

To the minister. I would like to know: what other consultation processes has the Alberta government undertaken with indigenous peoples?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very proud to speak to this question because, of course, the provincial government has really worked on transforming our relationship with the indigenous people in this province, and that includes coming to the table with them and having multiple conversations, whether it be through our Treaty 8 tables or our Blackfoot protocol tables or many other areas. For example, we have had consultations with indigenous people around curriculum, around rural broadband, around the North Saskatchewan regional plan, mandatory training for the Alberta public service, a human health study in Fort Chipewyan.

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

Mr. Hinkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that the Conservative governments in the past just tried to ignore the problems facing indigenous peoples and given that the same attitude seems to be alive and well in the UCP today, again to the same minister: what are you doing to ensure that indigenous people and communities are treated with the respect they deserve?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Feehan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much, Member, for the question. I appreciate the hard work you've been doing in the area of Wetaskiwin, and I look forward to working with you and with the Maskwacis communities again, just as we did even last week.

You know that we have been working very hard to develop a really positive relationship with indigenous people in Alberta, but meanwhile the UCP members, like the Member for Little Bow, say things like, quote: these people don't traditionally vote. I'm not sure what part of that sentence is most offensive. It's a shame that a member of this House would say that, and that shows that the UCP has no interest in working with our indigenous peoples. Our government will continue to strengthen these important relationships . . .

The Speaker: Thank you, hon. minister.
Thirty seconds, hon. members.

Hon. members, I think the Deputy Premier has a supplemental answer which she'd like to clarify. Is that correct, Deputy Premier?

Tobacco Reduction and Industry Lobbyists

Ms Hoffman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and to all members. I have a supplemental response to the question that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View asked last week of the Premier. I'd like to clarify some information from last week.

In the Ministry of Health there were actually two meetings with staff and National Smokeless Tobacco regarding the ban of menthol cigarettes. I also understand that there had been annual meetings with Treasury Board and Finance staff regarding regulating the industry. In 2017 I directed my deputy minister to send a memo to Health ministry staff to reinforce article 5.3 of the framework convention on tobacco control, which states that interaction with the industry is limited to only those meetings which are absolutely necessary about regulating the industry. No government official will meet with the tobacco industry going forward.*

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View.

Dr. Swann: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a lot to say, but thank you for clarifying it. There have been rumours about meetings within other government departments. You've clarified that there have been a couple. I would hope that all departments in government get the same message at some point so that related departments such as Economic Development and Trade or whatever other departments also understand the same proscription on meeting behind closed doors with tobacco lobbyists.

Thanks very much.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Premier.

Ms Hoffman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's certainly my intent. I look forward to – I believe my office has tried to schedule time so that the Member for Calgary-Mountain View and myself can discuss this in further detail face to face and discuss how we're going to make that happen.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: Edmonton-McClung.

Ramadan

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise today and wish Ramadan Mubarak to all, especially to those of my constituents in Edmonton-McClung and to all Albertans of Muslim faith. Muslim Albertans have a long history in our province. Across Alberta Muslims are volunteering in our communities, donating not just time but also financially. In Alberta we are proud to say that the oldest mosque in Canada, the Al Rashid mosque, was built right here in Edmonton in 1938.

During this month Muslims will be fasting from sunrise to sunset, praying, reading the Quran, and reflecting on their personal habits. This time of renewed devotion to the practice of Islam is meant to not only connect mind, body, and spirit but to increase empathy for those less fortunate. While Ramadan is a time for faith, prayer, and fasting, it is also a time for charity. Let us all take some time this month to reflect on what each of us can do in our own communities to help those less fortunate and how we as Albertans can work together to make a more inclusive society, a society that helps those in need, values diverse cultures, and sees our differences as a strength.

Muslim Albertans will be gathering to break their fasts this month at iftar meals across the province. In my constituency Rahma mosque will be hosting daily iftar meals. I encourage all MLAs to work with their local mosque to invite their non-Muslim constituents to attend an iftar meal. You will be wholeheartedly welcomed. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about the commitment to community that is fundamental to Islam throughout the year, and the food is fabulous.

Observing Ramadan in a climate as northern as Alberta's means long hours of daylight, leading to long hours of fasting. I hope that this month those of us who do not observe Ramadan take the time to recognize and support our friends, colleagues, and neighbours who may be fasting. I plan to do a one-day fast in solidarity with our Alberta Muslim neighbours, and I invite all MLAs to join me.

Once again, I wish a hearty Ramadan Mubarak to all.

The Speaker: Hon. members, we've had a request for unanimous consent to revert to introductions.

[Unanimous consent granted]

*See page 872, right column, paragraph 6