing emissions and protecting the health of our children and our families is very, very important. We've seen the lack of new pipelines being built over the last decade, and we've seen who is in power and why they couldn't get them built. Jumping up and down and screaming, cursing at people, and tweeting at them is not the way to get a pipeline approved and built. [interjections] We are having very constructive dialogue with our counterparts across the country, including the federal government, and we believe that this is the approach to take.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Hon. members, tone it down.

Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock.

Water and Waste-water Infrastructure

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Towns, villages, and counties across Alberta are worried about their water and waste-water infrastructure. Raw sewage will flow into the Crowsnest River if Blairmore's waste-water treatment plant is not fixed now. The systems in Blackfalds and Lacombe can't currently meet environmental standards, which is unacceptable under a government that claims to care for Alberta's environment. To the Minister of Transportation: when will these critical projects receive funding so municipalities will not have to sink to Montreal's level and pollute a major waterway with raw sewage?

The Speaker: The Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. This government has committed significant new funding for the water for life and water/waste-water treatment plants. That's about \$107 million over the next couple of years. Those applications have been received and are being

considered. We expect that sometime in June we'll be able to start making some announcements about what those projects that have been funded are.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that a regional water line is needed for consistent water supply to the town of Okotoks and given that towns like Westlock, in my riding, act as central hubs for regional water supply and the Westlock concrete water tower is literally crumbling, putting the entire region's water supply at risk, Minister, what is your government's plan to support regional collaboration when it comes to water/waste-water infrastructure, and will the town of Westlock receive funding this year for its water reservoir project?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member. I've been meeting with mayors, reeves, and councils. I met with four of them today at AAMD and C to hear their concerns. I will indicate that we're very sympathetic to some of these requirements. I met with the mayor of Okotoks just a week and a half ago as well. We're considering all of these things. We've put significantly increased resources into these projects, and they will be evaluated on the basis of their merits. Clearly, there are far more requests than money available to pay for them.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Second supplemental.

Mr. van Dijken: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wildrose would protect waterways and supply water by providing consistent funding to municipalities instead of keeping them in limbo.

Given that 56 projects were approved under the small communities fund and that 49 of those were for water, waste water, or storm water and given that we have a duty to manage our natural resources and protect them from raw sewage dumps, would the minister agree that there is a crisis in water/waste-water infrastructure in Alberta and that this government has a responsibility to help address the crisis?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much. Well, you know, it's a good question, an interesting question. Yes, we would say that there is a serious problem. Infrastructure spending, of course, was reduced under the previous government, particularly during the Klein period, and we're struggling to catch up. We've put additional resources. But it's a bit rich coming from a member of a party that would cut \$9 billion out of our capital spending. Nothing would get done, Mr. Speaker. He wouldn't get his water tower. He wouldn't get his waterline. Unless the NDP government is here, nothing will happen.

The Speaker: The Member for Calgary-South East.

Climate Change Strategy

Mr. Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I applaud this government for following through with the Progressive Conservative climate change framework. The new investment of \$10 million to SBI BioEnergy from the climate change and emissions management fund shows just how much this government appreciates this funding framework. However, in the past trends from biofuel projects have shown that it's difficult to create a business plan that will provide

the energy at a cost-effective price and generate a profit. To the minister of environment: what is different about this business plan with SBI BioEnergy, and can you assure Albertans that this isn't just a cash handout with a feel-good story to it?

The Speaker: The minister of environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question. It is true that the previous government's bioenergy initiatives and investments did attract some raised eyebrows from the office of the Auditor General, and that's why we're endeavouring to fix them. Now, this piece, though, was funded through the Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation, which is leveraging funding from the private sector as well in a number of different investments. Those decisions are made at arm's length from government. They are made possible through the specified gas emitters regulation, and that's how the corporation is funded.

Mr. Fraser: Given that this bioenergy project is said to have the potential to take the equivalent of 23,000 cars off the road annually, that's welcome news.

You mentioned in your throne speech that you'll be funding mass transit through your carbon tax. The Calgary green line has the potential to prevent 52,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions from being released into our atmosphere. That's pretty significant. Minister, will you commit to the green line project in Calgary as it clearly falls within the climate change plan and is a significant benefit for Calgarians and future Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for speaking out on behalf of his constituents on important public infrastructure projects, particularly with such important green ramifications to them. We are in the middle of a budget-making process and a capital-planning process, and we'll have more to say about these important priorities at that time.

Mr. Fraser: Given that this government is continuing to use the existing specified gas emitters regulation framework and continuing to fund projects from the climate change and emissions management fund, Minister, what will become of the climate change and emissions management fund when the new carbon tax framework is in place? Will you expand the mandate of the fund, or will the fund cease to exist?

Ms Phillips: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, some thoughtful questions from the hon. member. What I can say at this point in the budget-making process is that we will be making significant investments in green infrastructure and in innovation and clean technology, which is, of course, the mandate of the climate change emissions management fund, the latter with respect to ensuring that we get good ideas out into the market, whether it's reducing our per barrel emissions or whether it's investing in new and innovative solutions like SBI.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Stony Plain.

Agricultural Assistance for Drought Recovery

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Farmers and producers in my constituency were hit hard last year. In some cases states of agricultural emergency were declared, and now low precipitation levels and warm temperatures over the winter have left many of these same farmers worried about a repeat of last year's conditions

and wondering if they'll be able to cope. To the minister of agriculture: what are you doing to prepare for potential dry conditions our farmers and producers are facing again this year?

The Speaker: The minister of agriculture.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member for the question. The year 2015 was a challenging year for many Alberta producers who were concerned about dry growing conditions and feed supplies. Snowpacks in many agricultural areas are below normal this year due to a number of factors such as a late start to winter, below-normal precipitation, and above-average temperatures. However, at this point it is difficult to speculate on what the long-term impact on this year's growing season will be. Nevertheless, department staff continue to monitor conditions and will ensure that our robust suite of existing programs and services such as crop insurance, AgriStability, and AgriInvest continue to be available to help producers during difficult times.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
First supplementary.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we are already facing dry conditions and the growing season hasn't even started yet, again to the minister of agriculture: what are you doing to ensure that our farmers and producers can be confident now as they're planning what they'll have to grow and the supports that they'll need for this growing season?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Carlier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to the member. There are also a number of important resources available to support producers in their decision-making during dry conditions. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry posts regular crop reports and soil moisture condition updates on its website to ensure producers have current information about growing conditions in their area. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry offers business risk management programs that are designed to assist producers facing challenging growing conditions. Agri-insurance products provided through Agriculture Financial Services Corporation include protection insurance. Producers are insured for 50, 60, 70, or 80 per cent of their individual normal yield history.

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

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that producer uptake of insurance for hay and pasture continues to be below average, to the same minister: should we have another repeat of the challenging growing conditions, will farmers and producers, including ranchers and livestock operators, have access to appropriate levels of insurance?

Mr. Carlier: Mr. Speaker, the government heard from producers and is working with AFSC to improve the system. AFSC has engaged producer groups such as the Alberta Beef Producers to help improve this coverage. We've added more weather stations to more accurately assess conditions. The AFSC is considering numerous changes, including simplifying the options offered, changing the pricing mechanisms, reviewing the payment function, reviewing the hay normal yields, especially with respect to the age of the stand. These changes should be ready for the 2017 growing season.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Member for Rimbey-Rocky Mountain House-Sundre.

Long-term Care in Sundre

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I asked the Health minister about the closing of half the hospital in Sundre. Alberta Health Services, with the minister's blessing, blindsided Sundre by announcing the closure of 15 long-term care beds. This will directly result in front-line job losses. In the gallery today are front-line workers from Sundre whose colleagues' jobs will disappear because of this. How can the minister justify to these doctors and nurses the breaking of NDP promises by not only shutting down front-line services but also laying off front-line workers?

Ms Hoffman: Clearly, it's another day in the land of make-believe for the Official Opposition, Mr. Speaker. Let me make the record crystal clear. One, the hospital in Sundre will remain open. Two, all of the residents will be able to transition to a new facility, and we'll make sure that they get the right level of care. I think it might be long-term care for a couple of the members, and we'll make sure that that level of care is available at the new facility. Three, all staff will have a landing place consistent with the collective agreement. I'd be happy to meet with the members in the gallery afterwards to offer them that assurance in person.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Nixon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll take the minister up on that.

The minister is trying to downplay her decision to shut down 15 long-term care beds in Sundre by pointing to 40 lower level care beds that are being created at the new lodge. Given that the NDP used to know that long-term care beds are the same as supportive living 1, 3, and 4 and given that the NDP promised more long-term care spaces across the province in the last election, can the minister explain how cutting all of Sundre's long-term care beds moves us towards that goal?

The Speaker: The Minister of Health.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me again make the clarity around making sure that we get the right care in the right place by the right professional. For the individuals that are currently living in the long-term care facility: that's not the right care. Just like if I was waiting to live somewhere where I needed to have some support with my meals and with my daily hygiene, I shouldn't be stuck living in a hospital. I should have the right facility. The new facility will have 40 bright, brand new, welcoming beds, and I'm sure that the hon. member will be happy to be there with me when we open the facility.

In terms of the transition, for the couple of people that do need the higher level of care, we're going to make sure that we have the right supports for them in the new facility so that they can receive long-term care.

Mr. Nixon: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in question period I asked the minister point-blank if she would commit to not closing the Sundre hospital, but she would not in question period. She has now; I thank her for that. Given that hospitals in NDP-held ridings like the hospitals in Tofield, Lamont, Manning, and Grande Cache are statistically used less often than Sundre's, can these communities expect to see their beds cut, or is the Sundre hospital the only hospital in the minister's sights?

Ms Hoffman: I said it in the first question; I'll say it again. The Sundre hospital is staying open, and I'm proud of that. I'm proud that the people of Alberta elected a government that actually believes in public health care. Instead of pushing for queue-jumping and for people to be able to go over the border, we're investing in public infrastructure. We're looking at facilities that have 45-year-old beds, that aren't up to today's best standards, that aren't as welcoming as the new facilities, and we're finding ways to replace those 15 beds with 40 appropriate-level care beds. This is very good news not just for Sundre but for rural Alberta, and we'll continue to look at ways that we can move forward to make sure that people get the right care in their communities throughout Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

Bioenergy Initiatives

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier and the environment minister announced a \$10 million government grant to SBI BioEnergy for the construction of a new biofuel production facility. Now, the announcement actually reminded me of mating elephants. It was done at a high level, there was a lot of trumpeting and stamping of feet, and it will take two years to see if we get any results. But it got me to thinking: producing 240 million litres of biofuel is going to take a lot of canola. To the environment minister: what is the total annual volume of canola feedstock that will be required to provide input for this venture, and how many seeded hectares of canola does this represent?

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, as I understand the matter, the feedstock for this particular bioenergy refinery can be very varied. The fact is that they are using off-grade canola for which there is currently no market, providing a market to farmers for that product.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's good to know that the minister knows that it will use off-grade canola as the feedstock, but, you see, our farmers don't set out to grow off-grade canola. Our farmers set out to grow feed-grade canola, that can be sold at higher prices, and the amount of off-grade canola depends on weather and environmental conditions. Can the environment minister inform the Assembly: if growing conditions are good and farmers are fortunate to grow enough food-grade canola, how and where will SBI BioEnergy source enough feedstock to run their operation?

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, this is a very innovative technology that can use a number of different feedstock inputs for its bioenergy refining, and that's why the technology itself was so interesting and so worthy of support from the CCME and a variety of private-sector partners. I will add that Dr. Inder Singh, who is the head of SBI, is a leader in this field.

Dr. Starke: Well, Mr. Speaker, we're certainly proud of Dr. Singh as well, and that's why our previous government actually provided some of the original funding for this project.

The production of biofuels presents us with many challenging moral and ethical questions. Given that many Albertans are asking whether it's more important to feed the hungry or feed Humvees, to the minister of agriculture: would you please comment on the moral and ethical implications of diverting agricultural products out of the global food supply?

The Speaker: The minister of the environment.

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the hon. member for the question. Those concerns are valid, and that is why this particular technology takes other kinds of feedstock not

used in the agricultural food chain supply. There are a number of different waste products that it can use, and that is why this technology is so important for one of the pieces of our journey towards sustainability in this province.

Indigenous Peoples' Economic Development

Mr. Hinkley: Mr. Speaker, all Albertans are aware of the current economic challenges our province is facing. My constituents in Wetaskiwin-Camrose, which has a large indigenous population, are not immune to the downturn and have shared their stories about job losses with me. In 2015 the unemployment rate for Alberta's indigenous population was 11.7 per cent. That's double the 5.8 per cent for nonaboriginal Albertans. To the Minister of Indigenous Relations: what are you doing to ensure First Nations and Métis Albertans are supported when it comes to employment opportunities?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Indigenous Relations.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I am very proud of our government's role in working with indigenous Albertans to help them to be included in the business community in this province and to benefit from Alberta's economy. Our Alberta economic partnership program provides about \$2.4 million in funding to 44 different projects to help the indigenous communities to build their feasibility studies, their business plans, and economic development. We'll see that spreading throughout the province over the next year.

Thank you.

The Speaker: First supplemental.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we need to ensure that our indigenous communities have access to the same economic, social, and community development opportunities that all Albertans have, again to the same minister: what supports are in place to ensure our province's indigenous communities have the same chance to survive right now?

2:40

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. You know, as a social worker in this province for the last 34 years the socioeconomic well-being of the indigenous community has been very close to my heart, and it's central to how I'm going to practise in this ministry that I've been granted the privilege of leading. This year the First Nations development fund provided \$128 million for more than 300 economic, social, and community developments, and we are helping to move the indigenous community to have greater quality of life for themselves and their children.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Second supplemental.

Mr. Hinkley: Again thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that we need to ensure that our government's words are being backed up by our actions, how specifically will the First Nations development fund make a positive impact on specific Alberta communities?

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you again to the member for the question. I've really had the wonderful opportunity of going around this province, all the way from the very south, the Blood Tribe community, to the very north, the Paddle Prairie community, and I've seen the wonderful economic development

that's going on in many of our indigenous communities. In the last year, for example, the First Nations development fund has supported the Bigstone Cree Nation Women's Emergency Shelter, the Cold Lake First Nations hotel construction, and the Tsuu T'ina Nation fire department. In total, the ministry provides about \$165 million.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul-Two Hills.

Lac La Biche Apartment Fire

Mr. Hanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the very early hours of Saturday, March 12, the Lac La Biche fire department responded to a fire at an apartment building in Lac La Biche. In spite of the early hour the response was almost immediate. The firefighters worked very bravely to evacuate all 91 residents of the building safely, with zero injuries to the residents and only two minor injuries to the firefighters. The blaze caused approximately \$1.2 million in damage and was found to have been started by a cigarette butt in a flowerpot.

The Red Cross funded the first 72 hours of temporary housing for the displaced residents, and the owners of the Parkland Motel are still accommodating residents who have no place else to go at their cost. BCM Inns also donated accommodations for some of the residents for up to a month. The people and businesses in Lac La Biche have stepped up to help the many displaced residents. There have been donations of everything from towing services and lock services to those who lost their keys in the scramble to free taxi services, gift certificates, and cash. Big Dog radio held a radiothon on Monday to help out, and my Wildrose caucus MLAs stepped up and donated cash to help as well. Cash donations continue to pour in from the members of the community, to the tune of over \$16,000 so far. I would like to commend the people of Alberta for helping those in need, especially in these economic times. I also commend His Honour Mayor Omer Moghrabi and the county council for their immediate action in supporting their community.

I was not surprised at all to hear that this wonderful community and people from around Alberta stepped forward to help out their fellow men and women in crisis. I was, unfortunately, very surprised and dismayed to hear that Alberta Human Services chose this time to seek cost savings by ignoring the temporary foreign workers who also lived in the building. These people are now displaced because it is apparently not the provincial government's problem. What a terrible message this sends to those dedicated workers already removed from their families and homelands and who are trying to build a life here in Alberta. Luckily, Albertans' compassion and sense of responsibility for each other is stronger and more forthcoming than this government's bureaucrats.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and minister responsible for democratic renewal.

Bill 4 An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services

Ms Gray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and introduce Bill 4, An Act to Implement a Supreme Court Ruling Governing Essential Services.

This bill acknowledges many unionized public-sector workers' right to strike while also protecting Albertans' access to essential public services. The legislation modernizes Alberta's labour laws to reflect decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta. Both courts ruled last year that public-sector workers have the right to strike. As a result, Alberta's Public Service Employee Relations Act and the Labour Relations Code must be changed to lift the prohibition on strikes and lockouts. If passed, Mr. Speaker, Alberta's essential services legislation would be similar to the laws in other provinces. This legislation is fair to unionized employees, employers, and the general public, ensuring access to essential services in the event of a labour dispute.

As a final note, thank you to all in the gallery who contributed to this legislation.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 4 read a first time]

Tabling Returns and Reports

The Speaker: The Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster.

Dr. Starke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I'd like to table the requisite number of copies of a report entitled Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Recall Process in British Columbia, dated November 2003, which I referenced during the course of debate on Bill 201 yesterday.

Ms Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I rise with two tablings this afternoon. One is the *Canada Gazette* from August 30, 2012, and the other is clippings from Capital Power and AltaLink, both of which make the case for the phase-out of coal-fired electricity undertaken between 2016, now, and 2030.

Orders of the Day

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

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

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

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

[Debate adjourned March 10: Mr. Coolahan speaking]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Klein.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to continue my response to the throne speech. This government is taking an approach to the economy that encourages investment not only through incentives but through the fact that we are working to ensure that we have the best standards; the best workforce; the best infrastructure such as roads, hospitals, and schools; great access to capital; and, yes, competitive tax and royalty structures. We will

ensure that those who are struggling do have access to the services they need, services that can help to raise standards rather than services that keep people in the same place.

In addition to this government's pragmatic management of the budget during these lean times, I am proud, Mr. Speaker, that this government does not find social issues stale and understands that this province's legislation needs to move forward on making Alberta equal for all. Last session's Bill 7 immediately comes to mind, legislation that added gender identity and gender expression to Alberta's Human Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also extremely pleased and proud that we will introduce the Alberta child benefit, that will see Alberta's low-income families with two children receive an additional \$3,000 a year. This is the type of policy that not only helps families on a day-to-day basis, but it helps to level the playing field. This is also the type of policy that anticipates changes to the energy sector that may impact the price of utilities in the short term.

I'm also proud that this government has moved to ensure that the LGBTQ children will feel safe in their schools and that the school boards are moving to ensure the same.

Mr. Speaker, as noted in the throne speech, this government is moving towards ending the poverty-inducing cycle of payday loans in this province, and we'll be looking at ways to ensure that small loans can be given out without families going into further debt.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Albertans need a government that puts the interests of all Albertans at the forefront of its policies and its responsibilities. We need a government that removes the tunnel vision and sees the diversity of people that live in our great communities and the diversity of challenges that we all have. The Lieutenant Governor has reinforced that this government is, in fact, the government that understands Alberta's current and future economic needs. It is also the government that understands the need to ensure that the economy works for everyone.

Thank you.

2:50

The Speaker: Hon. members, are there any other members who'd like to speak to this matter under 29(2)(a)? The Member for Stony Plain.

Ms Babcock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to say thank you very much to the Member for Calgary-Klein for his insightful and informative response to the throne speech. I was wondering if he could tell us more about the importance of government putting money into infrastructure in his area.

Mr. Coolahan: Sure.

The Speaker: Proceed.

Mr. Coolahan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member for the question. Well, infrastructure dollars are very important to the province and people in my constituency. Firstly, we simply have an infrastructure deficit in this province. We have crumbling roads, crumbling bridges. We need to update schools. We need new schools. We need to update hospitals. We need to ensure that people move through our communities, communities like mine, in an efficient manner as a means to get to work every day.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Not only that, Madam Speaker, but the infrastructure projects and the money that we're putting forward will help put Albertans back to work while we work on getting pipelines built and getting our oil to tidewater and to new sources. Last but not least – and I think this is what we need to remember – is that when we have first-class

infrastructure in our province, that helps attract investment. It helps attract head offices for corporations. These businesses want to know that when they move here, their employees can get to work on time and their children will go to safe schools and they will have the hospitals that they can send their children to.

That's all. Thank you so much for the question.

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

Seeing none, do I have another speaker on this? The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is truly my pleasure to speak today in response to the Speech from the Throne delivered by Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, Lois Mitchell. It is a privilege to congratulate her on her appointment as our Queen's representative in Alberta. As I watched the installation of Her Majesty's Lieutenant Governor last year, I couldn't help but reflect upon the traditions that have shaped not only Alberta and Canada but also the Commonwealth nations and much of the world's responsible democratic governments, traditions that go back 800 years to the Magna Carta, that today define us and give us a shared purpose in governing this great province of Alberta with pride, the use of the Westminster parliamentary style of government.

I am blessed to be part of this Legislature, these halls that have now seen many great men and women that have preceded us, people like Alexander Rutherford, Alberta's first Premier; or the Famous Five women – Emily Murphy, Irene Parlby, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, and Henrietta Muir Edwards – who asked the question: does the word “persons” in section 24 of the BNA Act include women? Thereby, these five women ensured that all women had the legal – the word “legal” meant that women were indeed persons and had the right to vote. By looking at how many female representatives we have in the House, we sure have come a long way since that question was first asked.

One other person of interest to me that I want to talk about is Anthony Henday. Everybody here seems to know Anthony Henday as the drive that goes around Edmonton, and that's the name of the drive that they understand. But Henday is actually credited as the first European to enter Alberta, arriving in the area that was to become the town of Chauvin in my riding of Battle River-Wainwright. So, Madam Speaker, I am very honoured that the constituents of Battle River-Wainwright graced me with one of the greatest privileges and chose me to be their representative to bring the issues and problems to the Legislature. I would like to thank the constituents of Battle River-Wainwright for supporting me and giving me the honour to serve them.

Since the provincial election on May 5 I've been very, very busy throughout my constituency and have had the pleasure of meeting many of the constituents first-hand and hearing their concerns and taking comfort in their triumphs. But I've also despaired with their challenges. I promise I will do my very best for the constituents of Battle River-Wainwright.

I'm a proud Albertan and have called Battle River-Wainwright my home for over 35 years. I have deep roots in the riding, both personal and through business ventures, and I have raised my family of five here. We consider ourselves blessed to be part of the community, replete with good people and abundant resources.

I believe that this riding and its people have played a significant role in the economic and the historical prosperity of our province. Battle River-Wainwright is a large rural riding, almost 17,500 square kilometres in size. There are 24 municipalities, nine hamlets, four counties, and two municipal districts. Its population

is approximately 38,000 people, predominantly involved in Alberta's two biggest economic drivers, agriculture and oil. Agriculture occupies about 16 per cent of the workforce while a further 11 per cent operate in the energy industry.

At Hardisty there's a large petroleum tank farm that is the nexus of pipelines. I had the privilege over this summer to visit both Gibson's and Enbridge, and I have to say that I was most impressed with the cleanliness and the organization and care that they have for the work and the environment. It was truly impressive.

Another interesting town for me in my constituency is Forestburg. It is a strong, vibrant town of approximately 880 people which has a vital agricultural and coal mining background. Westmoreland Coal and ATCO Power are the main employers there. Unfortunately, this government wants to accelerate the phasing out of coal-fired electrical generation without a clear plan to help with that transition. This town and towns like Forestburg are afraid for their economy. Consequently, I fear for this town's future, too, but I will continue to work for the municipality to find ways and means to keep this town vibrant.

At the AUMA convention this fall I was able to meet with many of the town councils, and in my riding a common theme came from them. They wanted to see stable, predictable, transparent funding for the municipalities through the MSI grant. Now they've been concerned about any changes to the linear taxation structure. They, however, particularly liked the Wildrose's 10-10 MSI plan. They told me that funding of this nature would help them to remain strong and viable.

Towns in my riding include Alliance, Amisk, Bashaw, Bawlf, Chauvin, Czar, Daysland, Edberg, Edgerton, Ferintosh, Forestburg, Hardisty, Hay Lakes, Heisler, Holden, Hughenden, Irma, Killam, Loughheed, Provost, Rosalind, Ryley, Sedgewick, and Wainwright, my home.

There are two other towns in my constituency that I want to talk about, Strome and Galahad. They have chosen dissolution and have ceded their governance to the county of Flagstaff. There are other towns that are considering this option at this time, too. I believe that we as legislators need to tread carefully and look closely at programs that support rural towns as the heart of Alberta is still in rural Alberta.

Madam Speaker, I have a unique community within my constituency, Denwood. This is a Canadian Forces base in Wainwright. Last year they celebrated the 75th anniversary of the base. Denwood is home to approximately 500 full-time service personnel and their families, who bring a welcome boost to the local economy both as customers and as workers. During training exercises this population can expand up to 10,000 personnel, and there are many services provided both on and off the base to support these families. These military families bring a wonderful richness of national and international experience to the Wainwright region and have helped make Wainwright a vibrant community.

CFB Wainwright, Madam Speaker, is one of the busiest training bases in all of Canada, being home to two major training organizations, the 3rd Canadian Division Training Centre and the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre, or CMTC. Training exercises for both the Canadian and multinational forces take place in the area, adding a touch of colour and excitement. Of course, these exercises are not without dangers. During recent exercises 17 personnel were injured in a live training exercise over a weekend.

3:00

Madam Speaker, there are issues that pose challenges to all communities in my riding. Infrastructure is a concern, particularly the roads, the Wainwright hospital, the school in Irma, and facilities for seniors. Roads are not being maintained to an acceptable level

in many places. Highway 14 east of Wainwright has seen better days and is now starting to break apart in many places. The hospital in Wainwright is in desperate need of replacement. In fact, there have been many studies that have shown major deficiencies in the hospital such as size and crumbling infrastructure. In fact, the previous government had placed the Wainwright hospital at number two on the priority list. The hospital is widely overused, and there is no weekend medical coverage on the base. In the event of an emergency the Wainwright hospital is often the only available option for base personnel and the residents of Denwood and the surrounding Wainwright area.

Facilities for seniors are, in too many instances, substandard and failing. With our aging population it would be responsible for us to ensure that there are proper facilities for our seniors.

The school in Irma has been a great school for many years, but now it's 65 years old, and I'd say that it's time to look for retirement of the school and have a new, fully functional school that meets the needs of the town now and for many years to come.

I hope to continue to provide a strong voice for our constituency this session to address these and other concerns.

Madam Speaker, I would be remiss in telling you about this great part of Alberta that makes up Battle River-Wainwright without specifically thanking two beautiful ladies in my life, my wife, Eileen, and my daughter Ashley. Ashley is working on her fifth year of university for a bachelor of education degree, and she'll be finished in about three weeks. Eileen is tireless in her support for me in my new career as an MLA. These two women helped, and they worked tirelessly throughout the campaign, helping me to knock on doors, driving me from town to town, putting up signs, setting up the campaign office. The list goes on. They continue to support me as we go into this session.

I'd also like to thank my son Matthew and his wife, Rebecca; my oldest daughter, Chantel; and her husband, Nathan. They have been an inspiration in my life and mean everything to me.

I've been truly blessed with a family and would like to leave them with a government and an Alberta that will make Alberta prosperous for generations to come. On that personal note, I will close with the same words that Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor used in her Speech from the Throne: God bless Alberta, God bless Canada, and God save the Queen.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake.

Mr. Cyr: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the member. In my own riding we have the Cold Lake air force base, which brings a ton of stability during this economic hard times. I would like to know: does he have the same kind of stability within his riding with the base that he has?

Mr. Taylor: Thank you for that question. Yes. I'd be happy to address that question. Wainwright is absolutely one of the strong economic drivers in our town. It's there. The people are being posted in and out, but there's a large contingency of people. Denwood had 500 people in it, but we have at least that many, if not more, that live right in the town itself. The people that are hired as a result of the base: that's numerous people here, too. Towns such as Irma, Edgerton: people from the base go to those towns as well. The riding is well supported by the military base. They're a blessing to have.

Sometimes it's a challenge when they're doing their exercises. You can certainly tell when they're going on because the walls and the doors and the windows can literally shake when the bombs are

being dropped. It sounds like somebody is actually pounding on your door, so you go up to the door and you try to open up the door to see who's there. Nobody is there. But if you listen outside, you can hear the base going boom, boom, boom. Often you can see the light in the sky where the bombs are being dropped. It's quite an exciting town, and it's really a boost to our economy.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other questions or comments?

Seeing none, I will call on the hon. minister of environment.

Ms Phillips: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to deliver my maiden speech as the Member for Lethbridge-West. I want to use the occasion to pay tribute to my community, and I hope to do them justice both in this speech and in the discharge of my duties as their elected representative.

Lethbridge-West sits in the heart of Treaty 7, a treaty between the Blackfoot and the Crown signed by Chief Crowfoot in 1877. The descendants of the people who signed Treaty 7 live in my city just as they do throughout the Canadian and American plains and foothills as members of the Piikani and Kainai mainly, of the Blackfoot Confederacy.

My city is bordered by Canada's largest reserve lands, the lands given to the Kainai people and the Piikani reserve, home to some of the most beautiful riparian landscapes in the Oldman River valley. Blackfoot people tell us stories of the abundance of the foothills and plains, the great herds of buffalo now disappeared from the landscape, their presence still held in the ecosystem by the flattened earth, the medicinal shrubs, the rich native prairie and soil.

Madam Speaker, the worst of Canada's colonial history was played out in Treaty 7 territory. Smallpox and the extirpation of the bison herds robbed the people of their economy. Residential schools stole from parents the right to time and teaching of their children, stole dignity from the children and subsequent generations, and robbed the whole people of their language, spirituality, foods, medicines, and stories.

The last great battle between Canadian indigenous peoples took place in the middle of Lethbridge-West, literally in the heart of my community. Its very centre is the spot in the Oldman River valley where the Blackfoot and Cree clashed for the last time, in 1870. It is called the Battle of Belly River in the history books because the white settlers renamed the river the Oldman some years later. The term "Belly River," as the story goes, was too risqué for Victorian sensibilities. The battle was about the Cree's view that the Blackfoot had been sufficiently decimated by smallpox to lose an invasion. The river ran red with the blood of the Cree, as the stories go, and while the Blackfoot elders now smile wryly at the recollection of that battle or its stories, this is still a gentle reminder for all of us that the people are fierce, they are tough, and there are lines one does not cross.

Madam Speaker, the sun dance has never stopped in southern Alberta, the ceremonies, the centre of spiritual life for the Blackfoot people. Sun dance had to go underground during the most vicious generations of white settler colonialism, but today it thrives in Kainai and now Siksika.

Time is an enormous, long river, and I stand in it just as my indigenous sisters and brothers stand in it. Our work is now, after a great, destructive flood of historical events, to move the stones back into place, to remove the deadfall of history but set it aside and, in its place, as a reminder of what we have done and seen, repair the river together. We are all treaty people.

On the west bank of the Oldman River, a short jog up a steep coulee from the scene of the last great battle, sits one of North America's finest art collections, tucked away in vaults at the

University of Lethbridge. This is something that not everyone knows or appreciates. In the middle of my riding there are Picassos, Matisse, Group of Seven, Warhol, de Grandmaison. One of North America's most impressive collections of art was built in the 1980s by the art department at the University of Lethbridge, where Billy McCarroll and others cleverly leveraged a Lougheed-era arts policy to build one of the best collections anywhere. Those province-building initiatives, deployed through the heritage fund and an activist government in the early 1980s, reverberate until this day. It is my hope that we can as a government get back to this ethic of building a common heritage via an inclusive and proactive approach to the arts.

The Lethbridge arts community is not just locked up in a vault. It spills out to one of the best things about our city and is a major contributor to artistic inquiry and endeavour for the province. In my small city you will find musicians like Leeroy Stagger and Dave McCann, queer theatre and cabaret at Theatre Outré, a symphony, the New West Theatre, a pride festival and parade, independent artist studios, spoken word, zines, and a comic book, Eric Dyck's *Slaughterhouse Slough*, dedicated to the history and the present of the city. The Allied Arts Council, admirably steered by Suzanne Lint, supports many of these initiatives and ensures that the whole community has access to the arts via Casa, the community arts centre that anchors the downtown of my riding.

3:10

The city of Lethbridge has also been home to generations of immigrants. We have been at the centre of some of the defining moments of the 20th century. In World War II, after forcible confiscation of their property, Japanese-Canadians were relocated to southern Alberta to forced work on the sugar beet plantations just outside my city. After the war many of those families ended up staying. This is why, Madam Speaker, Lethbridge is home to a Japanese-Canadian population that owns businesses, has become judges and elected officials, and has contributed to all of Canada's understanding of displacement, racism, and the value of immigration.

Joy Kogawa, who grew up in Lethbridge, is one of Canada's most recognized authors. In *Obasan*, her award-winning novel, she says:

Where do any of us come from in this cold country? Oh Canada, whether you admitted it or not, we come from you . . . We grow where we are not seen, we flourish where we are not heard . . . We come from cemeteries full of skeletons with wild roses in their grinning teeth. We come from our untold tales that wait for their telling.

Madam Speaker, my city has also become a national leader in welcoming Syrian refugees just as we have welcomed immigrants from all around the world – from Italy, Hungary, the Americas, Asia, and the Arab world – for a century. Lethbridge was even featured in international news coverage. We have contributed very significantly through public and private sponsorship of Syrian refugees. To those refugees I say: [Remarks in Arabic] Welcome to Lethbridge.

Lethbridge is also home to a vibrant Franco-Albertan community. The community centre, la Cité des prairies, is the cultural hub that celebrates the fact that we are a bilingual society. I am proud that my own children attend the francophone school La Verendrye, and I commend the school and the staff at la Cité as well as their board for building a community where all francophone heritage in all its global diversity is celebrated and woven into how we understand what it means to be at home in Canada.

Madam Speaker, Lethbridge-West encompasses the downtown. It encompasses the north end, with established communities, and, of course, the west side. The west side is growing, with new housing

starts among the leaders in the province. The growth of the city of Lethbridge is an object lesson in diversification of the economy. The community is home to value-added and agricultural processing. It is home to manufacturing: steel, aerospace, oil and gas components. We have a tremendous renewable energy potential. Lethbridge is home to a growing technology centre – the tecconnect centre is a project of Economic Development Lethbridge – geospatial mapping, and new physics endeavours.

The riding also acts as a public services hub, Madam Speaker, for the region. This is important as our government's approach to stable funding for public services has ensured that our small-business sector continues to thrive. This is why you see collaboration between the public and private sectors in Lethbridge in ways that you may not see in other regions. In all this, Economic Development Lethbridge plays a key role, and Trevor Lewington and his whole team deserve recognition for their creative problem solving and commitment to diversification.

On that topic, I would like to pay tribute to some of the most progressive and forward-looking small businesses in Lethbridge-West. My friends Erica Joosse at Plum restaurant, Lorelee and Paul Edwards at Drunken Sailor clothing shop, and Kyle Baynes at Andrew Hilton fine liquor all merit a shout-out for how they support our community, how they embrace paying a living wage to their workers, and how they have faith in our city as a place where diversity can take root and grow. All of the downtown businesses in Lethbridge are supported by the Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone, which is ably and progressively steered by Ted Stilson and his wonderful staff, including my Deathbridge Derby Dames teammate and friend Melissa Johnson.

We have a history of strong women in southern Alberta, Madam Speaker. I am only the fifth or fourth woman, depending on when Maria Fitzpatrick was declared the winner, to ever be elected south of Calgary. The first was Louise McKinney in Claresholm in 1914, one of the Famous Five. The second was Edith Thurston in 1944. The third was Bridget Pastoor in 2008. Numbers four and five did not come until 2015. There has still never been an indigenous person, a new Canadian, a person of colour, or an LGBTQ person represented in our Legislature from south of Calgary. There is much work left to be done.

Lethbridge is home also to a significant labour history. It was the epicentre of the coal mining communities which were, of course, the first boom that powered this province. Lethbridge was the place where the first industrial disputes resolution act was written by Mackenzie King before he was Prime Minister and was the place where the first occupational health and safety rules were developed in response to the Hillcrest mine disaster in 1914, which killed 166 people. That project of occupational health and safety finally saw its full implementation in Alberta in December 2015, Madam Speaker, when OHS was extended to all paid workers in the province. The Alberta Federation of Labour was founded in Lethbridge in 1913. I was proud to assist with the centennial celebrations when I worked for the AFL with the leadership of Nancy Furlong, Gil McGowan, and Siobhán Vipond.

Madam Speaker, a few words on what brought me here and what sustains us all. I am a mom to two boys. Finn is seven; Hudson is five. They are beautiful and smart and hilarious. They don't always love mom's new job. I don't blame them. I'm away a lot, and that's why I carefully guard the time that I do have. But many Alberta kids grow up with a parent who works out of town. I know I did.

My dad was an electrician, who worked on oil rigs. He was gone a lot. But in the early 1980s, in economic conditions not unlike these ones, with a prolonged drop in the price of oil, my dad lost his job. My mom went back to work as a teacher. If Peter Lougheed had pursued policies of dramatically cutting health care and education

in response, my family would have been left with nothing. I think about that a lot.

My dad taught my sister and me that we could do anything we want. He used to say: you can be an electrician if you want. That was a radical thing to say in the 1970s to a little girl. My mom is a strong woman in and of herself and will never ever leave you wondering where she stands. But my mom is still here to speak for herself, and my dad is not, so let me share a little bit about him.

My dad had an inborn intellectual curiosity that did not come from a university; it came from who he was. He was monumentally impatient with inequality. He loathed overt displays of wealth or opulence. He loved to fix anything he could and reuse it and think creatively about all the stuff that piled up in his Quonset. He used to say that you can learn anything you like in a school, but you must also learn, above all, how to work.

My dad did not live long enough to see me get elected, though I think he would not have been surprised. Sometimes I look up in the gallery and wish he was sitting there. I think about how he would have been here to watch this speech, to watch question period. I think of him also in his market gardening role. After my dad retired from the oil patch, he ran himself a little strawberry and vegetable market garden along with a million other things my parents were doing. Dad used to talk to me all the time about how the weather was changing, how the availability of water was changing. Ross Phillips, you were ahead of your time. You knew things in your bones that the rest of us need a book to learn.

Madam Speaker, I found the compassion and empathy that I learned from my parents in my party as an adult. I found it in those I worked for, Raj Pannu, who officiated my wedding, and Brian Mason, who, when I delivered my father's eulogy and looked out, there he was. I found it in the incessant hard work of Jack Layton, who was an early inspiration. I found the impatience with inequality in my friend Niki Ashton.

Madam Speaker, when I and a small group of dedicated New Democrats began knocking on doors in 2011, I did not expect to sit in government; I expected to serve the people of Lethbridge-West. I would like to thank Dave McCaffrey and Melanie Decillia for going out with me on that first day in September 2011 after I won the nomination and for so many days since. My entire riding association makes sure I have the right supports to do this job, but none more so than my good friend Keith McLaughlin, who once pledged to me that he would knock on every door between 13th Street and Copperwood, and he's made good on his word.

I'd also like to recognize the hard work of New Democrats over the years in this area. Over the years Gordon and Sylvia Campbell kept this ship moving and founded the Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs. Others – Marshall and Angie Jaremco, Tad Mitsui, Mark Sandilands, Leona Jacobs, and Muriel Mellow – are giants on whose shoulders I stand.

Madam Speaker, it is my honour to stand in this House and enjoy the privileges of service in the public interest and the trust afforded to me as a parliamentarian. It is indeed the culmination of my adult life's work, and I think that you will agree that the community that sent me here deserves all of my effort to ensure careful and thoughtful consideration of the pressing matters before us. The people of Lethbridge-West have asked for a legislative program that is inclusive, that works toward equality, where justice is our guide, where everyone has access to personal liberty and expression, to a responsible relationship with the planet and our place in natural ecosystems.

With that, Madam Speaker, I will take my share of the work for the people of Lethbridge-West.

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

Ms Fitzpatrick: First of all, Minister, thank you. You said one time that I was way more effusive than you were in describing our community. You've learned, and I'm very happy that you did. I've just received an e-mail a few minutes ago from GREENSENCE about a meeting this week. So I'd like you to tell me a little more about the environmental ethic and activism in Lethbridge because I know you're part of it.

3:20

Ms Phillips: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, there are, of course, a number of organizations and initiatives under way in southern Alberta with respect to renewable energy and also broader sustainability initiatives within the city. We have Environment Lethbridge, which has just begun its storefront operations along with the Oldman Watershed Council to work with citizens on matters related to distributed generation, on matters related to composting, recycling, and general environmental outreach within the city. I commend those efforts, and I congratulate them on the opening of their storefront facility with the Oldman Watershed Council.

On that topic the OWC has also been a leader in the community on headwaters protection and putting that question front and centre for all of the citizens of southern Alberta, protecting habitat and protecting the headwaters for the Oldman River. That was one of the reasons, Madam Speaker, that there was a community-wide consensus that we needed to do more to protect the headwaters of the Oldman River, because it does feed the entire city of Lethbridge and is our drinking water source, and that is why we followed the lead and the call of those in the community throughout southwest Alberta, but in particular in Lethbridge, in establishing the parks in the Castle southwest Alberta region.

So you will find a great deal of engagement on environmental matters. There are environmental days in June as well, a celebration in Galt Gardens, and a number of other initiatives that our city undertakes.

I would be remiss if I didn't discuss as well, Madam Speaker, the wind turbine tech program at Lethbridge College. Some years ago Lethbridge College took leadership with respect to apprenticeship and training programs for those who were looking for employment in the expanding wind energy sector in southern Alberta. They have a very sophisticated program in which one obtains their first-year electrician certificate as well as a turbine tech certificate. We look forward to working with them on expanding those efforts as we welcome the billions of dollars of investment that are going to be coming to Alberta with respect to renewable energy, not just in southern Alberta, which, I may add, is the best solar resource and one of the best wind resources in North America, but also across the province.

There are a number of ways in which renewables has become a business in southern Alberta, Madam Speaker, and we're very proud of that. It's just another in a long list of stories that we can tell out of Lethbridge-West about diversification and making for a resilient, sustainable economy.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to commend the member for her speech. In her speech she mentioned her father fixing things and putting his mind to, you know, putting things together and making things better. I think the member herself has exemplified those qualities that she mentioned in her father in doing things like fixing the environment, fixing our watersheds, making sure that we have clean air and water for our future generations with the climate change leadership plan that she has created along with

a strong team that she has assembled. I wonder if the member might want to speak a little bit more about how important it is to her to have run and put in all the strong work that she has done, and now one of the first things that she has done is created this excellent climate leadership plan.

Ms Phillips: Well, Madam Speaker, I don't have long, so what I will say is that, you know, the approach that we took for the climate leadership plan was one of broad consultation and involvement of all industrial sectors in the province, looking at where our strengths are and looking at what we can build on and what we can improve, and that's exactly what we did. That's why so many groups have endorsed the plan, from the environmental organizations to industry. And it's not just the oil sands industry, although they do support the plan, but the cement industry, petrochemicals, and others have concluded that it is a balanced approach.

The Deputy Speaker: The next speaker on my list that I'll call on is the hon. Minister of Culture and Tourism.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today so that I may share my maiden speech in response to the Speech from the Throne. I begin by acknowledging the indigenous people of this land, specifically the people of Treaty 7, on whose land my constituency of Calgary-Cross now stands. I want to give the most earnest and heartfelt thanks to the people of Calgary-Cross, who trusted me to be their voice in the Legislature. I strive hard every day to continue to deserve the faith that they have placed in me.

It is with sincere gratitude that I thank the residents of Calgary-Cross for turning what was supposed to be a safe seat into an election. My constituents continue to tell me that health care, education, job creation, and the overall economy are of major concern in Calgary-Cross and to Albertans across the province. I am proud to say that these are issues that the government is focused on, and I am happy to be the voice of Calgary-Cross on these matters.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about myself and my journey here, my early life as an Albertan as well as my hopes and aspirations for the future. I am going to touch on a variety of issues such as immigration, women's issues, diversity, and equality. Alberta is a large, vast, and diverse province. The people of this province come from different beginnings and backgrounds. They speak different languages and have unique customs. I believe I share a lot of these traits, and I believe all of them should be shared with you today.

Madam Speaker, I came to this country in 1988 as a refugee from Nicaragua. Like so many other Albertans who started their journey elsewhere, I made my home in this beautiful province for the last 28 years. The majority of my family left Nicaragua when the civil war tore apart our country. Ultimately, our search for a better life led us here. We were looking for a better home, a safer home, a welcoming home. We found it in Alberta, Canada, in northeast Calgary, to be precise.

Northeast Calgary has been my haven ever since. Even as work took me away for short periods of time, northeast Calgary has always and will always be my home. My love for my home, for Calgary-Cross, and for Alberta runs very deep. As a flight attendant I travelled the world. I went to many countries, visited many, many places, yet always I longed for home. At the end of the trip home was Calgary-Cross.

As I mentioned, upon my family's arrival in Calgary we moved all over the northeast. In fact, I have managed now to have lived in every single community that makes up Calgary-Cross: Pineridge, Whitehorn, Rundle, Temple, and Vista Heights. The majority of my

experiences in the province were extremely positive. My family was welcomed and treated well. I made a lot of friends growing up, attending high school and graduating from Father Lacombe. I enjoyed many things I would not have had the opportunity to experience had my family not moved to Canada.

That being said, like many visible minorities, I fought through some adversity. When I was 17, about to graduate from high school, I was offered a full-time job at a local business I had been working at. I was advised to take the job; otherwise, I was told that I would likely end up in a gang and then prison. I did not take the job, and given where I stand today, I think it turned out to be okay. Instead of taking that job, I pursued my education. I graduated with a bachelor of arts in the humanities from the University of Calgary. I am proud of the education I received in this province, and I am proud of the opportunities it afforded me.

During my time as a flight attendant I became a union president and then a national union representative. It was my time with the union that cemented my drive and my passion for representing the collective. Giving a voice to the people is a wonderful job and not something that I take lightly. I eventually realized I wanted to keep representing my fellow Albertans but on a larger scale. The NDP is the party that I felt best gave me an opportunity to speak and support the people of this province.

3:30

I am a visible minority, I am an immigrant, I am a member of the LGBTQ community, and I am the Minister of Culture and Tourism. What a truly beautiful indication of the change in diversity that Alberta is currently undergoing. Last week we saw International Women's Day being recognized here at the Legislature. During the proceedings that day we celebrated with a female Premier and a mother and her baby. In last year's election four generations of women in my family voted for me: my grandmother, my mother, my sister, and my daughter. It is a miraculous thing. I would also like to thank my daughter who, upon turning 18, voted for the first time and was my campaign manager.

This province has made giant strides. We are witnesses to the true progress that has been made and continues to be made in Alberta. However, we still have a long way to go. Whether it is with gender equality, racial equality, or acceptance and inclusion of the LGBTQ community, we have barely scratched the surface of what we are actually capable of.

In closing, this province is a reflection of a collective, a large group of hard-working, innovative, and hopeful individuals living and thriving together. Given that we are the sum of all of our parts, I am genuinely excited for the future of this province. Thank you again, Calgary-Cross, for trusting me. Thank you to all Albertans for trusting this government.

We have many ethnic groups. We embrace many different cultures, traditions, and languages. Alberta is a richly linguistic province, and I want each and every Albertan to know that I am proud to serve you.

[Remarks in Spanish] I am proud to address this Chamber in the Castilian language. [As submitted]

J'ai aussi le plaisir de me diriger vers vous en français, me donnant l'occasion de parler aux Franco-Albertains dans notre province. [Translation] I also have the pleasure of speaking to you in French and speak to the Franco-Albertans in this province. [As submitted]

[Remarks in Portuguese] Also, to give you thanks to all the Portuguese speakers in Calgary. [As submitted]

[Remarks in Italian] Including, as well, the Italian speakers. [As submitted]

Gracias. Merci. Muito obrigado. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-McClung under 29(2)(a).

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to thank the hon. member for his insightful story and speech. I would remind all of us that in 1988 we were enjoying the Calgary Winter Olympics and the hon. minister was going through a rather different time and stage in his life, coming to this country as a refugee from civil war torn Nicaragua with his family to establish themselves in another part of the world, another climate, another language, many of which he has mastered better than most of us, becoming a graduate of the University of Calgary with a bachelor of arts, a union president, a member of a visible minority, an immigrant, a member of the LGBTQ community, a father of a daughter. What a story.

I'd like to hear a little bit more, though, about the experience of coming from another country to Canada, to Alberta to engage in this fantastic journey that you've just hit the high spot in telling us about. I've got nothing but the highest degree of respect and admiration for people who do make the decision to immigrate or flee to immigrate to another part of the world to better their lives for themselves and their families. I'd like to hear a bit more about what it was like and at what age you came. I think about seven?

Thank you.

Miranda: Thank you, hon. member. I was a little bit older than that, but there was pretty much nothing that would have allowed somebody to ever forget what it's like to have bombs dropped around you or have people shooting at you, trying to kill you for no reason. But even though all those things happened in my life, I remember how grateful and how much at peace we were when we finally reached this place.

In a small turn of events, I guess you can say, upon landing at the Calgary airport – we came very late at night, and there was no place for us to go because the immigration officers were not ready – they put us in an office at the Calgary airport, the same office which many, many years later became my union office when I was elected as president. You know, it tells you that people come to this province, people come to this country with lots of hope and with lots of things that have happened in the past but with a desire to contribute to society and be part of our society and do things that are positive for our fellow citizens.

I have had the opportunity on many occasions to continue that tradition in my family, who have always been very much empowered by a sense of community and a sense of obligation to our fellow citizens, to give back to this beautiful country, that has given us so much. Now being an elected official and to be able to do it in a different capacity has been truly, well, the most amazing experience of my life until now. I don't think there's anything that will ever top that.

Thank you.

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

Dr. Starke: Under 29(2)(a)?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Starke: Madam Speaker, I'd like to certainly thank the Member for Calgary-Cross, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, for his comments. It is an incredible story and one that is constantly inspiring to me as a native Albertan, to hear the stories of people who have come to this province for greater opportunity. I'm very impressed with this, a little disappointed that there's no German. But, hey, it's all good. We can swap. You can teach me some Spanish.

I would like to ask one question. In your role as the minister of tourism, specifically, linguistic ability is a huge asset, a massive asset in terms of reaching out to key tourism markets that, you know, visit Alberta. Specifically, I would say our Latin American market and our market in Brazil, Argentina, and especially Mexico now that visa requirements have been relaxed. I just am curious to know: have you had opportunity yet in your early days in this ministry to, shall we say, parlay your linguistic abilities into something that will increase visitation from those markets to Alberta?

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister.

Miranda: Thank you, Madam Speaker. [Remarks in German]

Yes, I've had the opportunity to speak. We actually had the corps of diplomats. We had the opportunity to actually meet with some of them and talk to them, especially the ones from Brazil, specifically. Absolutely, there's so much opportunity.

One of the reasons why we've learned that . . .

The Deputy Speaker: I'll call on the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Loyola: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As one of several new members in this House it is an honour for me to rise and address the other members of this Chamber and the people of Alberta by way of my maiden speech. Before I begin, though, I would like to extend my congratulations, although considerably belated, to all the members of this House for being elected to represent the people of their electoral districts.

Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by sharing a little bit about my family's history as it's quite unique compared to most in the House, with the exception of the Member for Calgary-Cross. My family came to Canada from Chile, fleeing violence, as many other Chileans, after the September 11, 1973, military coup. My father came to Canada in March of 1976, and my mother, older brother, and I joined him, arriving on Canada Day, July 1, of that same year.

When we first arrived in Edmonton, we lived in the Westmount neighbourhood. From the beginning of my parents' stay in Canada they worked extremely hard to provide for my brother and I as they worked diligently in positions in which they were underemployed. Their credentials and qualifications were not recognized here in Canada, a challenge that many new Canadians continue to face here in our province to this day.

My parents eventually decided that they wanted to stay in Canada and were determined to purchase a property of their own that we could call home. We packed our limited belongings and headed to the newly developed area of Mill Woods and moved close to a Chilean housing co-operative named after Salvador Allende, Chile's first democratically elected socialist president. It was there in Mill Woods that we felt supported by other diasporic Chileans, Canadians, and other new Canadians to this province.

3:40

As many other new Canadians, my parents worked multiple jobs. They worked 9 to 5 during the day and then did a number of janitorial contracts during the evening. For 17 years my parents worked day and night to make ends meet and make sure that my brothers and I would go without need. Some evenings they would come home tired around 11 p.m. only to prepare for their job the next day. When old enough, I began to join them so that I might also do my part to support the family. It is these humble beginnings from which I came, an experience I share with many other new Canadians from the electoral district of Edmonton-Ellerslie.

As some may know, southeast Edmonton has a high demographic of new Canadians. Many immigrants and permanent residents continue to move into the district to build their homes for them and their loved ones. The area truly is a cultural mosaic of many different ethnicities, predominantly South Asians, those from the Caribbean, Latin Americans, the Philippines, and the more recent from the Middle East and northern Africa, specifically Somalia and Eritrea. Indeed, we must have people from all over the world that call the electoral district of Edmonton-Ellerslie their home.

As we all recognize, all Canadians immigrated to this land. Before it was settled, Edmonton-Ellerslie was part of Indian reserve No. 136, now recognized as Papaschase territory. I'm happy to say that Chief Calvin Bruneau, chief of the Papaschase, and I have become brothers through our common work in the community, which was solidified by our participation in the Idle No More cultural movement focused on engaging all treaty people to learn about our common history and to find a path forward in the traditions of the First Nations people. This occurred at the same time that as a nation we engaged in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which identified for us calls to action to correct the injustices of the past committed against our indigenous sisters and brothers.

For this reason, I'm excited that this government and specifically Premier Notley offered an apology for the residential schools and advocated that there be a national inquiry into the more than 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women in this nation. I'm excited that she also called on each ministry to implement how they may implement the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples as well as the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This session the Alberta NDP government will be repealing Bill 22 as well as consulting with indigenous communities regarding sacred ceremonial objects and how they may be repatriated to the Nations to whom they belong. It is important that new Canadians learn about the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of this land and the obligations of treaties 6, 7, and 8 as we move forward to build a stronger province which celebrates diversity, pluralism, and inclusion.

Now, I've spoken at great length about new Canadians. However, it should not be misconstrued. I am here to serve each and every constituent of Edmonton-Ellerslie, no matter their race, colour, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or any other status. This is a principle upon which I will never falter as it is my duty to do so as part of our free and democratic society.

Edmonton-Ellerslie is home to many young families. It is common to see children accompanied by their parents playing in the many playgrounds throughout the constituency. Whether when I was door-knocking in 2012 as a candidate or when I continue to door-knock in the constituency to this day, child care continues to be a top priority for the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie. I'm eager to help usher in change through the new Ministry of Status of Women, providing Albertans with access to quality and affordable child care in a financially responsible way.

I also hear from constituents that education is an important priority for them. Edmonton-Ellerslie currently has two K to 9 schools south of the Anthony Henday that are considerably overcrowded. The good news is that three new schools are slated to open in that area of the district in September of 2017. Parents, however, are also concerned with regard to assessments for their children with special needs and how their children may be better served within the education system. There are challenges, but I'm sure that by working together with the Minister of Education, we will find the appropriate solutions.

My constituency is also home to many seniors, and I'm eager to identify and work towards reducing the burden for our seniors as we move forward. They passionately express their desire to age in place. They don't want to lose their connection to their loved ones and to their community.

Madam Speaker, one of my passions as a community organizer before becoming an MLA was mentoring and guiding youth and young adults interested in creating social change. I'm happy to announce that I'm continuing to do just that. This past month along with my constituency staff I launched the end domestic violence Edmonton-Ellerslie youth mentorship program. The program kicked off with nine participants between the ages of 12 and 24.

The program consists of four full-day workshops dedicated to educating the participants on the issues surrounding domestic violence and how they may be addressed. The learning includes equipping the youth and young adults with the skills to be effective leaders and community organizers. Utilizing Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, the training aims to empower and encourage young men and women to be more active in their communities and to use their knowledge and skills to generate positive change. I also designed the mentorship program to further discover details on gender equity and social justice as well as providing opportunity for young leaders to develop crucial life and career-building skills, all this while establishing a working relationship with their MLA.

In Canada women are three times more likely than men to be killed or to be sexually assaulted, choked, beaten, or threatened with a weapon by their partner. The majority of women who experience violence report that their perpetrators were male. These appalling facts urge us to mobilize our communities to finally end violence against women once and for all. The first workshop of the series provided an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their own values and how they have internalized them. They also embarked upon the process of discovering how gender stereotypes are socialized constructs put on us by society and how those stereotypes are not biological in nature. We engaged the participants in processes where we dispelled the myths of the causes of men's violence against women, and together we identified how we may all build healthy and strong relationships.

Madam Speaker, I'm eternally grateful to the constituents of Edmonton-Ellerslie. I owe them an immense debt of gratitude for putting their faith and hope into Alberta's NDP, our leader, Rachel Notley, and myself to represent them in this Legislature. Due to each and every constituent that cast their ballot for our party, politics in Alberta have started to transform and bring hope to Albertans regardless of whom they voted for. We have implemented several of the policy changes highlighted in our party's platform, and this government is determined to follow through with its vision, a vision that Albertans overwhelmingly voted for on May 5.

One such piece of legislation that I'm proud to have supported was the banning of corporate and union donations to political parties. The time has come for democratic renewal in this province and in this country. I'm also incredibly proud to have served with the now Minister of Labour on the Select Special Ethics and Accountability Committee, focused on renewing our approach to democracy in this province. I'm excited to continue working on this committee and bringing forward the many recommendations we will have on the four pieces of legislation we are reviewing.

This is an important time for Alberta, and I'm excited to be a part of it. A great opportunity lies before us as representatives to engage in meaningful dialogue with our constituents and focus on overcoming the challenges we are currently experiencing while at

the same time recognizing what parts of the system already work for Albertans. It cannot be stated enough: I'm here to serve the constituents of Edmonton-Ellerslie. I'm here to listen to them, to help identify solutions to the issues that they are facing, and to implement those changes in the best interests of all of our communities.

Last week my colleague from Edmonton-Centre talked about the virtues of leadership and service and leading by example. Since day one as an elected official I've approached my role in that spirit through building genuine relationships focused on strengthening our communities. I'm eager to continue building unity among the members of Edmonton-Ellerslie so that together we may increase engagement and participation in our democracy.

It is with a humble heart that I again take this opportunity to thank the people of Edmonton-Ellerslie for the confidence that they have placed in me by electing me to be their representative. They voted for change, and Rachel Notley, the hon. ministers of this government, and I along with the many other great MLAs in this House plan on delivering that change.

Madam Speaker, I am and always will be a proud democratic socialist. However, I must be clear. I have never been dogmatic. I am one of the worst kinds of idealists, the kind that dreams with my feet firmly planted on the ground and who becomes excited at the challenge of finding solutions that will benefit the most humble, hard-working individuals that make up society. As I stated prior, it's those humble beginnings from which I come.

3:50

One of my passions is debunking the public versus private myths, to share with others the important role that the province can play not only regarding the important social human rights of providing access to education, health care, and housing but also in working to stimulate economic growth. It's not about picking winners or losers; it's about investing in research and development when the risk is too great for individuals, firms, or groups of the private sector to do so. It's proper that the provincial agencies and postsecondary educational institutions play their role by innovating and introducing new technologies that explicitly fit into the new course that the government may envision.

For this reason I'm incredibly proud that the current government will introduce the climate leadership implementation act, focused on investing in a clean energy future. This investment plan will fully recycle revenues from Alberta's carbon levy into renewable energy, innovation, public transit, and other measures that will reduce the carbon intensity of our economy. This coupled with the work of the energy diversification advisory committee, focused on promoting innovation and efficiency, will strengthen the oil and gas industry, which has and will continue to be for years to come the backbone of the Alberta economy.

As any scientist or inventor will express, it is important to ask one simple question: what if? What if begs that we change our perspective, that we look at the problem in a different way so that we may find the solution that has been staring us in the face all along but we were just too figuratively blind to see it. This government has asked that simple question and is now moving forward with the solutions that it deems necessary to serve the people of Alberta now and in the future generations to come, and I along with many of my colleagues are incredibly proud of what this government will implement in this legislative session and the following years.

Madam Speaker, I welcome all in this House to work together in finding solutions to the challenges that Albertans are facing. After all, that is the important role of government. We are an extension of the communities that we represent. This government is not here

to govern for Albertans; it is here to govern with them. By bringing the most gifted and talented front-line workers together with researchers, academics, and industry experts, we will find solutions. I know we are making the people of Alberta proud now, and they will continue to be in three years' time.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you all with an alarm bell of great importance shared with me by many representatives and especially elders of First Nations communities. It is our duty to protect the sacred waters of this land. If we do not, we put at risk the very future of all our children and the generations to come. Responding proactively to climate change is not only needed; it is absolutely essential.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, before we go on to 29(2)(a), I did not want to interrupt your extremely passionate speech, but you did use the Premier's name a number of times. You're not the only one to have done this this afternoon, using colleagues' proper names, so I would caution all members that when you're preparing these maiden speeches, to keep that in mind and take note of that. Thank you.

Any questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Strathmore-Brooks.

Mr. Fildebrandt: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would just encourage the member to expound upon his faithfulness to the principles of democratic socialism.

Loyola: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. You know, as I stated in my maiden speech, I've never been dogmatic, but it's also very important to look for solutions. For me, as is well known, I come from Latin America, where over the past 15 years we've had many experiments in democratic socialism. Yes, some things have been failures, but there's also some amazing, positive work that is being done. I basically make reference to research that's been done, where the government is involved in helping the private sector in order to bring about economic change.

So it's these things that we shouldn't just automatically close the door to. We've got to look at what's happening, what is possible. That's what I'm here to do, to be able to, from my perspective, just look at all the opportunities that we have in front of us and be able to, like I said, ask the question "What if?" so that we can take a different perspective and take a different look at something. Maybe it's something that hasn't been tried before, but it's always important to ask and always look at things from a different perspective.

Thank you for your question.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other questions or comments?
Seeing none, the next on my list is Calgary-Glenmore.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is my honour to rise today in the Assembly to respond to the Speech from the Throne as the member for the wonderful constituency of Calgary-Glenmore. Calgary-Glenmore is a multifaceted riding. There are eight strong community associations, that serve the needs of 52,000 residents in the riding. In addition, we have Rockyview hospital, highly reputable schools, beautiful parks, and the Glenmore reservoir. These facilities are used and enjoyed by not only the constituents of Calgary-Glenmore but by people all over Calgary.

The constituents of Calgary-Glenmore believe in living an active lifestyle, as you can probably tell if you have ever taken a walk through our neighbourhoods. My constituency is also an excellent example of the community coming together to ensure that our land,

air, and water are protected for generations to enjoy. The residents of Calgary-Glenmore are devoted, dedicated, and responsible stewards, which is why this riding is known for its history.

In the Speech from the Throne Her Honour talked about all the work that's ahead of this government, and I'm pleased to be able to play a part in this. One of the biggest focuses of this session will be the implementation of the climate leadership plan and the diversification of our economy. I'm proud to step up today to work with the government in the diversification of our economy and to support the climate leadership plan because it is a key step to creating a balance between the economy and the environment.

I can extensively contribute to this plan. I am a chemical engineer with a master's degree in environmental engineering. My thesis was on devising the methodology for carbon dioxide sequestration, that can be used to help various industries reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I think it's fitting that last week, when we honoured Don Getty in this Chamber, I noted his connections to the University of Western Ontario, now known as Western University. I say with pride that I also went to Western University to study engineering. I always aspire to make a difference and strive for the sustainability of communities. In my previous life I was offering my services in volunteering through NGOs, finding solutions to problems using my engineering skills, and offering my help in various forms to the residents of our society.

Madam Speaker, when there is balance, there is fairness, and when there is fairness, there is success. Calgary-Glenmore is a perfect example of this balance, and I'm honoured that I have the opportunity to bring my constituents' voices to this Assembly every day. Fairness is also at the heart of our government, and the Speech from the Throne highlighted this commitment.

During this time of economic difficulty we must be committed to making things better for all Albertans and ensuring that the front-line services our constituents rely on are protected and strengthened. My constituents can be confident that this government has a plan to get Albertans through this difficult time. This plan will help put Albertans back to work and help our communities recover from the trauma of job loss. Our government has created a dedicated Ministry of Economic Development and Trade to put this plan into place, and I'm confident that the minister and our Premier have the tools and the vision to get our province back on track.

One of the key planks of our government's plan is an investment in infrastructure. The throne speech mentioned that our government will be investing \$34 billion into infrastructure projects. This investment in infrastructure during an economic downturn will not only help put my constituents back to work but also help reduce our province's infrastructure deficit and finally build the much-needed school modernizations and hospitals many Albertans are waiting for.

4:00

Calgary-Glenmore is lucky in that we have fantastic schools and facilities, and investments in these schools now will ensure that for generations to come they'll continue to provide the excellent standards that they have become known for. These investments will help secure the future of our children and improve our health care services.

Madam Speaker, families and children are the centre of Calgary-Glenmore, and I'm proud that our government has made the well-being of children and families the centre for our government as well. In the Speech from the Throne Her Honour talked about the fact that our government will be investing in the Alberta child benefit and the family employment tax credit. This investment will benefit not only my constituents but all Alberta families.

Calgary-Glenmore is a very diversified constituency, but like any community in Alberta my constituents have been affected by the economic downturn. My constituents are highly educated, and many of them are choosing to go back to school during this time of economic difficulty to retrain and diversify their skills. I'm sure that my constituents will be pleased to hear that our government has plans to support this retraining and skill development.

Madam Speaker, even in these tough economic times Calgary-Glenmore has a vibrant and active business community. I'm proud to say that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in my constituency. During this economic downturn many Albertans are taking the chance and striking out on their own by starting their own businesses. Small-business owners are some of the biggest contributors to job creation and economic growth in the province, and my constituency is an excellent example of the benefits that these small local businesses can have in our communities. Our government values their contributions and therefore is taking measures to support them. The Speech from the Throne last week highlighted that our government is taking steps to support these businesses by making \$1.5 billion available to Alberta Treasury Branches in order to support lending to small and medium-sized businesses. This is in addition to directing AIMCo to earmark half a billion dollars for Alberta-based companies with growth potential. I'm confident that some of these companies may come from the innovative entrepreneurs we have right now in Calgary-Glenmore.

The Speech from the Throne also emphasized our government's commitment to economic diversification and the need to move away from relying on a single commodity with a single price in a single market. I'm proud to say that my constituents are already stepping up to this challenge, and many are in the process of starting new businesses and creating new technologies in the green energy sector. These businesses will not only help support the vision of our climate leadership plan but will create good, diversified jobs for my constituents and Albertans as well.

I'm very proud to say that I'm the voice of the residents who work day and night for the success and sustainability of the communities in Calgary-Glenmore. As a resident of Calgary-Glenmore I want the best for my neighbours. I want to ensure that my constituents are employed with good jobs that can support their families and enjoy the quality of life that makes Alberta the best place to live. Madam Speaker, in conclusion, community building is my passion, and I will continue working hard to strengthen communities in Calgary-Glenmore. I will ensure that my constituents are continuously engaged and involved in this process to build the best vision for our constituency.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Thank you. I really appreciated the speech of my fellow MLA, Madam Speaker, and I was just intrigued. Being a chemical engineer, what was your path towards seeking political office? We don't often get engineers in this House. I'm not sure if you're the first one or if you're one of the first. It may be something interesting to find out. I was wondering: what was your path to political office?

Ms Kazim: Thank you very much for the question. I'm happy to share a little bit of the story here. The reason I joined engineering in the first place was basically to make a difference and to provide solutions to problems and help society in different ways. After I finished my engineering and acquired some work experience, over

time I realized: why not consider something that has a philanthropic side to it as well as a technical side to it?

Politics is something that allows us to look at things with a holistic approach and look at every aspect of an issue. If I'm looking at something from an engineering perspective, that would be most likely technical whereas there are legal, social, and various perspectives that could be taken into account when looking at a problem or a situation. That's why I decided that if I want to make a difference and really contribute to society in multiple ways, then politics will be the path that will allow me to do so. That's why I chose to get into this field. I felt that I would be able to bring a lot to the table and represent the people of my constituency, particularly, in a very good manner.

Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Banff-Cochrane.

Mr. Westhead: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was really pleased to hear about the member's approach to politics and the unique perspective that she brings. I also know that she has another unique story to tell us about democracy. Oftentimes people complain about democracy, saying: my vote doesn't count. In this member's instance, if I recall correctly, she won by six votes, so that tells us all that every single vote really does count. I wonder if the member could maybe tell us a little bit about what it was like while she was waiting to hear the results of the different recounts that were undertaken and how enthusiastic she was when she finally had the final results and was declared elected.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Kazim: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you very much, Member, for the question. That was indeed an exciting moment, when I felt that actually every vote counts. Being in a situation, especially on election night, I would say, when people were either winning or losing, when I had a tie, I was, like: "What is that? Can that even happen?" So I was not sure how to actually react, either to be happy or to be sad. It was an interesting experience, for sure, because through that process I learned a lot about how the policies of Elections Alberta work and how a judicial recount happens.

I was just actually laughing about the fact that I started my political career by stepping into court. That was something interesting. It was a rich experience, and it gave me confidence. Life is full of ups and downs, and this career, particularly, is also full of ups and downs. So that was a good experience for me to get ready for what to expect once I entered into this role.

At the same time, in my riding people have learned the lesson of what can happen if they don't vote. After the results were finalized and even now, we have people in our constituency who come and share their story: oh, I'm so sorry; I could not vote because I was out of town or out of country. Then people would share stories of how much effort they put in to make sure that their vote was counted. They contacted Elections Alberta from different islands where there was no access to the Internet. They wanted to vote; they did not want to miss the opportunity to vote. Through that experience I learned a lot about the importance of democracy and how much our participation matters towards our society.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. It is an honour to rise today to respond to the Speech from the Throne. I would like to start by acknowledging that we stand here today on Treaty 6 territory and that my constituency is also on Treaty 6 territory. This

government recognizes the importance of a strong relationship with our indigenous communities, which is why we will repeal Bill 22 and find a better way to carry out consultations in the future.

4:10

I feel it is quite fitting that the throne speech took place on International Women's Day, delivered by a female Lieutenant Governor on behalf of our female Premier. Look to our caucus and you'll see near gender parity. Look further to our ministerial bench, including the newly created Ministry of Status of Women, and you will see the importance that we place on balanced representation.

It is something this province can take great pride in. The diversity that Albertans see in the Legislature is a reflection of the diversity that makes up Alberta. There are more young MLAs than ever before in our province. This is something that I am reminded of daily as I spend time in my constituency visiting with residents. I don't think I've ever visited a constituent who wasn't curious about my age. What is interesting, though, is that when I reveal that I am only 24 and there are actually MLAs still younger than myself, I am met with excitement. People are happy to see such diversity, with new energy and new ideas, in the Legislature.

I hope that through the example that my young colleagues set, there will be more young leaders willing to put their names forward. That is, in fact, one of the main reasons I got involved with politics from a young age. I realized that the youth voice was not at the table. Thankfully, we have seen the landscape changing at all levels of government. It is an important step because the decisions we make as legislators have lasting effects on the broader community, and these effects are felt differently based on a number of circumstances, including but of course not limited to age.

When I think back to the career opportunities that I've had that led me to this point, I realize that they have all been in the Meadowlark community: first, working in retail at West Edmonton Mall; then in radio at K-97, once again in West Edmonton Mall; and eventually as an electrician at two local businesses within the constituency. It is quite fitting to be able to come full circle and represent these same businesses that gave me the incredible opportunities that led me to this very Legislature.

I've lived in the Meadowlark community for the better half of my life, moving here from Saskatchewan around 2003. I attended Britannia junior high in the constituency of Glenora but completed my diploma at Jasper Place in the Meadowlark community. I have built lasting relationships both with the teachers and students that accompanied me on my journey through the public school system, and I think about how our legislation will affect them any time we make decisions in this Chamber.

Through the many years that I have lived in the community, I've had the opportunity to meet with many leaders and organizations, including most, if not all, of the community leagues. These leagues are truly the grassroots of our communities. The volunteers spend countless hours organizing sports leagues and fundraisers to create the sense of community, which we all cherish. It is an incredibly selfless and sometimes thankless job, but I know that the community as a whole appreciates the work that these volunteers put into our neighbourhoods.

Meadowlark is an incredibly diverse community. There are families who have called the area their home long before West Edmonton Mall was a destination and also new Canadians, including newly arrived Syrian refugees, who have come to this great province after years of struggle. Our job as representatives of our community is to ensure that we are doing what we can to help these families, regardless of socioeconomic circumstances, to realize their potential as members of our community. It is our duty to ensure that the public services, of which we are so proud in this

province, are efficient and accessible to those who need them most. It is also imperative that we create an economic environment that encourages growth and creates opportunity for every citizen in this province.

One of the most rewarding opportunities we get as elected officials is to visit with the remarkable people who make up our communities. Since my election to this Assembly, I've had the chance to visit with many seniors in my community. They're often politically and socially active, and the residents have some of the most insightful questions, ranging from fracking to the heritage trust fund and everything in between. The wealth of knowledge our seniors hold is invaluable, and the contributions they have made to our province are enormous. There are a lot of lessons in history that can so easily be lost if we don't learn from them. This has become clear to me when I have talked with the people in my community who have been through economic downturns before and have seen what can happen when we don't diversify our economy.

Madam Speaker, the throne speech outlines many of the key challenges and opportunities our province will have moving forward. Alberta has suffered from not diversifying our economy, and governments past have not been able to achieve the market access our province needs for the full value of our products as well as a royalty system that did not have the full support of Albertans based on a perceived lack of transparency and accountability.

I believe that the initiatives this government has undertaken, as presented in the throne speech, are important issues and will help move this province forward. I can tell you that my community has been hit hard by the falling commodity prices. The industrial park in the Meadowlark community is one of the largest service providers to the oil and gas industry, and when this industry struggles, so do the many businesses and families in my community. While West Edmonton Mall is still an incredible economic driver in the Meadowlark community and in this province, especially with the low dollar, we are still seeing a slowdown in local purchasing power.

As I mentioned earlier, before getting elected to this Assembly, I was an apprentice electrician, building and servicing sleeping quarters that are utilized by oil field workers while they are in camp. Many of the companies I worked for, as I said, are in my community, and I've seen these companies slow down because of the slump in global oil prices. It is not going to be an easy road forward, but I know that these businesses are run by passionate families and entrepreneurs constantly adapting to changes in the market and finding efficiencies. As we realize increased market access and plan for recovery, these companies will continue to thrive within our province just like they have for so many years before.

For those who are looking to retrain, our government will support you because we recognize that a diversified workforce is a strong workforce. It is increasingly important as we move to diversification that we offer our communities the opportunity to grow with us. Through access to capital and measures introduced by the Economic Development and Trade ministry like Bill 1, the Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act, and the petrochemicals diversification program, we will support the creation of new jobs in emerging markets. Countercyclical investments will keep this province moving. While we can't control the price of oil, we can put people back to work, and we will, by investing \$34 billion in capital projects. We have seen the devastating effects of deferred maintenance in the past, and investing the money now means we can keep people working while reducing the laundry list of maintenance and construction that needs to happen throughout this province.

My community has been waiting on a valley line LRT for many years now. I think we all recognize the importance of having effective modes of transportation within our cities and, of course, across this province. It is, in fact, the lowest income communities who need these services most, and we're doing a great disservice to them every time we put these projects off.

This is a difficult time, like I've said, for Alberta, brought on by circumstances that we cannot change, but it is also a great opportunity. We are a province of ambitious, determined, hard-working people who will forge ahead even if it means treading new ground. We know what hasn't worked in the past, and we know what has to change now. We have taken steps toward a better future, and we will continue on that path to innovation, accountability, and responsibility to Albertans.

As Albertans we are proud of our natural resources, that have built this province and created many good-paying jobs, yet past practice has been to import almost 1 million barrels of oil per day from other countries. This has been a point of confusion and frustration for Albertans for many years, and I believe it is important that we transition to a made-in-Alberta approach. This will not only benefit our economy, but we as Albertans also recognize that our product is produced in one of the most environmentally sound jurisdictions around the world, and it is something that we can all be very proud of.

As a member of the West Edmonton Business Association I've had the opportunity to meet with many of the businesses in the Meadowlark community. They are an incredibly resilient group of people who collaborate to support the local economy and not-for-profits. The association consists of everything from small IT companies to the Fantasyland Hotel, in West Edmonton Mall, the perfect example of how we can work together for the betterment of our community.

Edmonton-Meadowlark is also home to the Misericordia hospital, a hospital that people across this province depend on and a place that employs many families in my constituency. I will add that I have both gained and lost family members at this hospital, but the staff have always been accommodating and professional, though their work environment is often high stress and the staff increasingly overworked. We know that cutting funding to essential public services only worsens these problems, increases costs in the long run, and downloads responsibility to our communities.

4:20

I would also like to acknowledge the incredible number of not-for-profit organizations in the community, that have growing clientele while facing budget restrictions. Portions of many not-for-profit agencies' budgets come directly or indirectly from government, and many of these important service providers are working at capacity. To reduce funding or to add to the growing number of service users through downloading would put additional strain on our communities and add to the daily struggle of many families. We need to support our communities now more than ever. I recognize the reality that so many of the constituents of Edmonton-Meadowlark are facing, and I will do everything that I can to support them through these tough times every step of the way.

Every child in this province deserves a bright future. Those futures will be realized because of the investments we make in education. In a time of much talk of austerity measures our government committed to supporting this province's front-line workers, including restored funding to education, which resulted in the hiring of 740 new teachers across this province. That means we're able to offer more programs to the families and students as well as, hopefully, reducing class size, which is so important.

Though there are many initiatives within the throne speech that I am proud to support, among the most important to my community is our government's move to protect Albertans from high-interest loans. There are many lenders within the Meadowlark area, something the local associations have been trying to deal with for several years. This overaccumulation of lenders in our low-income communities has created a troubling situation, which I have seen first-hand. This commitment to protect Alberta families is especially important now as many families are juggling their daily expenses and often consider these high-interest loans, that can put them in unfavourable situations.

For those Albertans struggling to find work in these tough times, our government has committed to working with the federal government to reconsider employment insurance rules as the program has often been hard to access. I have had these struggles myself in the past.

This throne speech, I believe, reflects the needs and expectations of my community. The fallen commodity prices have affected my community, my friends, my family, but we must work together to create new streams of revenue while finding efficiencies within our government departments. We must not, however, make broad cuts or expect our already stretched public services to somehow make do with less. I am proud to stand here today with an alternative way forward. While this year has been tough on our province, I am still proud to stand here as an Albertan, and I know that Alberta is still the best place to invest your money.

In closing, having the honour to represent the constituents of Edmonton-Meadowlark here in the Assembly is, no doubt, one of the greatest accomplishments of my life. I'm sure many of the other members within this Chamber would say the same thing about their own journey. I do not think any of us take this responsibility lightly. To the citizens of Edmonton-Meadowlark who put their trust in me to represent them and to my friends and family who helped me along this journey both before and during the election: I owe you everything. Thank you to my parents for letting me use their home as a campaign office and a hotel during the election. Thank you to my partner of eight years for believing in me from the very beginning and to my little sister for being the light of my life.

It is also important that I mention Raj Sherman and the incredible work that he did both while in government and in opposition representing the Edmonton-Meadowlark community. Your ability to advocate on behalf of your constituents is something I hear of often in my community, and it inspires me to be a better representative every day.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Under 29(2)(a), the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms Drever: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark for his remarkable speech about his constituency. I noticed that he mentioned a lot of his stakeholders. I was wondering if he could elaborate on those and how he was engaging with them.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the member for the important question. As elected members of this Assembly I think it is imperative that we do our best to reach out to our entire community, really, and get feedback on the decisions that we have before us. Personally, I've held budget consultations, open houses, and I actually have a town hall telephone conference coming up very soon, which I'm excited to take part in.

Other examples. My office does advertise in community league newspapers, explaining the services that we offer, including, you know, help getting through some of the hurdles that a lot of constituents have when they're trying to access government services. I think that we're well equipped to do that considering that I have a social worker in my office. I know many of our New Democrat colleagues do have the same services as well.

You know, I made it very clear at the door and any time I have a chance to speak with constituents that my door is always open. Like I said, I have met a number of people who have had to jump through these hoops, and it's really frustrating. I mean, even up to last week I had somebody that was having trouble getting services for their brother, and it's been a process of many, many years. They sit down and, really, it's all put in front of you, and they won't hold back, by any means. To really understand where they're coming from, I think, is a learning experience for all of us.

As I mentioned before, I think the most valuable asset that we have when forming policy decisions is to be able to talk to our constituents. They know how it's going to affect them better than I think any of us might, so it's important that we carry out these consultations.

Going back to the stakeholder relations, you know, though I'm very proud of the work my office has done, I do recognize that we're always working to do a better job. I think that's something that we work on every single day.

I'll just wrap it up by saying that the biggest habit that I've taken forward is visiting with the seniors in my community, as I did mention in the throne speech response. They have some incredible stories, even dating back to the amalgamation. Well, actually, Jasper Place was its own town. The east side of the Edmonton-Meadowlark constituency was the town of Jasper Place until the amalgamation in 1964. So there is some incredible history that we can learn from the seniors in our community and from everyone.

Thank you.

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

Mr. Orr: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'd like to thank the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark for his comments. I appreciate the story. I was quite encouraged to hear the mature and measured response to the Alberta oil industry and our oil. I was wondering if you could just confirm to us that it's actually the position of your caucus or just your own personal position that maybe we don't need to talk about dirty oil in this province anymore. I'm also interested to know how it is that you don't have that visceral reaction to the oil industry that says that it's somehow the evil enemy of our province.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Carson: Well, thank you very much for the interesting question. Personally, I myself have never heard anyone in my caucus, at least in the time that I've spent with them, ever call the industry "dirty." But with that being said, you know, I've spent as much time as I have been able to so far – and I plan on continuing these conversations – with these organizations in my community and just talking about some of the innovations that they have moving forward. We do recognize that moving forward, the technology can only get better. So that's something that we will watch as we develop policy, and I'm excited to see some of the innovations that industry will have in the coming years.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker, and I certainly thank the member for that statement, especially the fact of being a fellow graduate of Jasper Place composite myself. I always enjoy hearing about the high school.

I was curious, if the member wouldn't mind sharing, if he's identified any goals that he's specifically looking at accomplishing in terms of serving his constituents and how he's going to be accomplishing those.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, you have five seconds.

Mr. Carson: Five seconds. Thank you very much. Well, we have a lot in the works, I can say that. But I mentioned some of the things in my throne speech response.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Ms Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm honoured today for the opportunity to rise and respond to the Speech from the Throne. First, I would like to thank my husband, Doug, for his unwavering love and support and belief that I can do anything I put my mind to. Without this support, I wouldn't have this amazing opportunity. I would also like to thank my children – Ashley, Kimberly, Matthew, and Kyle – and my two grandchildren, Austin and Payton. You are all part of the reason I ran for office, and I hope my contributions here to our government and this Assembly will ensure that Alberta is an even better place for you and your generation than it is today.

4:30

I have to acknowledge my parents, Gerry and Iris, for raising me to have values, humility, and a willingness to help others. One of the lessons my parents taught me while growing up was that if you don't like something, it is up to you to step up, to put in the work needed to make the change. I see this same attitude every day throughout my constituency, Madam Speaker.

Last but not least, I need to thank my team – Stephen Merredew, Karen Reay, and the rest – who work so hard to bring change to Red Deer-South, and my constituents in Red Deer-South, who place their trust in me and our government's vision for Alberta. Their trust has allowed me to be their voice in government.

I believe that things happen for a reason. People come into your life at the right time and place to help you to evolve into the person you are supposed to be. Some people call it luck, fate, serendipity. I have four such people who help guide me: Mrs. Betty Ryan, my friend and confidante – the world is not the same without you in it – Mr. Don Crissal, friend and mentor, whose gentle nudging helped guide my path; Ms Elisabeth Ballermann, a woman who inspired me to be the best at whatever I do; and Ms Marle Roberts. We are true sisters of the heart. Without these people, I would not be the person I am today.

I work with an amazing team of people led by an equally amazing woman, our Premier. Thanks go out to all of you for your help and support. On May 5, 2015, history was made in Alberta. We formed Alberta's first NDP government. Since that day I have been working nonstop for my constituents. I have met with countless people and have met with over 200 not-for-profits and organizations.

I would like to tell you about a few of these particular organizations in my constituency of Red Deer-South. Turning Point, formerly known as CAANS, works in harm reduction. Their team is an amazing group of people. Not only do they do needle exchanges, distribute condoms and naloxone kits; they are also a team that the people who are their clients trust. Some of the staff have been known to take in and foster the pets of their clients when they have been unable to care for them themselves. One such pet is

Bella, whose humans are struggling right now. Bella is in a safe and happy home, waiting for her humans. Turning Point, because they are trusted, gets info from the people on the street when a new substance hits the street. The staff of Turning Point are more than just a not-for-profit; they're an integral part of the community.

Another amazing organization is the Golden Circle. It is a seniors' drop-in centre and more. It is a hub where seniors can meet and enjoy the company of their peers. The centre has provided programs, activities, outreach, and resources for older adults and their families since 1977. The team at the Circle is led by a dynamic woman, Monica Morrison. She is very forward thinking. On August 18, 2015, the team hosted a rainbow tea, complete with a drag show. It sold out quickly. As Monica wrote in their newsletter: I never thought I would see the day that our local seniors' centre would be part of pride, let alone host a drag show in the middle of the afternoon.

Some of the weekly activities at the centre include Zumba, tai chi, square dancing, dancercise, and various card games. They also offer computer classes. There is a very active travel club. New York was the last big trip, with 43 participants. The centre is a one-stop shop for programs like home maintenance help, grocery delivery in partnership with the Co-op store, program referrals, support groups, transportation to and from medical appointments, and they spearhead the elder abuse program. I am very proud to be working with these wonderful people.

Another hard-working group of people is the staff of Women's Outreach. The programs they provide are invaluable to the community, programs like domestic violence support and safe visitation, which is a neutral-based program that allows children to continue visiting noncustodial parents in a supportive environment in situations when families are dealing with the impact of domestic violence. They support the premise that children grow up to be more healthy and adaptive individuals and contribute to the community while knowing both parents love and support them. They also do monitored exchange, where a safe transition of children from one parent to another is done to eliminate the children from witnessing a negative interaction between the parents. This group plays a key role in the struggle with domestic violence.

Madam Speaker, in Her Honour's speech last week she highlighted a variety of issues that will continue to put Alberta back on track. We know that we are in a period of prolonged economic decline, and I know my constituents are pleased to see that their government has a plan to put Albertans back to work and to finally get our province off the resource royalty roller coaster. Like all Albertans, my constituents are affected by the declining price of oil, and I know my constituents are assured by our government's commitment to do everything we responsibly can as quickly as we can to ensure that we are promoting economic growth and diversification and job creation.

Red Deer-South is not only home to a great many nonprofits, as I mentioned earlier, but we're home to a considerable number of small, locally run businesses as well. I know our government's commitment to making \$1.5 billion available to ATB to support lending to these small and medium-sized businesses in combination with AIMCo's earmarked half a billion dollars for investment in companies with growth potential has these local businesses excited. Small businesses are often the driving force behind local economics and job growth. I know that these companies in our constituency are ready to lead the way.

Madam Speaker, while Red Deer-South is home to great schools, a hospital, and other facilities, like many other cities across the province we're still facing a crunch when it comes to infrastructure. That's why I was so pleased to hear that our government will be investing \$34 billion into the provincial capital plan to help build

roads, transit, schools, and other infrastructure projects across the province. Not only will the projects help address our infrastructure deficit; they will keep Albertans working during this period of economic decline.

My constituents of Red Deer-South know that when times are tough, we need to have each others' backs. I see this attitude every day in my constituency, and I'm pleased to see our government is taking the same approach. We need to work together to support one another in this current economic climate. Now is the time to invest in our front-line services and staff. Now is not the time to be making things worse by laying off nurses or teachers in the short term.

Part of taking care of each other means ensuring that vulnerable Albertans have the protections they need to succeed. That's why I'm pleased that the throne speech announced that our government will be introducing an act to end predatory lending. Madam Speaker, I've heard from constituents that use these payday loans, and I've heard the horror stories of up to 600 per cent interest rates over the course of the year. As Her Honour mentioned, this practice has been allowed to go on for too long, and it's especially important that we take action now, when times are tough, to make sure Albertans who use these services are not taken advantage of.

Madam Speaker, I'm honoured for the opportunity to represent the constituency of Red Deer-South, and I'm thankful to everyone that has placed their trust in me to ensure that the voices of our community are heard loud and clear through these halls and in this Assembly.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments under 29(2)(a)? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Dr. Turner: The beautiful riding of Edmonton-Whitemud. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Member for Red Deer-South for an excellent presentation about her history. I was particularly impressed with the many mentors and role models that you had. I can share that I see the member as a role model for me in the way that she leads the Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. I noticed that she had mentioned the work that AIMCo is doing for the benefit of the province, and I wonder if she would maybe expand on that and talk about the advantages, the sort of investments that AIMCo can make in Alberta businesses that might benefit this province.

4:40

Ms Miller: Thank you, Member, for the question. Chairing the heritage savings trust fund, we've – the whole committee has learned a lot more about how our nest egg is being invested, and this half a billion dollars is over and above what they already invest in Alberta companies. What they're looking for are companies that have a potential to grow but that just need that little bit extra, something that will also grow our fund. It's not just the Alberta government that's involved in AIMCo's investments. There is the teachers' pension fund and a lot more, so they're not just focusing on the Alberta government's portion but on what makes the best sense for everyone. Of the government's portion, the \$500 million is strictly for small and medium businesses that have the potential to become big businesses.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess I'm at a bit of an advantage as I do know the member's history and everything that she brings to the table, but I was wondering if you could share with other members, who are maybe not as familiar with your work in the labour world, how you used to interact with your members

and how that relates to what you bring to the table in serving your constituents.

Ms Miller: Thank you. I walked my first picket line when I was nine years old, and I'm very proud of it. My parents had no problem with it. I've always thought that you have to stick up for the underdog, and I've carried that through my life. When I worked in the school system, I was on bargaining committees. When I started working at Safeway, I joined, of course, the union and became a shop steward. Then I was elected to the executive. I was the president of the local labour council, part of the AFL, part of the Canadian Labour Congress. In every organization I've been part of, I've gathered a little bit more of an idea of what other people are going through, so I've been able to use that knowledge to help constituents when they've come into the office. It could be job related; it could be health related. I've been able to pick up information from all different facets of my varied career to help the constituents of Red Deer-South.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other questions or comments?

I will recognize the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to begin by recognizing the indigenous peoples of Alberta. My constituency includes the Alexander First Nation as well as the historic land of the Michel people, both of whom signed Treaty 6. I am proud to see the continued efforts to implement the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, some of which are present in the throne speech.

[The Speaker in the chair]

As a member of the Métis nation I would also like to recognize that both Spruce Grove and St. Albert have a long history with the Métis, including the founding of St. Albert and the habitation of the Lac Ste. Anne Métis in the western portion of their lands.

I am proud to rise today to respond to the Speech from the Throne as the Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

I was quite thrilled to hear the Famous Five recognized in Her Honour's address. The right to vote, indeed the duty to vote, is one of our most important rights, and I am proud to say that my family has long been committed to human rights and public service, a tradition I am honoured to continue in this Assembly. There are two members of my family tree I would like to take a moment to discuss a bit, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge some others.

On my father's side we signed the Magna Carta, starting the long road of human rights. On my mother's side we have James McKay, who served as a judge on the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal; Gladys Bigg, my 99-year-old great-grandmother, who served as deputy mayor of Westlock and is a member of the Athabasca University board; and, in addition, we had countless factors from the days when Alberta was dominated by the fur trade.

The first person I would like to discuss fits nicely into the throne speech. A few members have laid claim to Nellie McClung, and I'm sure they are all pleased to know that I am not about to do the same. According to family mythology I am related to Edith MacTavish Rogers, the first woman elected in Manitoba. As a result of her work with veterans, she was committed to working for labour rights against her Liberal Party lines. She represented Canada at the Geneva Convention, defining the rights of prisoners of war and civilians in a war zone. In sum, she fought for rights that are now fundamental both in Canada and internationally, and this is a tradition I wish to emulate.

The second person I would like to discuss a bit is my great-grandfather, Jack Bigg. He was a veteran of World War II, having previously served in the RCMP, and he played a season with the Saskatchewan Roughriders although we won't hold that against him. He was personally asked to run by John Diefenbaker, and as a veteran and in recognition of both his constituents and his Métis roots he committed his life to fighting for indigenous and veterans' rights. In recognition of his work he was named Chief Almighty Voice. Last I heard, his headdress is still on display in the Westlock museum. As a signatory to the Canadian Bill of Rights, I find his commitment to fighting for the rights of Canadians inspiring though I am sure we would not agree on much policy beyond that.

Mr. Speaker, as one of the youngest members in this Legislature I am honoured to represent the people of Spruce Grove-St. Albert. The two cities I represent are routinely named among the best cities in Canada to raise a family. Both Spruce Grove and St. Albert are served by wonderful teachers, school boards, and they both offer a wide variety of services. This has brought recognition, but it has also brought a lot of growth. Spruce Grove in particular has exploded in population, especially in the past 10 years. This growth has brought with it new challenges, some related to the median age of the constituency and some to growing population.

The first big issue my constituency faces is that of an infrastructure deficit. Years of cuts and delayed projects have left us with a pressing deficit. One road in particular has been discussed and re-examined and rediscussed since the Social Credit was on this side of the aisle. Another project, a school in St. Albert, had originally been promised a renovation by Premier Getty, and they are just now receiving that renovation. Neither of my communities has seen a new school since Premier Getty although we have seen replacements. Having said that, we are seeing three new school builds, so I'm optimistic on that now.

Certainly, being recognized as some of the best creates a certain level of demand. This leads us to the other issue in my constituency, that the recognition for being a great place to raise young families has brought a young population. Like many young Albertans, my constituents are faced with the fact that tuition rates and school fees are climbing faster than incomes, making it that much harder to access postsecondary education. This is forcing many parents to take out a second or even a third mortgage to provide their children with a chance of an education just while mom and dad are trying to save for retirement.

4:50

On top of that, many students – I dare say most of the ones I have met – are forced to take out student loans. Textbooks are becoming increasingly expensive, and those students from out of town, whether they're from a rural setting or simply a different urban one or who don't live with their family, have to find housing and cover the cost of living. With an eye on that, I'm not going to get into the impact of finding employment around class times and studying on top of that, Mr. Speaker, but I will say that it has left many of the younger MLAs well equipped to deal with the long hours of debate we experienced a few months ago.

So now our students have an education. They have the marketable skills they need to find employment, but they now face a market where most positions are asking for experience, where the positions they are qualified for are often taken by people a few generations older. This is for a position that used to be an entry-level job. Faced with a cycle of debt, compounded with a difficult market to make use of the education that started it – I completely lost that.

Mr. Speaker, Spruce Grove-St. Albert is noteworthy for finding grassroots solutions to problems that face our whole province. Our

citizens have developed some especially amazing programs supporting mental health as well as young mothers. Compassionate Connections is committed to helping young mothers with accessing food, clothing, and household supplies, efforts that I'm sure that the Famous Five would have appreciated.

Now, both Spruce Grove and St. Albert are suburbs, and there's a lot of research proving that suburbs can be a lonely place, leading to mental health issues, but we have many organizations working to address that. The Spruce Grove and area friendship connection is an online support network helping people face feelings of isolation and loneliness. We also have Auggie's Café, a group who meets every Tuesday just a short walk from my office and endeavours to provide individuals who feel isolated a place to socialize and enjoy a nutritionally balanced meal. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the spirit of the community-minded, caring, and neighbourly Albertan is alive and well in Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

I am proud to note that my constituency has led on environmental causes. It's no mistake that the minister of environment is a graduate of the Spruce Grove education system. The city recently opened a new public works that makes use of passive lighting, geothermal, and water conservation to strive to be as environmentally friendly as possible. Also in Spruce Grove we have Greenbury, a neighbourhood using wind turbines to power their street lights in a push towards carbon neutrality, and these are but some of the initiatives in my constituency. I look forward to many more.

In Her Honour's speech there was a commitment to help the many Albertans facing tough economic times. While the current environment makes that much more important than ever, we need to work towards this through boom or bust. My constituency along with the rest of the province is faced with a lack of affordable housing. This is true in both rural and urban settings, as I'm sure all members in this Assembly are aware. While there are many great organizations working to address this gap both in my constituency and throughout the province, I cannot stress enough that we have fallen short. From our younger Albertans trying to start a life on their own to families working multiple jobs to our seniors and our most vulnerable, the challenge in finding affordable housing is daunting and something that all Albertans should be concerned about.

Now, it's not as simple as just finding any old house. Many groups are faced with additional restrictions. One group in particular, our Albertan families, especially single parents or those working irregular hours, are faced with the added challenge of finding housing that allows children and that has reasonable access to schools and child care.

It's not all gloom and doom on this file, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased to see that affordable housing will be a priority for the new Minister of Seniors and Housing, and I look forward to following the results of their work going forward.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech notes that we need to diversify our energy markets, and I couldn't agree more. For too long we have relied on a subset of energy products and on a narrow selection of customers. I'm sure all members in this Assembly can appreciate the impact hydraulic fracturing has had on the market to the south of us, especially as our best customer has now found a cheaper product. Now we have to change how we act. While in the past it was sufficient to focus on our southern neighbours, we now need to look for new markets, whether that's to tidewater or to our eastern Canadian partners, who are currently importing oil from the Middle East more than they are from us. We need new markets.

As Her Honour mentioned in the throne speech last week, Canada's inability over the last 10 years to pursue a strategic energy policy supported by Canadians has made it impossible so far for our

country to diversify our markets. I'm proud to see that our Premier and our government are taking significant strides to promote a drama-free and collaborative approach to pipeline construction.

The implementation of the climate leadership plan will further improve Alberta's reputation, allowing us to access new markets and protecting jobs in our largest industry. Mr. Speaker, the politics of division, the politics used and promoted by the opposition, have failed. It is my opinion that if a project passes through six Premiers without shovels in the ground, we should probably readdress how we are approaching it. If our partners in every direction are calling for action on climate change, the answer is not to ignore these calls but to work toward them. I am proud to say that this government is working towards that. We need to look at a variety of energy sources – solar, wind, natural gas, and, dare I say, geothermal – alongside continued efforts to make sure that we continue to have the cleanest oil on the market.

Now, many are concerned that an increase in renewable energy would be an overnight change, and I would have to agree that such an approach would only shock the system. What we need to do is create a blend of products, and I am proud to say that I am seeing this approach from our government. The beginnings of this are the access to supports that municipalities and farmers have when they're looking at solar power.

We have a long way to go, Mr. Speaker, but Albertans are hard-working and entrepreneurial people, and I believe that with a little support from this Assembly we will all enjoy a stronger, resilient, and diverse economy.

The Speaker: The chair recognizes Edmonton-McClung.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to congratulate the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-St. Albert on a fantastic speech, and I think I join in celebrating with pride no more so than the two individuals who sit in our gallery to watch that speech, the member's parents, who are probably bursting at the seams right now. I have to agree with the hon. member that the cities of Spruce Grove and St. Albert are great places to raise a family for I began to raise my young family in Spruce Grove over 20 years ago, when I first moved there after being married and adopting three children who were then seven, nine, and 11. We lived for a year in Spruce Grove before moving to an acreage nearby in Parkland county.

However, I'd like to know what the special challenges are for a member who serves a constituency that does have that split of rural and urban components to it because I am sure that there are different things that you would look at on a daily basis in terms of serving those constituents compared to what I would in a more urban setting, and I'd be interested to hear what you, as one of those MLAs who serve a split riding with urban and rural components, might be able to tell us about that experience.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the hon. member for the question. There is certainly a bit of a challenge in making sure you're juggling your time. It's very easy to get caught up, as I'm sure many members on both sides of the House can appreciate, in just agricultural issues or just housing issues or indeed almost any issue you can lose all of your time in, so making sure I maintain that balance is certainly important and something I strive for on a daily basis. There are also a lot of different points of view that come forward with having such a, well, rural riding, including a lot more concern on the loss of ag land. Both of my cities are growing in every direction they can. As well, a lot of the counties right around the capital region are starting to move towards

some acreages, so there are a lot of farmers who are concerned about the loss of their land and a lot of the land of their colleagues. That's certainly a concern that I've been hearing a lot about and that I'm trying to keep an eye on.

5:00

In addition, there are challenges that are unique to both, even within the same file, like affordable housing, for instance. In a rural setting it tends to be a bit more – a lot of people will describe it as invisible, although I don't think that that's entirely accurate. There are a lot more people living in a trailer or out of the back of their truck, where in a city setting it can be what most people think of, living around the downtown core. So trying to address both of those different situations is an ever-present challenge.

Ms Fitzpatrick: First of all, I'd like to congratulate my seatmate here on a wonderful speech. I was quite intrigued by your history of political activism. I'd like to ask you a little bit about your own steps towards this position because I know that there's a little something there that we're all quite interested in as well.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member for the question. Well, when I first graduated high school, I went to NAIT and took a program that wasn't the right fit for me, and then I decided to go back, originally thinking, like many members of this House, that I might go into education. Then I ended up taking a political science course and somehow ended up majoring in it, attending many political functions, and door-knocking out in Beverly-Clareview with the minister. And from there I started to become more and more active with the youth branch of the NDP, starting to protest many of the actions of the former government. From there I just continued being more and more active, setting up the association in St. Albert, and starting to grow both the federal and provincial levels as well as continuing . . . [A timer sounded]

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. I wonder if your parents still speak to the member from Beverly now that you ended up in this place.

I would recognize the Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose.

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to reply to the Speech from the Throne and to speak about my constituency of Wetaskiwin-Camrose. I actually have to divert for two things right now thanks to the Edmonton-Meadowlark speaker – he's brought up something that I wanted to mention – and also to Spruce Grove-St. Albert.

My wife, unfortunately, is not in the gallery today, so I want to publicly and online apologize to her but not for miscommunication. I'm speaking today and not later, so it was not that I communicated incorrectly. It's really important in a relationship, a marriage relationship between husband and wife, that there's good communication. So I have to clear that with her right away. It's important in a good relationship that you have communication. In a marriage longer than possibly both of these colleagues have existed, again, not to re-emphasize it too long, communication is important.

The other thing is that when I go to schools, much like my Edmonton-Meadowlark colleague, I will give my spiel. I'll talk about all of these issues, all of these things that go on, and the very first question will be: how old are you? We have the very young and the very enthusiastic and energetic, and they've actually revived my interest in politics. I had been retired for four years, and

coming back today, I'm excited that I'm going to be serving for eight years or more. It comes from their enthusiasm, and I'm really proud of that.

I would like to compliment all of the previous speakers for their eloquence and passion. I am proud of the commitment and dedication they have shown to social justice and humanitarianism, and I'm honoured to be part of their team and join together with them in this House.

The constituency of Wetaskiwin-Camrose includes two progressive cities but is also the home of the town of Millet and the village of Bittern Lake, which, if you haven't been there, is a cozy little village that is near a wildlife preserve and has many walking trails. Bittern Lake is known for its beauty. Our constituency also includes the hamlet of Gwynne, which has its own ski hill, and some day you might want to come and ski there. We are also privileged to encompass two of the four Cree Nations, Samson and Montana, at Maskwacis. Now, Wetaskiwin-Camrose has two county councils and is part of four school districts: Wetaskiwin regional, Battle River, Elk Island Catholic, and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic.

Mr. Speaker, I may be a little biased, but I think Wetaskiwin-Camrose is one of the best and most diverse places in our entire province. We are a dynamic community, and it would take me days to list all of the fantastic features of our constituency, so here are just a few of those highlights.

We have the University of Alberta Augustana campus in Camrose offering a fine liberal arts program under the guidance of Dean Allen Berger.

Recently we have a very modern, up-to-date Peter & Jean Loughheed Performing Arts Centre.

Likewise, the Camrose city centre has the Bailey Theatre, which is a beautiful heritage building, and one of the festivals that they held just in February is called the Nordlys film festival. It was actually started by the previous MLA and his wife, and I compliment them on that. It features a number of international films but also some Canadian ones from Alberta as well. Hans Olson, the son of the previous MLA, produced a movie that was shown at this film festival. It's called *Figurine* and was filmed in Edmonton. You just don't get to see that at commercial theatres, but you may want to watch that sometime.

The dramatic pride of Wetaskiwin is the Manluk performing arts centre, located in another historical building, the waterworks building.

A fairly famous Camrose event is the Big Valley Jamboree of country and western music under the present direction of Tom Gerling, his board, and a tremendous number of volunteers. I'd venture to guess that at least some of you have been to the Jamboree, and if you haven't, you're welcome to come this year because we're going to feature Blake Shelton, Carrie Underwood, and Autumn Hill.

Jaywalker's Jamboree is a June extravaganza of food, fashions, and fun that you may also want to attend.

Mr. Speaker, as many of you who are from rural constituencies will know, our communities can be as close as family, with everyone having at least one connection to another. For example, one of Camrose's councillors, Kevin Hycha, is a former student of mine. Max Lindstrand, is a former baseball teammate. Wetaskiwin's mayor, Bill Elliot, is another retired teacher. Actually, Bill and I coached volleyball but often on the other side of the court. Also on council in Wetaskiwin is Wayne Neilson, like me a retired school principal, and Wayne and I shared basketball coaching duties for a few seasons. It is these connections that are the lifeblood of rural communities, and these connections run deep throughout my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, in my home of Wetaskiwin, which means, appropriately, hills of peace, there are countless things to keep you very busy. If you are a history buff like myself, you can go any time of the year to see the Reynolds-Alberta Museum. In fact, some 10,000-plus people do so yearly. In Her Honour's speech last week she mentioned that our government is taking steps to diversify and grow our economy. Despite the current economic downturn, tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in our economy, and the number of visitors we see through the Reynolds museum perfectly highlights the potential of this industry in our province.

The Reynolds-Alberta Museum has something for everyone. If you appreciate – and I know many of you do – or would like to explore our rural heritage and historical artifacts, you can explore some amazing farm machinery and buildings. If you are a car enthusiast like our colleague from Calgary-Currie, some of the restored vehicles are incredible, and you can see restoration happening in their shops.

5:10

As a side note, just outside of Wetaskiwin is the Edmonton international speedway – Edmonton is too small; they had to bring it to Wetaskiwin – for those that like fast cars and racing.

Reynolds is also the home of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, where you can get up close, sit in some of the airplanes, and touch those exhibits. Wetaskiwin also has an air show. Due to very generous donations from the Reynolds family – the artifacts are now beyond the space. There's a space crunch to display more, so they are looking at further expansion.

As many of you know, in my previous life, before being elected to this House, I was a teacher. I was delighted to hear in the Speech from the Throne last week our government's commitment to protecting and strengthening our public services such as health care and education. Education plays a major role in our constituency, with Wetaskiwin-Camrose, as I said, having Augustana university, part of the U of A, but also NorQuest College. I know many of my former students have gone on to continue their studies in these institutions and are continuing to make contributions to their community.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to briefly mention one of our local businesses; that is, Parkland Fertilizers. In a period of prolonged economic decline our government is committed to doing everything that we reasonably can as quickly as possible to promote job creation and economic diversification. Businesses like Parkland Fertilizers are a perfect example of the potential that local businesses can bring to the diversification of our economy. Parkland is also currently building new, expanded facilities in Wetaskiwin's southeast industrial park, and since we know that small and medium businesses can help drive job creation in this current economic climate, I am hopeful for the future.

One of their buildings, I'm also proud to share, has 350 solar panels on its south side. By their numbers they tell me that the life expectancy of those panels is 30 years. They expect the cost to be recovered in 10 years, and that leaves 20 years of free electricity and cost savings, not to mention the contributions to the environment and the goals of the climate leadership plan.

Mr. Speaker, Millet is one of Alberta's prettiest towns, as evidenced by the fact that they have won the cities in bloom championships for many years. I'd like to congratulate the recently elected new mayor of Millet, Tony Wadsworth. Tony attended the Speech from the Throne and, with his English background, really appreciated the significance of the ceremony and traditions in this House. I am sure that like many other municipal leaders in our province, Tony appreciated our government's commitment in Her Honour's speech to investing \$34 billion to help build roads,

schools, transit, and other facilities in our communities, that need and will help support the economy and local jobs.

To the south of Wetaskiwin are the four Cree nations of Samson, Montana, Ermineskin, and Louis Bull. While all citizens of Alberta are welcome to Maskwacis, which means “Bear Hills,” you will find a very rich cultural heritage by attending either or both powwows in July and August. I would like to thank the MLAs, my colleagues, that were there this last summer. You would not believe how amazed they were that MLAs would actually come to Maskwacis. When we had so many there, they really, truly appreciated that.

With the growing population amongst First Nations it is important to see how Maskwacis Cultural College is helping to provide postsecondary opportunities. I want to compliment their president, Patricia Littlechild, because today is her birthday. Patricia, if you are watching, happy birthday.

I was incredibly proud to hear in the Speech from the Throne last week of the government’s commitment to respect the request of most of Alberta’s indigenous governments and to not only repeal Bill 22 but also start consultations on a new indigenous people’s sacred ceremonial objects repatriation act, which will facilitate the return of sacred objects to the nations to which they rightfully belong. I look forward to these discussions, and I know my constituents do as well.

In addition to the three chiefs – Kurt Buffalo, Darrell Strongman, and Randy Ermineskin – I would like to pay tribute to the late Rusty Three Fingers, chief of Louis Bull. Maskwacis also has Chief Craig Makinaw as the Alberta First Nations grand chief. Craig and councillors Marvin Yellowbird and Kirk Buffalo were also former students of mine. Something must have gone right to get so many of those students in social studies into politics. Councillor Vernon Saddleback is one of my former cross-country runners. Chief Randy Ermineskin and I shared the coaching bench of the junior B Hawks hockey club.

Speaking of hawks, I would also like to inform everyone that Maskwacis has Hawk Radio 89.1 FM and promotes all things First Nations: music, singers, drummers, and events. Sometime please have a listen. Actually, I wanted to mention some of the other radio stations that we have in Wetaskiwin. Wetaskiwin has two, and Camrose has one, CFCW.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne last week contained numerous initiatives that my constituents are excited for. Our investment in front-line services, workers, and infrastructure is greatly welcome. Everyone is quite aware of the stresses of the present economic situation, which one year ago during the election campaign was rarely a topic of discussion. They are reassured, however, that our government has a plan to put Albertans back to work and will focus on diversifying our economy. My constituents are excited about the reinstatement of the STEP program and the introduction of the Promoting Job Creation and Diversification Act and the \$340 million investment in new direct help to Alberta’s families who need help, including the enhancement to the Alberta child benefit and the family employment tax credit.

I am proud to have supported last fall the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act. My office has had numerous inquiries about how people could participate on the technical rules, and I was informed today by the agriculture minister that there have been hundreds of applications. I’m very impressed with that because I think this not only shows that the people of Alberta are ready for safety and ready for compensation to include all workers, but they are excited to get on with forming the best of the best policies unique to Alberta’s farms.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to end today by thanking all my constituents who placed their faith in me as their MLA – it has been

an amazing experience – and especially thanks to all my team of volunteers and supporters. We will go into history as one of Alberta’s best reformative provincial governments: gender balance, gender rights, reforming Alberta health care, human rights, environmental stewardship, the sunshine list, building schools and moving forward with badly needed infrastructure, and rectifying many treaty wrongs for our First Nations.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member.

Ms Fitzpatrick: Again, I want to thank the Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose for his insightful maiden speech. I’d like to ask him: eight years, and what do you plan on doing after that?

Mr. Hinkley: Well, I have an amusing story. After that, I’m going to write the book about my experiences in this House, and I’m going to call it *My Bargain with the Wildrose Party*. If they promise not to tell any more lies about us, I won’t tell the truth about them.

The Speaker: I would caution the members about certain adjectives that might be directed at other members of the House.

The Member for Sherwood Park.

Ms McKittrick: Yeah. I wanted to thank the member for his speech. I didn’t realize how diverse his riding was and how many interesting cities and places are there. I just wanted to ask him about the importance of the REAs in his riding. I know that you have a couple in your riding.

5:20

Mr. Hinkley: First of all, I guess I need to apologize for using an inappropriate word in my last comments. At that time I will not be a member of the House.

With regard to the REAs I do want to mention a bigger part of that. I have been the co-chair of the rural caucus and advocating on many issues, one of which is co-operatives and the rural electrification associations. As part of the rural caucus we are also talking about food security, surface rights, and property rights. Early in the year, last June, we had Motion 501 about fair compensation and the right to appeal for property rights. Also, our rural caucus is concerned about the electrical rates and consumer protection, environmental stewardship, rural hospitals and schools, and rural economic diversification and sustainability. We also have lots of concerns about urban sprawl. So there are many, many topics that we would like to look at.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Northern Hills under 29(2)(a)?

Mr. Kleinsteuber: Yes, under 29(2)(a). I’d like to thank the member for the fine speech. I just wanted to mention that I’d met the member in Camrose a few years ago as he had organized a rural contact event. As a retired teacher I was wondering what got him involved in these activities and if he could expand on his current outreach activities and if he has any such events maybe lined up for the future.

Thanks.

Mr. Hinkley: Okay. How I got started. I guess that being a social studies teacher, I’ve talked about politics in many, many classes and, of course, always tried to be neutral. It became very obvious from the students and their passion for politics that they actually guided me into looking at our political issues and deciding to take some action, because in school we always talked. I always

encouraged them: "Well, if that's what you believe, why don't you do something about it?" They bounced the question back and said: "Well, why aren't you in politics?" And I did become so involved and very active with that.

I do continue being quite concerned about education and do want to be a voice and advocate for Augustana University College. They do need a new facility, as does Maskwacis Cultural College in Maskwacis. They have been working out of temporary trailers for many, many years. If we do believe that education is one of the tools to get out of poverty, to help people go to work, to do many positive things, I think we have to continue to support the infrastructure that builds schools.

I continue to attend many schools. I continue to support students getting involved. Of course, in grade 6 they study the Alberta Legislature, and it's amazing how many students come up and will want to shake my hand and say: I'm going to become an MLA, just like you. I really appreciate that.

Thank you very much.

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

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

Ms Goehring: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and speak to the Assembly about the fantastic constituency that is Edmonton-Castle Downs. I am proud to represent the community that I have called home for over 20 years and wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you for believing in me and for choosing me to be your representative. I adore Edmonton-Castle Downs as this is where I chose to raise my family, nurture my friendships, and pursue my career as a social worker.

Immediately prior to being elected by the incredible people of Edmonton-Castle Downs, I worked for almost a decade with children's services. In this role I worked with Alberta's most vulnerable children and families, facing what could have been seen as one of the worst times in their lives. I worked hard to ensure that these children and families were always treated with the utmost dignity and respect by both myself and all the other professionals that they interacted with. It is with these values and beliefs that I will continue to advocate for and represent our community to the best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker, Edmonton-Castle Downs is filled with community leagues, associations, and societies that work to support all residents in this constituency. I would like to highlight a few of the many leading organizations that play a role in the engagement of the individuals and the families in our community, one of which is the Castle Downs Recreation Society, that was formed in 1983 with representatives of the community leagues in Castle Downs and several other members.

The society has many successful accomplishments and has invested over \$900,000 in the Castle Downs area. Examples of these contributions to the community are the Castle Downs Recreation Centre, sports fields and parking, the creation of the Castle Downs YMCA, the playground and spray park, the skateboard park, and the Castle Downs district park development. These accomplishments were successful due to the collaborative work with the city of Edmonton, the YMCA, and both federal and provincial grants. Their efforts are celebrated within the community and are an important part of Castle Downs.

The CDRS are also well known for their amazing Canada Day celebration, that has had an increased turnout year after year. I highly recommend that you and your families come and participate in the festivities. The work of all the individual community leagues cannot be emphasized enough as they co-ordinate organized sports,

playschools, and many other opportunities for our families to participate in the development of their community. Edmonton-Castle Downs is an inclusive and cohesive constituency that is celebrated for its diversity.

Another strong community organization is the Castle Downs YMCA. They provide a wide variety of social programs and community events such as the BMO NBA All-Star KidsFest, the healthy kids event, a weekly youth drop-in, child care services, and the alternative day program for youth suspended from school, to name a few. I recently was a guest of the Castle Downs YMCA for the YMCA northern Alberta Strong Kids campaign, which was a fundraiser to support programs in our community. They are an invaluable community centre within Castle Downs for our youth, families, and individuals.

I would also like to mention two of our sports organizations that are housed in our community. The Edmonton Seahawks football organization finished the season with the peewee team as the tier 3 champions and the midgets as tier 4 champions. My son Dre and the Member for Edmonton-Centre's nephew were players on this peewee team, and my husband, Shane, was their coach. The Edmonton Hawks Athletic Club had a great year in the 2016 minor hockey week. They had 14 hockey teams in the tournament, and nine of those teams won gold and silver medals. My son's peewee team just won the gold in the city championship this last Sunday, and my husband coaches this team as well. I would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the players, coaches, and families for participating in children and youth sports.

We had a busy season in my constituency office and hosted an open house in December. We had an excellent turnout, with constituents supporting both the Food Bank and Santas Anonymous. We received an overwhelming donation of over 100 toys for Santas Anonymous that evening, and I would like to again thank the families and individuals for their generosity. Our community demonstrates time and again that we support each other in tough times, and as mentioned in the throne speech, in tough times we always pull together.

As many of you know, we recently celebrated Chinese New Year in February, and I was invited to participate at the Chin Yin Buddhist temple to ring in the new year of the monkey. It was amazing to see the community come together and celebrate a time of new beginnings. The children and youth drummers and lion dancers entertained the room filled with people of all ages. I also had the privilege to participate in the Chinese New Year celebration at the Golden Age Manor, where the singers, dancers, and drummers were of all ages, performing for the residents and their loved ones.

This January I was able to celebrate with Baturyn elementary school on reaching a milestone of 15 years participation in the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Jump Rope for Heart campaign. Congratulations to all the students, staff, and families who supported this campaign.

In the summer the St. Charles Catholic church held an incredible dialogue around Christianity and Islam, and I was honoured to be part of that. This was the third city-wide event organized by the collaborative Edmonton-based group. It was a powerful discussion where Christians and Muslims together grew in their understanding and appreciation of each other's faiths and traditions.

This winter I participated in the Edmonton Islamic Academy's Syrian refugee fundraiser. This was put on in collaboration with the Al-Rashid mosque, which spearheaded the launch of a new centre aiming at addressing the needs of the refugees and complementing the government's efforts simultaneously. All proceeds went to the new Edmonton Islamic Relief centre. The outpouring of funds and supplies for the Syrian refugees was immense. Thank you to the

Islamic community for once again showing that Edmonton-Castle Downs steps up to the plate for their community when in need.

5:30

I have also been fortunate to be appointed to the role of the Alberta government liaison to the Canadian Forces. I have met and maintain an ongoing relationship with Brigadier General W.D. Eyre, who commands the 3rd Canadian Division of Edmonton and the Joint Task Force West; and Colonel Eric Kenny, who commands 4 Wing of CFB Cold Lake. While meeting with the 3rd Canadian Division, I've been able to speak with officers and tour the facilities available to both the military and their families. This summer I had the incredible experience to ride in a tank that crushed a car, and I did it in heels.

This fall I was able to emcee the Helmets to Hardhats event and the launch of the new Support Our Troops licence plate at CFB Edmonton along with the Minister of Transportation and the former minister of jobs, skills, training, and labour. This was an opportunity to highlight Alberta's support of veterans' transitions to new jobs. The Helmets to Hardhats agreement was made with this government to now allow current and retired Canadian Forces members to operate commercial vehicles without additional testing, which was not an option under the previous government.

I was honoured to attend the 100th anniversary celebration of the 3rd Canadian Division in December. This highlighted the efforts that the 3rd Canadian Division has made in both international and domestic matters. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Brigadier General W.D. Eyre for all his hard work and collaboration to support and lead the 3rd Canadian Division. We wish him all the best in his new role and congratulations on his new appointment in Ottawa. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the new commander of the 3rd Canadian Division, Brigadier General Simon Hetherington, who will begin in July of 2016.

In September I had an opportunity to speak at the Royal Canadian Air Force commemorative park dedication ceremony. The date of the commemoration coincided with the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, in which the RCAF played a vital role and helped turn the tide during the Second World War. Edmonton has a rich history with military aviation, and this was showcased at this event.

I was also honoured to attend the unveiling of the Flanders fields park within the village of Griesbach. The park was created by the Castle Downs Recreational Society and commemorated the 100th anniversary of Lieutenant John McCrae's iconic poem *In Flanders Fields*. The park is a great symbol to honour the strong ties between Edmonton and the Canadian military.

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to tour 4 Wing of CFB Cold Lake, hosted by Colonel Eric Kenny, 4 Wing commander. The base was able to showcase how 4 Wing effectively protects the Canadian west through aviation. I met with the 4 Wing commander and fellow officers, who took the time to showcase all of the positive work that the base is doing to support those stationed, and their families, at 4 Wing as well as those deployed with Operation Impact. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome and thank all the men and women who played a role in Operation Impact as they now return home.

This fall I travelled to Penhold to participate along with Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, Lois Mitchell, at the commemoration of the Penhold cenotaph, which honours those from the town and surrounding rural community who served in the Great War, of 1914 to 1918, and the Second World War, of 1939 of 1945. The cenotaph was commissioned with private donor funds and was completed in time for the Remembrance Day celebrations at the Penhold Regional Multiplex. To honour our veterans, I participated with Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the

celebration of the 90th anniversary at the Kingsway Legion here in Edmonton. As a democratic, independent, and member-based organization the Royal Canadian Legion has improved the lives of thousands of veterans and their families, including serving military and RCMP members. It was a powerful moment that showcased the importance of supporting our veterans through the Legions. I look forward to maintaining and building new relationships while touring the impressive military facilities across our beautiful province in my role as the Alberta government liaison to the Canadian Forces.

Now to an issue that is near and dear to my heart. It's incredible to think that over 100 years ago women were having to fight for their right to vote and that now, today, we govern. It's an exciting time to be a part of history, with women represented in all levels of government. Mr. Speaker, as I stand beside my peers, I am inspired by their accomplishments. Our caucus is roughly 45 per cent female, where our cabinet is fully gender balanced, the first time in Canadian history. Under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Status of Women, a new mother, we are working towards more diversity and inclusive measures. It's important to continue to nurture and support women from all backgrounds to step into leadership roles and community engagement with the goal of representation and equality in all aspects of policy and programs. I have chosen to do this in my life's work and in the Edmonton-Castle Downs constituency office. As a social work practicum student supervisor I encourage the social work students who are in our office to feel empowered and supported in leadership roles.

Mr. Speaker, education is so important. I've had the wonderful and insightful opportunity to visit our local schools. I'm inspired to see so many young people asking insightful questions about government, my role as an MLA, my role as a mother, my role as a woman, and about how they, too, can one day run and become leaders of our community.

When I attended the Daughters Day celebration with my own daughter, Adrien, it was overwhelming to see so many young, engaged women who look at us here in the Legislature as role models and see how we can participate in standing up for equality.

Now, having mentioned my daughter, I want to close with acknowledging the love and support of my family. To my children, Allan, Adrien, and Dre: you have been a constant source of comic relief, which is always a breath of fresh air. To my mom, Lorraine: you're an incredible woman, and I appreciate all that you have done to encourage me to strive for my goals and to hold a high standard in all of my pursuits. To my husband, who has remained a steadfast partner, supporter, and who is always ready to step in when I need you most: I want to thank you for all that you do and want you to know that I appreciate how much you do for our family. To my family: you inspire and motivate me every day to be the best that I can be as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a friend, and an MLA. I could not do this without all of your support.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. member, if your children need some comic relief, you might advise them to watch this place sometimes.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I have to thank the Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs for a fantastic maiden speech. I'm very grateful that I share borders with you between our two constituencies.

You, of course, had mentioned that in your former life you were a social worker. I was wondering what kinds of skills and experience have come from that area that contribute to serving as an MLA for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Ms Goehring: Thank you very much, Member, for the question. I see my role as a social worker as being what I do. I believe that in this role as an MLA, I am doing social work. I'm advocating. I'm standing up for and looking out for Alberta's most vulnerable, for the people that come to my office, for the people that don't come to my office but send me an e-mail or a phone call. I'm advocating. I'm reaching out. I'm being their voice. I see my role as being an MLA doing social work. I think all of us here in this Assembly are here because we truly want to see a better place for Alberta, and I believe as a social worker I'm able to do that. I'm so grateful for the experience that I have had.

I want to just acknowledge that today is international Social Work Day. It's such a privilege to be able to stand in this House today as a social worker with all of my fellow social workers, doing what we do.

Thank you.

5:40

The Speaker: No others under 29(2)(a)?

I would recognize the Member for Little Bow.

Mr. Schneider: Well, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. It's truly an honour. I rise in the Chamber today to deliver my maiden speech, as we've heard ladies and gentlemen across the floor and on this side do very good jobs as such. It's truly an honour to have been elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. The spring election of 2015 was an election that was not expected. As such, a couple of the parties were not quite ready for the event. A poor showing was expected by many, but as per the outcome it became clear on May 5 that those that were not expected to be able to put forth a strong showing indeed were able to demonstrate to this province that hard work really does pay off. I mean that sincerely as a reflection of both sides of the House.

I don't remember what the name of the girl in the back row's riding was, but she had a very close race. In my own there were less than a dozen votes, actually eight, that separated me from the incumbent. When I arrived in Edmonton to my first caucus meeting, I was promptly given the nickname "Landslide" by our House leader. What the outcome really did confirm for me, as for my fellow MLAs, is that every vote counts.

Mr. Speaker, I have congratulated you on your position and your election to that position personally, but I did want to say publicly that I congratulate you. Many well-respected folks have accepted the job of Speaker, several from my riding, and I'm sure you will be as fair and impartial as any of those that came before you.

Her Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor in her throne speech of June 15, 2015, neglected to mention agriculture in that speech. The March 8 throne speech this year mentioned the word "agriculture" once, and that was a general comment about the government setting out plans to build on strengths in our economy, including the agriculture industry. I look forward to seeing what those plans will be to build on the strengths of this industry, that has provided so much to Alberta.

I just want to be real clear, Mr. Speaker. With respect, agriculture has been a key industry in what would become Alberta since the 1870s. Short of the fur trade, as Canada opened up the west, agriculture was for decades in this province the number one export industry, those exports being wheat and beef. It's an industry that I hold dear and an industry that has contributed to the gross domestic product of Alberta in a huge way over the years.

My maiden speech today will focus on an area in this province that is special to me. I was born and raised in the southern portion of Alberta, and I'm proud to speak about that area in the House today. I think it's fair to say that Alberta is a province that was built,

shall we say, by wave after wave of pioneers and settlers. As a member of the Little Bow riding I can attest to that fact. As the railway came westward, these pioneers and settlers founded the communities inside my rural constituency.

As a matter of fact, my grandfather sailed across an ocean from Scotland to come to this new land. He arrived in eastern Canada in 1904. He promptly got himself a job on the Canadian Pacific Railway and worked his way across Canada in that capacity. In 1908 he arrived in a very new province called Alberta, and he settled on a quarter section of land two miles away from a very small community called Armada, about 30 miles east of the town of Vulcan. He paid \$10 to the province of Alberta for that quarter section, and he homesteaded it, which meant breaking 20 acres, fencing the quarter, and building a shelter, no small feat while using horses and what would be considered today ancient, primitive pieces of equipment and sheer manpower. He proved up and received the adjoining quarter section for his efforts two years later.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I hesitate, particularly since it is your maiden speech, to interrupt; however, I am required under the standing orders to interrupt.

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

Bill 3

Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2016

The Speaker: In accordance with Standing Order 64(3) the chair is required to put the question to the House on the appropriation bill on the Order Paper for second reading.

[Motion carried; Bill 3 read a second time]

The Speaker: The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy for the hon. member to continue with his response to the Speech from the Throne until the clock adjourns us for dinner.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. member. Much appreciated, I think. Please proceed, hon. Member for Little-Bow.

Consideration of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's Speech

(continued)

Mr. Schneider: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the member that has given me another chance here.

In every corner of my riding, Mr. Speaker, similar stories can be told, like the one that I just reiterated. Those settlers broke the ground, tilled it, and turned my constituency into a picturesque agricultural Garden of Eden, a landscape that today produces all manner of foodstuffs, those being wheat, canola, barley, oats, sugar beets, potatoes, beef, pork, chicken, eggs, and dairy. Those same producers, their offspring, and their offspring were charged with setting up secondary processes for the very commodities that they were creating. As a result, the Little Bow riding relies on a good highway and railway network, good rural roads and bridges in order to move those commodities to markets around the globe. Without that criss-crossing grid of infrastructure the residents of my constituency that are charged with feeding the world would be hard pressed to produce the products that they do and get them to market.

Right now I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge a well-known area of southern Alberta which resides within the Little Bow riding which has been given the nickname of Feedlot Alley. This area, because of naturally occurring chinook winds, which produce milder winters than other areas of the province and allow for a better feed-conversion rate, is home to over 2.3 million cattle. Sixty per cent of all of Canada's beef is finished in this area. This industry creates its own economy. It requires grains and roughages and supplements and manpower to finish those cattle for market to be shipped not only to Canadians but to markets all over the world.

Little Bow was also blessed with energy resources early on. Coal was discovered upon the arrival of the pioneers, and this combustible black sedimentary rock, which revealed itself in seams and beds and veins and eventually became the largest source of energy for the generation of electricity in this young province, was being discovered and excavated throughout many areas of my riding. The names of communities were closely tied to the discoveries of vast stores of the mineral, communities like Coaldale and Coalhurst. Just south of where I live there is a 10- or 12-mile stretch of road named the Coalmine Road for obvious reasons. Along that stretch are several small coal reserves that pioneers of the area mined many years ago. The product was sold to folks that travelled by horse and wagon for a load of the precious heating fuel from areas a day's ride away.

Coal Banks, today's Lethbridge, which does not make up part of but is surrounded by the Little Bow constituency, has been home to generations of those that pioneered the land around her and home to the services required by those that live within her and home to the services required by many that still occupy the same lands of those that came so long ago. Drift mining of coal led to the development of Lethbridge. Nicholas Sheran and Sir Alexander Galt were early entrepreneurs for the market of coal from that area.

Along with coal other energy resources were discovered. Oil and natural gas became a large industry in my riding in the early '60s. After the discovery at Leduc No. 1 in 1947 an eruption of exploration around the province made our home a true success story. Like many rural ridings in Alberta, Little Bow is home to the two top industries within our provincial boundaries, energy and agriculture.

5:50

The villages and towns that grew up within the areas that were settled as a result of rail running west in my riding are vast. They include Coaldale, Coalhurst, Picture Butte, Nobleford, Barons, Vauxhall, Carmangay, Champion, Lomond, Vulcan, Milo, and Arrowwood. These are all places where pioneers of all types gathered to do business. This in turn gave opportunity for more businesses to begin. General stores, implement sales, blacksmiths, poolrooms and dance halls, barbershops, taxi services, restaurants, doctors, lawyers, banks, and schools all began the century-long growth of Alberta.

There have certainly been tough times, the weather on the farming and ranching side and the economy on the town and village side, but residents of Little Bow, no matter their chosen vocation, have persevered and stayed on to proudly build a portion of this great province, a testament to the values passed on by those original pioneers. But that testament also applies to the new settlers and Canadian citizens, who can also be considered pioneers in Alberta. These are the citizens that continue to add to the rich tapestry and diversity of this province in their own right.

Quoting from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's throne speech, we are "an optimistic, entrepreneurial, can-do people [that] are community-minded, caring and neighbourly." Those words

describe the people of the riding of Little Bow very well and honour the people that came before us.

While talking about my riding, I need to mention the politics of the past. Little Bow is proud of the people that it has sent to the Legislative Assembly. In 1913 James McNaughton as a Liberal candidate. In 1921 Oran McPherson as a United Farmers of Alberta candidate; Mr. McPherson was the Speaker from 1922 to 1926. In 1935 Peter Dawson for the Social Credit; Mr. Dawson is still the longest serving Speaker in Alberta history, from 1937 to 1963. In 1963 Mr. Raymond Speaker for the Social Credit Party; Mr. Speaker also was elected as an independent, a Representative, and finally a Progressive Conservative in his 29-year tenure. In 1992 Barry McFarland for the Progressive Conservatives; Barry served until 2012. Little Bow chose Ian Donovan, a Wildrose candidate, in 2012, and the results of the 2015 election are fresh in our minds.

As I wind down my maiden speech to this Assembly, I wish to recognize the Siksika Nation constituents, located on the northern edge of my riding. The people of this proud area are descendants of the first known inhabitants. The present population of the Siksika Nation is near 7,000. The community has facilities such as the Deerfoot Sportsplex, the Old Sun Community College, a provincial courthouse, police station and emergency services, elementary and high schools, and the Blackfoot Crossing historic park, where Treaty 7 was signed on September 22, 1877. As a matter of fact – my colleague isn't here – but my colleague from Strathmore-Brooks and I are working at setting up a visit with the elders of the Siksika Nation this summer and, for me, a highly anticipated personalized visit to Blackfoot Crossing, where the respected Chief Crowfoot, who was instrumental in the signing of Treaty 7, is buried.

Just a few hundred feet to the west of my home, Mr. Speaker, on the edge of a coulee which is a tributary of the West Arrowwood Creek, are five teepee rings. This small piece of land has never been broken and looks as it would have hundreds of years ago. Before there were fences and farms and towns and railroads, the nomadic Blackfoot people travelled all directions of this area for major tribal ceremonies. These rocks in circular formation, that were touched by the hands of those that came before us, will not be disturbed in my lifetime. I'm proud to have a part of history that is so close to my home and will protect it.

So, Mr. Speaker, with all of the history of the Little Bow riding and, indeed, of every riding within our glorious province we have now begun the Second Session of the 29th Legislature of Alberta. Eighty-seven people have been sent to this hallowed Chamber to conduct the business of the people. They've been sent here as representatives. We are charged with debating the issues that are put before us on behalf of those people. We are charged with making laws that the people of Alberta must live by. We are charged with taking the ideas and concerns of those that sent us here and bringing them forth within these walls for strong discussion and resolution.

I can't express how much it means to me and my family to be a part of the 29th Legislature, how much it means to be the 895th Member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta to be sworn and the seventh MLA of the great riding of Little Bow. I am positive, Mr. Speaker, that every elected soul within this room, no matter what political stripe, garners those same feelings. Ladies and gentlemen of the Assembly, I respect each of you and those that sent you here. Let us begin this session we have begun – I wrote this a few days ago – with healthy debate in a process of good and honest government, the kind of government that the people of Alberta can be proud of.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms Jabbour: I just want to make a general comment that in the many years I worked for *Hansard*, I always said that I had the dubious privilege of being able to listen to every word spoken in this House. It wasn't always enjoyable, but my absolute favourite part was always the maiden speeches, and this afternoon my colleagues have not disappointed. It's been an absolute joy. Thank you for the wonderful stories.

To the Member for Little Bow: this summer I had the privilege of travelling in southern Alberta and visiting areas in your constituency. Of course, as a Trekkie I had to go to Vulcan. I wonder if you could just share with the House a little bit more about Vulcan and the *Star Trek* connection and what that's all about.

Mr. Schneider: Well, thank you for the question. Yes. I remember – dear, I would have to say 30 years ago – when the discussion to relate Vulcan to the member of the *Star Trek Enterprise* that came from – his hometown was Vulcan. I remember the discussions and people saying to those that thought it was a great idea: “What are you talking about? This can't work.” People persevered, and the county and the town became involved and thought: you know, this is a great idea; this will put Vulcan on the map. It really did. Whether you like *Star Trek* or not, when you say Vulcan, you understand what's going on there.

They've gone a long ways. They've built a centre. It looks like a church, kind of a synagogue looking thing, but it serves a purpose. It has lots of memorabilia for sale inside, has lots of unique little

things with every portion of *Star Trek*. If you happen to get inside there, it starts with *Star Trek*, like Captain Kirk and Spock himself, and moves on through every series of *Star Trek* that was on television. They're all represented within there.

It has certainly put Vulcan on the map, and it is a phenomenon that every town kind of looks for to make itself known across at least Alberta. I think that Vulcan has made it further than that.

The Speaker: The Member for Edmonton-Decore.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I absolutely cannot help myself. I have to ask the question. Being a *Star Trek* fan here as well, I have to ask the member: which captain is it?

Mr. Schneider: Well, it was Captain Kirk, of course. Mr. Speaker, my hair is getting grey too, but I remember watching Captain Kirk and Spock and all of it for three years in the '60s, so of course I'm a fan.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we know that we have at least two Trekkies in the Assembly.

The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Bilous: Mr. Speaker, I think that on that note I will move to adjourn until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

[Motion carried; the Assembly adjourned at 5:59 p.m.]

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