



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

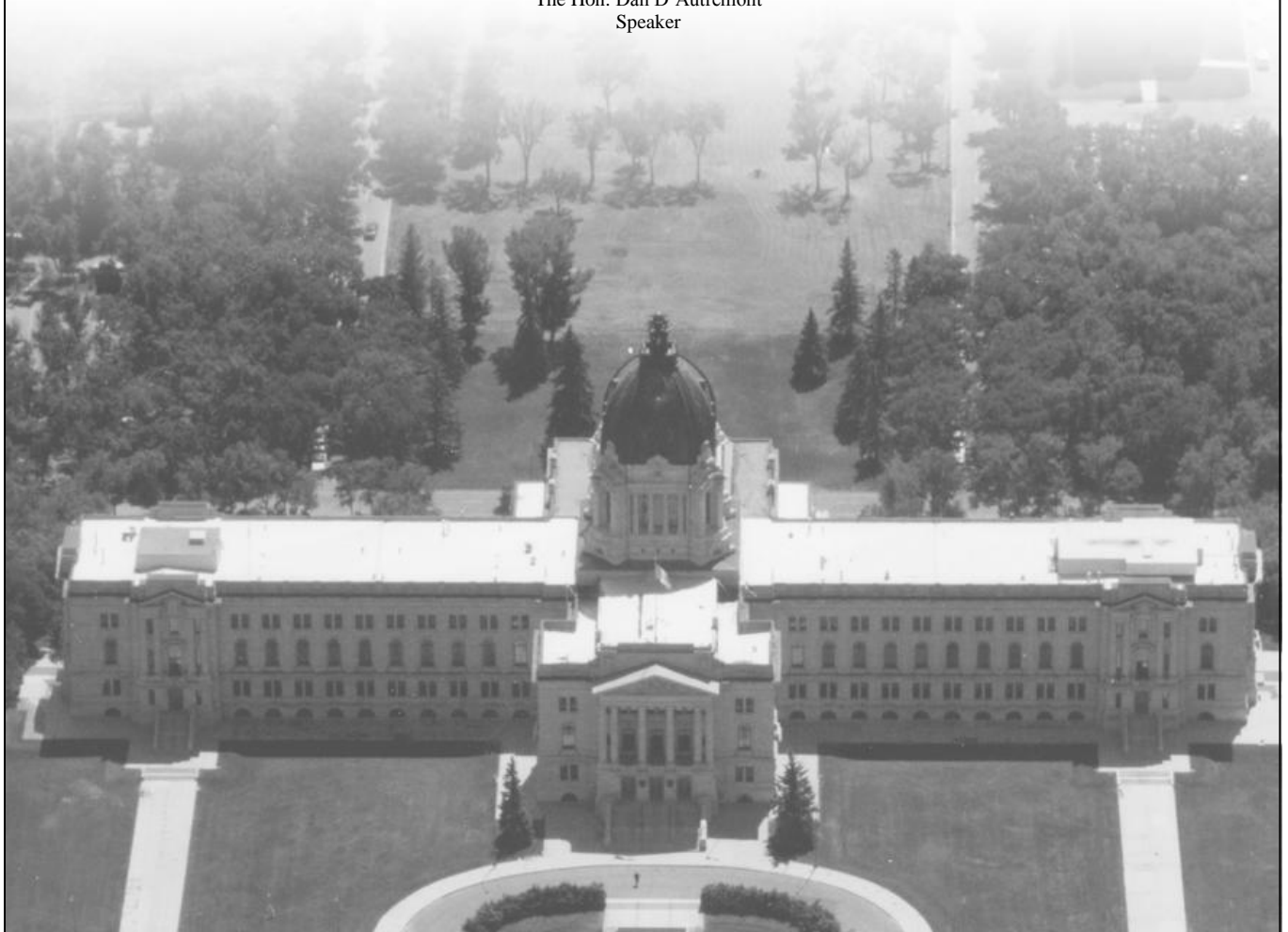
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D'Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
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Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
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Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce 18 grade 11 and 12 students from the law 30 class at Sheldon-Williams Collegiate. They're sitting in the east gallery, and they're accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Lindsay Vindevoghel, and Ms. Jeanie Dunbar. So I ask all members to welcome them here today to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to all members of this honourable Assembly, four people who are very important to me. My daughter Alison Sargent from Ottawa. Alison is executive director Rx&D Health Research Foundation and in the province to present a \$100,000 fellowship, a research fellowship at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. And her husband, Sean Sargent, manager IT [information technology] operations in Shared Services Canada. And their daughter, Liberty, who is the apple of grandpa's eye, 18 months old. And they're accompanied by my wife, Linda, who is well known to many members of this honourable Assembly. And I hope all members will accord them a warm welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce three people in the west gallery. Two are fixtures of this Assembly, I believe, Rich and Joanne Lepp from the Saskatchewan House of Prayer. It's always great to see them in the gallery. With them is Mike Schouten of WeNeedALaw.ca. Mike comes from Surrey, BC [British Columbia]. He is a Lions fan. He did admit that to me today, although in the past events he says he has seen a bit of a light with a bit of a green tint to it. So great to see him here today.

Mike describes WeNeedALaw.ca as an organization that advocates for the human rights of children before birth. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome Rich and Joanne to their Assembly, and welcome Mike to this Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater support for anti-bullying initiatives. And we know bullying can cause serious harm, and the consequences of bullying are devastating, including depression, self-harm, addictions, and suicide. And we know that bullying can occur within schools but also

through social media, cellphones, or through the Internet, also known as cyberbullying. It's a human rights issue, Mr. Speaker, one of safety and inclusion.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to protect Saskatchewan's children from bullying because the lives of young people are at stake and this government must do more to protect our youth.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of very concerned residents from across southern Saskatchewan as it relates to the unacceptable closure of the emergency room at Regina's Pasqua Hospital. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to take the following action: to cause the provincial government to ensure our capital city has two 24-hour emergency rooms.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These petitions are signed by concerned residents from Regina and Lumsden. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Far Reserve Road. This road is used as the main road into the regional landfill which is operated by a tripartite agreement between the communities of La Ronge, Air Ronge, and Lac La Ronge Indian Band. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to pave Far Reserve Road, which has not been given proper resources by this government. The dust on this road is causing respiratory problems for elders and community members. It also creates poor visibility for drivers. This is a safety issue, in that we have students walking alongside of a very dusty road to school. This road has a high volume of traffic in that this is the only road to the regional dump.

It is signed by many northern residents. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School. The petitioners point out that the gym at Sacred Heart Community School in north central Regina is now quite literally falling apart, has been closed indefinitely, and is no longer safe for students or staff. Certainly the petitioners are aware that a temporary solution has been provided in terms of the refurbishment of the old sanctuary at the old Sacred Heart Church, but they are calling for a permanent solution.

They also point out that Sacred Heart Community School is the largest school in North Central with 450-plus students, 75 per cent of whom are First Nations and Métis. They point out that enrolment has increased by 100-plus students over the past four years and that attendance and learning outcomes are steadily improving. And they point out, as a matter of basic fairness and common sense, Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym. In the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Sask Party provincial government to immediately commit to the replacement of the gymnasium of Sacred Heart Community School.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Regina. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Celebration of Hanukkah

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the sun goes down over Saskatchewan tonight, our province will be made a little brighter with the lighting of the year's first menorah candle. Jewish families begin the celebration of Hanukkah this evening, commemorating the rededication of the second temple in Jerusalem and the miraculous longevity of the oil which brought determination to a people much in need of encouragement.

At this time we extend our best wishes to the Saskatchewan families celebrating the festival of lights. Here at the legislature, the Premier will bring greetings tonight at 6 p.m. in the Saskatchewan Gallery followed by a lighting of the menorah. In Saskatoon, I will be joining the Minister of Advanced Education and the Chabad Saskatoon at the third annual menorah lighting ceremony to be held at the Mendel Art Gallery.

As Rabbi Kats is quick to point out, Hanukkah's universal message of freedom makes it more than a Jewish holiday. It is truly a community celebration, a time for all of us to reflect on the freedoms we enjoy as Canadians, and the providential circumstances have brought us such fortune.

Mr. Speaker, the tapestry of our province is made stronger by its diversity. As we move into the holiday season, we recognize that our religious and cultural pluralism is a source of strength. Today we celebrate with Saskatchewan's Jewish community

and thank them for their contributions to our province's character, economy, and public service. Just as the miracle of the oil brought courage to the Maccabees in 165 BC [before Christ], we hope that the light of the menorah will inspire us to seek out a fairer and freer world.

I invite all members to join me as we send our best wishes to those celebrating tonight. Happy Hanukkah.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Remembering Guy Bouvier

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will ask all members of the Assembly to recognize the life of a very important Métis figure. Guy Bouvier was born in Ile-a-la-Crosse in 1946 and died on November 7, 2013 in Meadow Lake. Guy worked hard in his lifetime as a social worker, apprentice electrician, and a shop steward.

Guy's involvement in Métis politics started in Meadow Lake when, as a fieldworker for the Métis Society, he initiated the establishment of the Native Urban Housing in Meadow. He was also very instrumental in forming the North West Métis Friendship Centre and helped bring legal aid to Meadow Lake. In 2010 Guy received the Order of Gabriel Dumont Gold Medal, which is a lifetime achievement award for his work on education and training of Métis people and for enhancing the employment opportunities for Métis people overall.

I want to extend my condolences to Guy's wife, Linda, who has remained on the acreage where at one time they raised and trained 20 horses for chuckwagon races. He will be missed by his daughters, Erin and Renee, and his grandchildren: Jackson, Madden, and Leyton.

For all of his life, he enjoyed playing the guitar and singing, and plans have been made to organize a fiddle festival in Meadow Lake next summer to recognize Guy Bouvier's life.

Guy was my cousin and a friend, and I ask all members to join me in recognizing the lifetime of Guy Bouvier and his very important contributions to improving the lives of Métis people. His work on earth was indeed well done. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Artist Wins Governor General's History Award

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak about a Prince Albert artist who recently won a Governor General's History Award. Catherine Blackburn was the winner in the senior arts category of Historical Canada's Aboriginal Arts and Stories contest for her painting titled *Grandma*.

The award encourages Aboriginal youth to express their history through artistic mediums by producing either a piece of writing or art about their culture and their heritage. Catherine, of Dene ancestry, is one of four recipients of the national contest that has been recognizing Aboriginal youth for the past 10 years. Catherine wanted to start a body of work that honoured her

family and culture and made the piece a couple of years ago when she was travelling. The award-winning acrylic painting pays tribute to Catherine's own mother, who is a proud Dene woman that calls Saskatchewan's North home.

Catherine hopes this award and her artwork will show Aboriginal youth that there are a lot of opportunities in the world if you seek them out. She also highlights the importance of honouring Aboriginal history and encourages youth to always remember where they came from and what made them who they are.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Ms. Catherine Blackburn on this prestigious Governor General's History Award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Albert Library Celebrates 100th Anniversary

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Imagine Saskatchewan's capital city 100 years ago with a population of 30,000 people, citizens travelling by foot, by bicycle, by streetcar. And in 1913, the Albert library branch was established in a modest wooden structure at a cost of \$2,200. Earlier this fall, Albert library celebrated its 100th anniversary. Wendy Sinclair, the branch head of Albert library, has been with this community hub for a tremendous 22 years.

The demographics in our community boast a very high Aboriginal population, and the Albert library reflects the needs of the community it serves. When Albert library began offering Aboriginal-based programming, their circulation doubled within the year. It has changed the dynamics of this branch and increased the pride in the neighbourhood. Programming offers everything from creating powwow outfits, to Cree and Saulteaux language circles, to making hand drums.

Mr. Speaker, the branch has a bit of an international reputation as well, and members of the library committee have presented papers in Norway, New Zealand, Australia, the United States, and Sweden. In addition, the library committee has hosted delegations from New Zealand and Australia. There are adults in North Central who have grown up with the Albert library. These men and women are now bringing their children in for storytime. They recognize how much Albert library has meant to them as a constant over all these years.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Albert library branch on their centennial, and here's wishing them continued success for the next 100 years. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Moose Jaw to Host Scotties Tournament of Hearts

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a few hours ago, I attended the announcement that Moose Jaw has been awarded the 2015 Scotties Tournament of Hearts. Our great city, Moose Jaw, will host the annual women's curling tournament which will decide which team will go on to represent Canada at the World Curling Championship. There is

no doubt in my mind that Moose Jaw will be a great host for this event.

Mr. Speaker, when our government released the Saskatchewan plan for growth last fall, it gave a strong mandate to aggressively promote Saskatchewan as a tourist destination. Hosting events like the Scotties Tournament of Hearts will raise Saskatchewan's profile across the country as a first-class tourist destination.

It will be the first time that Moose Jaw has hosted the Tournament of Hearts, but definitely not the first time the city has hosted a successful curling event at Mosaic Place. The 2012 Capital One Canada Cup of Curling held in Moose Jaw broke attendance records and the 4,465-seat Mosaic Place is ideally suited to hosting the crown jewel of Canadian women's curling, the Scotties Tournament of Hearts.

Ticket announcements for the 2015 Scotties will be made in the coming weeks, and I know Saskatchewan's devoted curling fans will be eagerly awaiting. Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me in congratulating Moose Jaw on being named the host for this great sporting event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Big River Saw Mill Reopens

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The buzzing of blades and smells of sawdust are once again present at the Big River saw mill. The plant, closed in 2006, began operation earlier this fall under the new owner, Carrier Lumber. This is great news for Big River, Mr. Speaker. The reopened mill will create 100 new jobs in the community. This doesn't include contractors, chip and log haulers, and all the other jobs that will be connected to the mill, Mr. Speaker.

The reopening will create a boost to the local economy and allow those who formerly worked at the mill and since went on to other industries to come home and work near their families again. The news of the reopening has created a resurgence in the community, according to Big River town councillor, Carla Chadwick:

I think everybody's very excited about it. Carrier Lumber is a very well-respected company, and I believe people are happy that they are trying to keep things local and trying to hire some of the people that originally left the old mill.

Some advantages have no monetary impact at all but will simply help Big River require an identity that was lost when the mill was shut down.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating the town of Big River and Carrier Lumber on the exciting reopening of the Big River saw mill.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Affordable Housing Project in Regina

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in this House to inform all members that construction is beginning on another new social housing project in our province. I was pleased to participate in a sod-turning event that was held last Friday for a 48-unit rental housing project right here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, communities across our province are experiencing unprecedented growth. With that growth comes challenges in meeting the needs for safe and affordable housing. That's why our government committed in our plan for growth to address the needs for new housing options. We're doing that in part by selling close to 300 single-family housing units in Regina, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw and reinvesting the proceeds in new housing for those communities.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that access to good, affordable housing helps maintain a strong economy and a high quality of life. That's why I'm pleased to report that our government was able to help by investing \$9.9 million in this project. As a result, we're making housing less expensive for the tenants and the taxpayers by creating more affordable, modern, energy-efficient multi-unit housing as well as creating hundreds of entry-level home ownership opportunities.

This project and others like it support our government's goal of improving housing availability and affordability across our whole province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Emergency Medical Services in Regina

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've heard a fair bit over the last few weeks about nurses who are afraid for patient safety because of overcrowding and understaffing. And now, Mr. Speaker, our province's nurses are afraid for patient safety with news of the closure of the Pasqua ER [emergency room]. SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] president, Tracy Zambory, says, "The south part of the province cannot function with only one ER in the capital city. You can't do it. Patient safety is going to be put at risk, and we can't have that."

The president of the nurses' union says that it's not workable, and the president says that patient safety will be put at risk. My question to the Premier: does he agree with the president of the nurses' union, or does he dismiss her concerns?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Far from it, Mr. Speaker. We share her concerns about the loss of, the temporary loss of ER services at the Pasqua for certain hours of the day. Mr. Speaker, that's why we're working very hard on contingency plans even as we speak here, even as we meet in the legislature. It's why we've been pleased with the announcement that the Meadow Clinic just across the street — or it's certainly in the neighbourhood — is going to be open until midnight, Mr. Speaker. It's why we're also pretty hopeful, frankly, about the process of contract negotiations with respect to emergency room doctors who are

obviously so important to this particular issue, but health care in general in the province.

We have a good partnership with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, as evidenced by the relationship we've been able to have over the last six years, as evidenced by the fact that there are 1,000 more nurses today working in Saskatchewan, something the NDP [New Democratic Party] said was impossible to achieve or at least would refuse to set a goal. So we take the concerns of SUN seriously. We share them, frankly, and this is the number one priority right now within the Health ministry in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nurses say that it is completely unacceptable for our capital city to have just one 24-hour emergency room. Nurses say that southern Saskatchewan cannot function with just one 24-hour emergency room in Regina, and nurses say that this decision will put patient safety at risk. So my question to the Premier: what specifically is being done at Regina General Hospital for them to cope with the closure of the Pasqua ER?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the region has put in place a contingency to manage through this situation, Mr. Speaker. We hope certainly that this is a short time contingency that needs to be put in place, Mr. Speaker, knowing that for the limited numbers of individuals who on a typical evening would show up at the Pasqua Hospital, Mr. Speaker, are . . . Mr. Speaker, the more serious cases are already being referred to the General Hospital.

It may not have as much of an impact as one may think, Mr. Speaker, but knowing that it will have an impact, the region is proposing to staff the General Hospital with additional staff, including additional emergency room nurse 24 hours a day, Mr. Speaker, at the General Hospital, and they will evaluate going forward, based on what they see in terms of the numbers of people that do still find their way at the Pasqua Hospital. But as I've indicated before, Mr. Speaker, they'll be evaluating this situation as we move through it daily.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In an earlier response, the Premier made reference to the fact that a nearby walk-in clinic will be open for a few more hours at least for a few weeks. And that's good, Mr. Speaker, but that doesn't address the problem. According to the health region, about 85 per cent of the people who show up at the emergency room require the services that are available in a hospital emergency department. And I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, for those that show up at the ER at nighttime, that percentage is even higher. So we know that the closure of the Pasqua ER is going to add a lot of pressure to the General Hospital ER.

Yesterday the minister said no additional resources would be added. Today we find out that they've changed the plan once again and there might be a nurse added. This is evolving, and really the government is scrambling here, day by day, as the

story changes with what they are doing. My question to the Premier: when will a finalized plan be in place? When will some assurance be given to people that there is a concrete plan and that actual decisions are going to be made that will ensure patient safety?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope the Leader of the Opposition isn't recommending that the health region set a plan today or yesterday or the day before and then not deviate from that plan based on the numbers that they see actually coming to the emergency room, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it is wholly responsible for the region to make adjustments to the plan as they're dealing with this short-term contingency.

I do want to correct the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition indicates the roughly 15 to 20 per cent of individuals who typically are not in an emergency situation. Mr. Speaker, that's a number from the last year in Regina when you look at the coverage over a course of a year. So, Mr. Speaker, when you look at what takes place already in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, the traumatic incidences that come through, whether it be 911 or other ways, Mr. Speaker, those that would be a CTAS [Canadian triage and acuity scale] 1 or 2, those are typically already bypassed to the General Hospital which is set up more for a traumatic incident, Mr. Speaker.

So the 15 to 20 per cent is an average across an entire year, not specific to the evening hours at one particular hospital. And I think he should know that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister can look to page A3 of today's *Leader-Post* where it says, "... approximately 85 per cent of patients who go to Regina's ERs require emergency care." Mr. Speaker, whether it's 85, whether it's 90, whether it's 80, the fact of the matter is there are emergencies that occur around the clock and they require the best possible care available.

Mr. Speaker, as of tomorrow, Regina's capital city ... the capital city here in Regina will have just one 24-hour emergency room. The government has known for months that the crisis could reach this point, Mr. Speaker. But now that the Grey Cup festivities are over, they're scrambling to come up with a plan to actually handle this, Mr. Speaker.

The Regina General Hospital has already been struggling with overcapacity challenges for months. There are often more patients than available beds. And this decision, Mr. Speaker, will mean that even more patients are showing up at the Regina General Hospital and requiring admission. My question to the Premier: where will these extra patients go?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from time to time the hospitals, whether it be in Regina and Saskatoon, do face pressures in terms of the

capacity, Mr. Speaker. I want to be clear though that the issue that we're dealing with today at the Pasqua Hospital with the nighttime emergency coverage is not an issue that deals with capacity. Currently the hospitals are not over capacity as they have been in the past, Mr. Speaker. This is specific to the lack of emergency room physicians in Saskatchewan as it is across Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're coming to the close of negotiations and hope to have a contract ratified soon that will put us in a competitive place with other provinces across Western Canada, that will help to fill some of the gaps in terms of the coverage, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are also increasing, as it's been mentioned before, the number of training seats in this province, the number of residencies.

Mr. Speaker, we would not I think be in this position today had we had more than just 60 residency positions when the government changed in 2007. We have to make priorities within a limited number of residency seats, and when you only have 60 seats, Mr. Speaker, that means you can only have two emergency room seats. We've increased that to 120, which means that we have now eight residency seats for emergency room physicians, Mr. Speaker, and two Royal College physicians.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if members opposite were so concerned about medical training here in the province, you'd think they'd be paying closer attention with respect to the fact that the College of Medicine is under probation under their watch.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that over the past few days everyone in the province has been paying attention to the Grey Cup, and rightfully so. But not everyone, Mr. Speaker, may have heard the news of this closure as our attention has been focused so much on the good news that we've been following over the last week. And we know, Mr. Speaker, there are many people who don't tune in to question period every day, and people who don't follow the news. But it is absolutely important, Mr. Speaker, it's essential that people know that if they have a medical emergency between the hours of 7:30 at night to 8 in the morning that they should not show up at the Pasqua ER.

So my question to the Premier: what is his government doing in order to ensure the people in Regina and southern Saskatchewan know about the closure of the Pasqua ER?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition would clarify for the House and for anybody watching why he would think the Grey Cup would have anything to do with this particular issue.

In his earlier question he said, after the Grey Cup festivities are done ... What's his implication? That the doctors involved, that the people at RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] were too distracted? Is that what his suggestion is? Mr. Speaker, this was made clear a week ... Well members are ... Now members are chirping from their seats, Mr. Speaker. A week

prior to any of the festivities, this information was known.

To the member's question: there will be a comprehensive communications strategy undertaken by the health region, Mr. Speaker. It's something that government is certainly involved with as well. It'll include, among other things, a mailout to everybody within a 50-kilometre radius of the Pasqua. It'll include, Mr. Speaker, the appropriate signage and posters and communications with respect to social media, with respect to every media that's certainly available to the health region to communicate the message. I think significantly is a direct mailer to everybody within a 50-kilometre radius.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're working very hard to make sure that whatever is needed in communications is needed for a very, very short, temporary period of time, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Health Care Staffing in Wolseley and Area

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, reduced health care services are becoming a trademark of this government, not just here in our capital city but in rural communities as well. This government has converted the Wolseley Memorial Hospital to a health centre. It no longer offers acute care or emergency services.

I've visited this community and met with residents. They're frustrated because the Minister of Rural Health said this government was going to work to keep their hospital open. But internal documents show that the government actually planned to offer only acute care and emergency services in Indian Head and Broadview, not Wolseley. To the Minister of Rural Health: why did he tell the community he was working to keep their hospital open when the government's internal documents show otherwise?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are aware of the challenges that Wolseley has been facing, caused by the physician leaving, and we're certainly not closing the hospital in Wolseley or converting it. I've met with the community officials on two occasions, and the Minister of Health and I will be meeting with the community leaders next week.

Mr. Speaker, I also met with the CEO [chief executive officer] of RQHR and other senior officials of the health region, and the good news is we have a plan, and I support it. What the health region is doing is bolstering the physician complement in Broadview and Indian Head, and would be followed by an emphasis on Wolseley. As the international grads go through their made-in-Saskatchewan assessment, they will be going into those communities and working towards opening Wolseley emergency centre in the future.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, that answer will not satisfy the people of the Wolseley area. The Minister of Rural Health told local residents on June 17th that this was just a temporary service disruption. But five months have gone by, and it's still closed. A local resident wrote to the Wolseley newspaper saying:

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the sign on the hospital door which states "temporary" is nothing more than a part of the agenda to deconstruct a fully functional acute care facility.

To the Minister of Rural Health: is that Wolseley resident right or does this government actually intend to reopen the Wolseley Memorial Hospital?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, Wolseley Hospital is under a service disruption. And we are not closing the hospital and will not be converting it. As I said, there's a plan in place to bolster the whole area and we are actively working to fill the vacancies in the entire area. Job postings online at Saskdocs include Wolseley in that service, Mr. Speaker.

I can only point to the good news that we have right now in Fort Qu'Appelle where there's six full-time doctors, a seventh on its way. And that is the reason that there's doctors coming into rural Saskatchewan is because of the good work that Saskdocs has been doing through the Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment, the made-in-Saskatchewan assessment. International grads are coming into Saskatchewan and most of them are working in rural Saskatchewan.

We're also training more physicians at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] by increasing the numbers by 40. And also, Mr. Speaker, we increased the locum pool, a regional locum pool as well to bolster services in rural Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Rural Health received a letter dated September 20th, 2013 from two physicians and a nurse practitioner that want to work at the Wolseley Hospital on a permanent basis. Two doctors and a nurse practitioner are asking to work at Wolseley Hospital, but this government is ignoring them and it's leaving the closed sign up. To the Minister of Rural Health: how does that make any sense?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, the health region has a plan in place to recruit physicians into the area, and that includes Wolseley. And as new doctors come through the SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment], the made-in-Saskatchewan assessment, which are coming to this province through Saskdocs, these communities will be getting physicians and the emergency

centres will be open.

Mr. Speaker, all I have to do is look at the record of the NDP where they closed 52 hospitals, Mr. Speaker, when they were in government, Mr. Speaker, let alone the 1,200 long-term care beds that they closed and the 16 long-term care facilities. So, Mr. Speaker, we really have nothing to learn from the opposition.

We have a plan in place for this area and we have a plan in place for the whole province in rural and remote Saskatchewan to attract and retain physicians in this province. And that plan is working and will continue to work in the future.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, that isn't being ready for growth. Once again this government is instead always ready for excuses. They shut down the Wolseley Hospital. There's no acute and no emergency care in the community and this government is ignoring two doctors and a nurse practitioner that are ready and willing to work in this hospital.

This is not an issue of recruitment challenges. Health professionals are practically begging to work here, yet this government is keeping the Wolseley Hospital closed. This is a failure of leadership on the part of this government. It's no wonder that Councillor Gerry Hill is quoted in *The Wolseley Bulletin* as saying, "The powers that be are just waiting for us to give up so they can move ahead with their plans."

To the minister: when will this government acknowledge what its real plans are for health care in the Wolseley area?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Weekes: — As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. The health region has a plan in place and it's going to include Wolseley, but the whole area as well, attracting physicians, as I mentioned, through Saskdocs and going through the assessment process. And most of those doctors do come to rural Saskatchewan.

As I had mentioned, we've increased the number of training seats at the U of S at the college by 40 — now it's up to 100 training seats — and doubled the number of residencies in the province by 60. So, Mr. Speaker, we're doing a number of innovative things in health care. Also distributive education, where residents go out and to work in smaller urban, and they work in the smaller rural areas. And we're having a good success of those residents staying in those communities and practising medicine in those communities, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to point to the NDP's record in the last five full years in office. The province lost 1,160 total health workers, 450 registered nurses. They lost 173 physicians in the last five years. We have over 300 more physicians working in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Funding for Health Care and Education

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, budgets are about people, not simply numbers on a page. When it comes to this government providing services to people and families in critical areas like health care, they've got their priorities wrong.

We have a current crisis with the closure of an emergency room here in Regina at the Pasqua Hospital. And under this government, that's also coupled with staffing shortages and neglect in seniors' care. In the wake of these crises, the mid-term report makes clear that this government is forcing health regions to slash tens of millions of dollars between now and the end of the fiscal year. To the Minister of Finance: what will be the impacts of these cuts to front-line health care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the efficiencies that we've been able to find and identify in the first half of this fiscal year are related to the budgets of the health regions, Mr. Speaker. We've been able to find savings and efficiencies in terms of how we purchase prescription drugs, for example, through the generic initiative that the Premier worked on as the Co-Chair of the health innovation working group with the Co-Chair of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Speaker, we've also been able to identify savings through how we purchase blood through Canadian Blood Services, how we inventory blood. Mr. Speaker, we're being seen, Saskatchewan is being seen as the jurisdiction to watch and follow as an example in terms of how we purchase and inventory blood, Mr. Speaker. For example, since 2010, since this initiative was put in place, we've saved \$35 million just in how we inventory the blood system in the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this government responded to the seniors' care crisis with an inadequate drop-in-the-bucket fund of \$10 million, pretending they were new dollars. But now it's clear in this report that those aren't new dollars for urgent action. Insufficient as those dollars are, they're now being clawed out of previously budgeted health care funding.

Health regions were already asked to make huge cuts in the spring, and now they're being asked, forced to make many more cuts as they move forward, before the end of the fiscal year. At a time when there's a closed ER at the Pasqua Hospital in our capital city and a crisis in long-term care, this government isn't getting the job done for Saskatchewan families. Mr. Speaker, rather than stepping up to the plate to address these crises, how could this government force tens of millions of dollars of further cuts in front-line health care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned before and as I've indicated both today and in committee and other places, Mr. Speaker, the health system in this province is undergoing significant work to find efficiencies within health spending, Mr. Speaker.

As I've mentioned, in terms of the prescription drug plan, in terms of how we purchase blood from Canadian Blood Services, Mr. Speaker, the pan-Canadian approach to purchasing vaccines, we're saving, for example, \$4 million just in the way that we purchase immunizations, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I find it odd that the members opposite would have a problem with finding efficiencies within the health care system. The Leader of the Opposition ran on a campaign platform for the leadership of the NDP, and he said, "... more efficiency built into our public health care system. Our focus needs to be on establishing a more efficient system that is centred on patients and their families," Mr. Speaker. I don't know what explains efficiencies more than purchasing blood and finding efficiencies in the way that we stock and inventory the blood system in the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, let's get this straight. We have a closed down emergency room in the capital city of our province. We have a crisis in long-term care. And that government is forcing cuts by the millions in health care? And that minister chooses to offer that sort of spin and just sort of brush it off? That's not good enough, Mr. Speaker.

The cuts don't stop in health care. We also know that government has failed in education. We hear from communities, teachers, students, parents, school boards that they're facing cut resources, cut supports, with larger and more complex classrooms. Given this scenario and that government's failure in education, how could they choose to cut in education instead of responding to their failures with real action?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. I can advise the members that there are no cuts in education. There are no cuts to education infrastructure. All of the capital projects are proceeding.

Our budget funds capital projects on a percentage completed basis. If there's delays or a project is ahead or behind schedule, it affects our budget. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite there are some projects that are proceeding slightly slower than anticipated so it is merely a timing issue that it shows that there is less expenditure.

We are always willing to look for efficiencies and save money, but we will not cut funding or do anything that's going to impact our students anywhere. The students are our priority.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the facts speak for themselves. There's a \$3 million reduction in education and there's urgent priorities in the classroom that affect student learning.

The education numbers are also a bit of a budgetary charade. It seemed from the technical briefing that there was no allocation, no allotment for the settlement of the teachers' contract, a contract that ended in September. Mr. Speaker, how is it

responsible to table a budget that doesn't even have a provision for a fair settlement of an expired teachers' contract that the government knows they're going to have to pay for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a privilege on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and the Government of Saskatchewan to present something very unique that the NDP wouldn't understand and that is a balanced budget in both the General Revenue Fund and the summary financial statement.

Mr. Speaker, for our entire time in government we have been very careful about ensuring that we live within our means. And that means, Mr. Speaker, that revenues have to exceed expenditures. I listen to the members opposite every day — spend, spend, spend. Mr. Speaker, they proposed a platform that was going to cost \$5 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know better. They want to ensure that we move forward. We lead the nation. We lead the nation in having the lowest unemployment rate. We lead the nation in retail sales. We lead the nation in so many things, Mr. Speaker. That is why this province is rated AAA, and it'll stay there.

[14:15]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 122 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)/Loi n^o 2 de 2013 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 122, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read for the first time.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved that Bill No. 122, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 123 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013 (No. 2)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 123, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has moved Bill No. 123, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 124 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Consequential Amendment) Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013 (No. 2)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 124, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Consequential Amendment) Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has moved that Bill No. 124, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Consequential Amendment) Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, it is my pleasure to submit supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from Her

Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The Speaker: — Would you all please rise for a message from the Lieutenant Governor. The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits Supplementary Estimates — November of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2014, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. The Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 109

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 109 — *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's my pleasure to rise today to speak to the proposed amendments on *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act*. This is Bill No. 109. It's been tabled by the Minister for the Economy.

We have some indicating remarks from him. It was introduced just yesterday in the House, Mr. Speaker, and what he's indicating here is that there's a need to amend this Act to allow that some of the . . . A percentage of the pool funds annual net capital has to be invested into innovation type investments. And obviously the minister will be setting the form by which these tax credits would be issued to investors in the future. And there's a few other housekeeping amendments to be found in the bill, Mr. Speaker.

He went on to talk about how labour-sponsored venture capital corporations have been prudently supporting provincial businesses. Certainly we know that the incentive to invest in these quite often is backed up by a tax credit of some sort. And if I understand what's being presented in the annual report for the SaskWorks Venture Fund, for example, that the federal government is now backing off on some of the tax incentives that have been in place for a number of years for these funds. So I think that's something that definitely the shareholders will be tracking and certainly the ability of these corporations and these funds to attract new investment, Mr. Speaker.

So we are looking to keep an eye on that and ensure that the investments are properly managed and that the funds are carefully invested in local businesses, and certainly as much as possible, local businesses, and in traditional businesses in Saskatchewan in addition to the new intent which is to increase investment in what the minister referred to as innovation type investments. The expectation on the part of the government is to

stimulate the innovation sector more.

We know that a lot of work is going, and the good people of Saskatchewan and businesses in Saskatchewan are certainly doing their part to develop the innovation sector. And certainly we see ample evidence of that, Mr. Speaker, in the world of agricultural technology and the good work that's being done both at the university level and also at the applied sciences level. We know that the agricultural industry in Saskatchewan has evolved very quickly over the last many years and that the type of innovation that we see taking place all the time both in plant technology and mechanical technology and all across the board in terms of value added for some of our products and some of the crops and beef industry, there's all kinds of wonderful things going on in the province right now.

And so encouraging investment in the local companies is something that's very important. And it looks like the Ministry of the Economy is now wanting investors in these types of companies to extend their investments beyond the traditional type of businesses in Saskatchewan. For example in SaskWorks's annual report from 2013, some of the types of traditional investments that we see right now are certainly in the oil and gas sector. And we know that they've invested \$7.7 million in a company called Avalon Oil and Gas in the Lloydminster area. They've invested \$3.7 million in Fire Sky Energy Inc., which is an oil and gas company headquartered in Estevan. We see Steel Reef Infrastructure Corp. got over 15 million, \$15.7 million, and they're described as a midstream infrastructure company with operations in Saskatchewan and Alberta. And this is a new oil and gas services subsector, so in some sense, Mr. Speaker, this is an innovative type of development.

We also see a couple of traditional investments like Centre Square Place here in Regina, with an investment of \$3.3 million for a new mixed-use tower in Regina's downtown area, and also the Poplar Grove development, which is a Saskatoon development for 88 units using cost-effective modular techniques. And this is going to be made accessible to homebuyers through Innovative's proprietary financial assistance programs. This is a development . . . The company is called Innovative Residential, which has become a leader in Saskatchewan's entry-level housing market.

So those are some of the examples of the types of investments that are being made in one of these labour venture capital companies, SaskWorks. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we want to see that kind of investment and what's going on here in Saskatchewan continue. We know that there's always more and more competition. The more trade agreements that are entered into, the barriers to trade are coming down, and so Saskatchewan companies have to be very flexible and very adaptive to respond to those types of concerns.

And when we see the ability for these types of labour-sponsored venture capital corporations to make investments in innovation, the challenge I think the Ministry of the Economy is suggesting is they want to see the various funds increase the amount of innovation investments in the portfolio by up to 25 per cent in the next three years, or two years actually, seeing that 2013 is almost finished. And they're looking at that increase by 2016.

So there's the main bulk of the amendments. There's a number of housekeeping items that are being introduced through the Bill No. 109. Basically there's ones that hang over from a few years ago when this government changed the name of government entities. They used to be departments. Now they're ministries and apparently that was missed in this bill. So those are being cleaned up.

And there's a couple of substantive sections, Mr. Speaker. One is the new subsection 9(5). This is the main meat of the new bill, Mr. Speaker. And in this one, 9(5) is going to establish innovation type requirements for type A corporations. So type A corporations are defined in the bill. It's "a labour-sponsored venture capital corporation to which a Type A certificate of registration is issued pursuant to this Act."

So, Mr. Speaker, we see that this new clause is dealing with type A corporations. They're a fairly technical description. But what the new subsection (5) will say is that an investment . . . This is (5), sorry, subsection 9(5). It's a new subsection and it says:

On or after January 1, 2014, an investment instrument issued by a business that would otherwise be an eligible business is not to be taken into account . . . unless:

And then I'll skip to sub (b):

the Type A corporation has already invested and maintained not less than the portion of its equity capital that is prescribed in the regulations in investment instruments issued by eligible businesses engaged in an innovation activity . . .

And once again there's the emphasis on innovation. So as I've said in the past, you know, it used to be innovation, small I, was just a good idea that somebody would have. But now it really drives I think what we would see as the applied sciences and institutes where we have applied technology, and those sorts of commercially ready sort of innovations that are easy to get, easily made into the market, Mr. Speaker. So obviously the government wants to ensure that the labour-sponsored venture capital corporations also encourage that type of investment and not just focus on the type B corporations.

The other amendments, there's a few others that are being proposed. In section 10 of the existing Act we see a rearrangement basically of the way the section was worded. It's indicated in the explanatory notes as a housekeeping amendment. And this is speaking to the investment requirement of the original capital raised by a type B corporation, so there's some requirements there. And it's just really a rearrangement of the clause and some of the timing periods that are required for additional capital being issued by that type B corporation.

So, Mr. Speaker, by and large we see this as a number of basically housekeeping items that are being proposed, a few renumberings. There's a new clause, 28(1)(m.1) that's being proposed which allows some amendments to the regulations and as indicated in the explanatory notes, it's ". . . necessary to establish innovation type requirements as per the proposed amendments to section 9."

So the new clause reads as follows, 28(1)(m.1):

“prescribing innovation activities and requirements related to investments made in businesses engaged in innovation activities for the purposes of section 9 and authorizing the minister to set additional terms and conditions for innovation activities”.

So once again we see a deference to the executive arm of government where we have more power being placed in the executive government to pass regulations which, as I've indicated before, are not subject to scrutiny by this legislature. They're not subject to public scrutiny, and indeed often happen behind the scenes in many ways. We know the orders in councils are published but with little fanfare and little uptake in terms of public engagement for those types of laws, basically. I mean regulations carry the force of law. And whenever we see this government furthering its powers through the executive arm of government, where powers are given to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, I think it's another little chink in the armour of an open and democratic society, Mr. Speaker. And those are things that we're concerned about and certainly want to bring to the attention of the public.

[14:30]

So in terms of this Bill, it's just been introduced yesterday. We're just taking a look at it now. It's a complex type of investment scheme, and we know labour-sponsored venture capital corporations are an important part of the investment world here in Saskatchewan, and certainly having the tax opportunities to add on top of that has provided . . . been a good incentive over the years, Mr. Speaker. I've taken advantage of some of them myself. And it's a good way to ensure that our entrepreneurs and our people on the ground here in Saskatchewan have access to capital that will help them do what they need to to bring those good ideas and that hard work to fruition and benefit their families and the communities they live in as well as our province.

At this point I think other of my colleagues are going to want to have an opportunity to participate in the debate, and so then I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 109, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 109, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 112

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 112** — *The Accounting Profession Act* be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon, after question period, to have the opportunity to enter into the discussion on Bill No. 112, *An Act respecting the Accounting Profession and the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts*.

So this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, of course has to do with the authority and the regulations and the rules that involve the accounting profession, and in response, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it in having had some discussions with the different professional associations and with others, that this is a request that's largely driven by the sector and by the accountants, Mr. Speaker.

But before I just get into a few of the details related to the changes that are proposed in this legislation, I do want to make a few general comments about the importance of such designations and why we need to take this seriously. Of course, Mr. Speaker, when we are dealing with any self-regulating profession and when designations are awarded to certain professions, it's important that the rules that we have in place do a number of things.

One, Mr. Speaker, is that they need to provide the professionals working in an industry to have a recognition, to have a designation that is well respected and that means something — yes, in our own jurisdiction, but in other jurisdictions as well. And that's a very important component. It's also, Mr. Speaker, important to ensure that the standards to which one would meet, be required to meet in order to receive the designation, that they are strong, that they are of a high level, and that they in fact bring the results that are needed for the trust that the Saskatchewan public needs and wants when it relates to a particular industry.

Essentially if someone in a profession is claiming to be something such as an accountant and has the appropriate designation, Mr. Speaker, it's important for the general public to know that they have in fact met a standard, that they are held accountable for their actions and how they meet the needs of their clients or customers, and that there is a mechanism in place, Mr. Speaker, so that if someone is falling short, if someone is not meeting the standard, that there is a means for accountability for the profession to take someone who may be not meeting the standard, take them to task for what is occurring.

So in this instance, Mr. Speaker, what we have is a piece of legislation that would be bringing in one designation for accountants here in the province. So currently there are a number of designations that individuals may have, and what this bill is proposing to do is to merge the different designations together. So at present, Mr. Speaker, we have chartered accountants, referred to as CAs; we have certified management accountants, referred to as CMAs; and we have certified general accountants, referred to as CGAs.

And so this piece of legislation is suggesting that these three designations be merged into one, and it would be a CPA [chartered professional accountant] designation. So that's an important step. And as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is actually . . . The discussion that's occurred in

this province among the profession and among the three existing designations is one that actually is a bit of a trailblazer within the Canadian context for what are the best steps.

And when we're looking at changes to any sort of profession or any sort of legislation, it's important, Mr. Speaker, to know where the impetus is coming from. And in this instance, Mr. Speaker, it appears that the industry has decided that this is the best approach forward, the best thing for their profession, and then also in turn the best thing for customers or clients who may be accessing the services of an accountant.

I can see the merit in this approach, Mr. Speaker, for a few reasons. One benefit or potential benefit could be the fact that with one single designation of CPA, there could be less confusion. I mean for those who love accounting and have gone into that career path, the distinctions between the chartered accountants and certified management accountants and CGAs, Mr. Speaker, would be well known. But I would imagine for the average person on the street, understanding the nuances of the different categories and the different professional designations might be a bit confusing at times.

And so by going to one designation, Mr. Speaker, in a sense there would be one gold standard that would have to be met by individuals wishing to go into that profession. And that would decrease confusion for people wanting to access a professional who has this designation, knowing that if they're accessing a CPA, as this legislation would suggest we should do, Mr. Speaker, then they would know that they have someone who has met the standards and that the proper regulation is in place.

Another benefit I can see to this, Mr. Speaker, is with respect to the interaction that accountants may have here in the province with other jurisdictions, other international jurisdictions. So if someone is working in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and having interaction with a client or another company, Mr. Speaker, in another country, by having this designation which can be used in other jurisdictions as well, there's greater transferability and greater recognition for what is being required.

With this of course, Mr. Speaker, there would have to be, as the industry has explained, a new certification program so that the right standards are in place. And I want to compliment the industry for the steps they have taken. When there are different bodies involved in any sector, at times, Mr. Speaker, there can be some turf battles or some territorialism that can arise. So to see a sector working together between the different branches that currently exist and finding the best way forward for their own profession and for the province and beyond, I think that's a positive thing and can serve as a good example of a way to push new legislation within a jurisdiction. And I think that's a positive thing.

Also, Mr. Speaker, an important component to think of is what this means for university grads and for people who would pursue post-secondary training in accounting and for designation. This puts, Mr. Speaker, all those grads into one stream, and so there's some good sense I can see in that as well for consistency for grads within the accounting profession.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're generally supportive of this approach because it seems like it's legislation that has been requested

from the industry. And, Mr. Speaker, we're also speaking and listening with other individuals to ensure that yes, we hope the intended consequences of this legislation would be positive and would be realized, but also doing consultation to ensure that if there are any unintended consequences that we may not be aware of as legislators, that those would be brought to our attention and that they would be addressed. So that's of course the due diligence that occurs with any piece of legislation that we are discussing here in the House and through the committee process, Mr. Speaker.

So at face value, this seems like a common sense approach and something that is constructive and good for accountants and thereby for the province. But of course, we do want to ask the appropriate questions and ensure that all the i's are dotted and t's are crossed and bases are covered, Mr. Speaker. So we may have some further discussions, some further questions in discussion at the committee stage. But in general, we're supportive of this piece of legislation, but wanting to take the right steps in order to ensure that any unintended consequences are being properly addressed.

So I know there may be yet some on our side who wish to speak to this legislation, so at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 112. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 112, *The Accounting Profession Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 99

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 99 — *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill No. 99, *An Act to amend The Public Employees Pension Plan Act*.

And it is an important piece of legislation that we have before us today. Clearly whenever we have discussions around pensions, it's one of those things that people really want to know as much about as possible. You know, it's one of those things that when we talk about our senior years, we want to make sure we have adequate resources in place to make sure we can live in a lifestyle that we think we should be able to.

And that means that we shouldn't have fear in terms of housing, in terms of groceries, in terms of health care. And that could mean particularly in terms of whether it's ambulances or pharmaceuticals or drugs, supports — whatever they may be, that type of thing. And we want to have that little extra too so that we can enjoy life. Now when a person is retired, they always hope they could do a little travelling, visit with families, share some of the good times, enjoy a movie, do those kind of

things.

So when we talk about pensions, they're critically, critically important. And as I know my colleagues have said earlier that some 11 million Canadians do not have a retirement plan. And this is really unfortunate because it is something that really concerns me because we do so much work, and in fact we know that there are many seniors who try to do the right thing, try to put away money, but unfortunately they don't put enough away. In fact they may even be penalizing themselves.

And we've seen the different government initiatives. We know in the 1970s, and this is one of the governments that the New Democrats put together, the Saskatchewan Income Plan to support the old age security and the guaranteed income plan as well. But what happened was that the one group that was not really supported well enough are those workers, particularly the low-income workers who may make just a little bit too much to qualify for the Saskatchewan Income Plan or the guaranteed annual income allowance, and that there's a void.

So we have to make sure we do the right thing here when we talked about pensions. And I do have to say — and I hope the Finance minister continues on this way — we were delighted to see that the ministers of Finance in their meeting in Prince Edward Island decided to do another look at the Canadian pension plan because we need that to work well for all of us. And we've argued in this House many times about the efficiency and effectiveness of that plan.

[14:45]

And I know that when you talk about the public employees pension plan, the PEPP as many people might call it or the PEPP plan, that the CPP [Canada Pension Plan] is a strong partner to that in terms of providing for our old age. But I think that when we take the time to reflect on this, we want to make sure that there are no unintended consequences or intended consequences. That's our job, as we do the second reading debates and as we go to committee and the time we connect with the people who are behind the amendments, that have they done their due diligence? Have they taken a look at all the impacts of this?

Now some of these seem relatively straightforward, and I just want to review for a minute what the minister said. You know we entered into this debate on November 12th, 2013. He doesn't really talk about who brought forward the suggestions for the amendments. I would hope that it was the people with the plan. And I'm always curious, and I think it is a good thing to think, have people had an impact? Have people had a chance to talk about this? Have the members had a chance to put their two cents into this discussion?

Now he does talk about how the plan is a defined contribution pension plan, and it's administered by the Public Employees Pension Board. And it's a means of saving for retirement, true enough, and that this includes employees of executive government, members of the Legislative Assembly — and so all of us in here are members — Crown corporations, and a variety of other government agencies.

And in fact the minister goes on to say that there's close to

53,000 plan holders of the public employees pension plan. And they have \$5.6 billion in plan assets and they cover 79 different employers. And then he talks about how the contributions are made and how the process is through a payroll deduction. And this is set out accordingly to maximums set by the *Income Tax Act* of Canada. They don't pay taxes on contributions or the accumulated investments income until they withdraw that amount from the plan, and hopefully at that time they'll be having some ways to save some income tax as well. It's a bit of a deferral, isn't it? Contributions are forwarded to the plan and then used to purchase units in the investment option of the member's choice.

He goes on, the Finance minister goes on and talks about the six asset allocation funds and lists them. They include the Accelerated Growth Fund, the Growth Fund, the Balanced Fund, the Moderate Fund, the Conservative Fund, and the PEPP Steps Fund. So they're all about investing in, that they may invest in a short-term bond fund, either in addition or instead of having to invest in one of the six allocation funds.

So that's pretty well straightforward. Now he gets into the meat of the legislation. So what he says is we'll do the following: clarify that a simple majority of the board is required of the board members for all decisions made by the board. Now that's just a few words, simple majority of the board members is required for all decisions of the board. But as I understand it from the notes, that the decision making changes the basis for decision making of the Public Employees Pension Board, known as the board, from unanimous decision making to a requirement for a majority, for all decisions by the board.

So that's an interesting change, going from the unanimous to a simple majority. There's many variations in between: two-thirds majority, three-quarters majority, a simple majority. Now it would be interesting to know what the quorum regulations are. Is it a simple majority, and is it a simple majority of the board members to have a quorum for the meeting? Then you could get less than half the board members involved making a decision, and quite a significant decision. So I'd like to have questions more about that.

And we'll have questions around, what does this mean in terms of simple majority? What does it mean in terms of quorum? What's the impact on the two? How do the two connect together? It's not I think the . . . And it's also the kind of decision making. You know, I'm surprised that it had to be unanimous for all decisions. Maybe that's wrong. Maybe it's only part . . . some of the decisions because it does seem extreme that you have to have unanimity for all, all decisions. So I'm not sure if that's accurate as well. But it's interesting.

It allows the board to undertake short-term borrowing for the purposes of administration of the employment pension plan Act. That's straightforward. It allows the Lieutenant Governor, by order in council, to designate the default fund in which all member contributions shall be deposited unless otherwise directed. And that makes sense. That makes sense. You've got to do something with the money, so there's got to be a default investment process. And that makes sense. And authorize the Lieutenant Governor by regulation to permit the plan to receive members and funds from a registered plan wanting to become part of PEPP and to state which specialty funds the members

transferring into PEPP are eligible for.

So just a few lines about what he says but six main goals. But this is a fund that, as he says, invests over 5.6 billion in plan assets. So it's not a small organization. This is not something to sneeze at. This is a significant, significant fund. And it's one that we should be careful about because, as we've known that it, sometimes these things can have issues, problems. And we want to make sure that all of this is done in a way that is appropriate, that people who've given their lives to public service can rest assured that in their retirement years that they will be well looked after.

We've seen situations in the States where pensions or savings have not been well looked after, particularly in terms of, and we'll talk about this later, in terms of the fees that some investment fund operators have. So when you can have a publicly operated and maintained fund that has a high standard — and I'm a member, so I get my monthly statements, and I think they're quarterly, actually, statements — that it does have a high level of transparency, extremely high level of accountability. And we need to maintain that. We need to maintain the confidence in the plan.

You know, it really becomes a challenge when people say, you know, I would rather invest my own money, I'd rather take all of my income and put it into an investment myself, and that they feel they could do better on their own. And that is a problem. We get away from these pension plans, especially when you're going to have so many members and, in this case, 53,000 members is a significant number of people. And when you can do that, you can pool the resources to have significant returns, get significant returns on your investments.

But as I say, if for some reason the wheels start to come off, people start to lose confidence in the plan because they feel like the market is hot, investments are strong. And we know that that can appear to be attractive. The unfortunate thing with pension funds, pension plans, they're in it for the long haul, the long haul. And this is why it's so important to have a strong, strong pension plan.

And this is also the reason — and I'll come back to it and keep coming back to it — how important the Canadian Pension Plan is, because for all of us, we all contribute. It's in our best interest to make sure it's strong, but also that it's there for those who may not work for an employer that has a pension plan or belongs to a large enough pool of people that can make significant earnings.

You know as I said earlier, 11 per cent, it's 11 per cent . . . Not 11 per cent, over 11 million Canadians are without a workplace pension plan. And nearly half of Canadians born in the 1960s will end up with a retirement income below 80 per cent of what they earned while working. And this is from a recent report from CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce]. And I think this is really important that we think about this.

And you know, the wonderful thing about the Canadian Pension Plan, it's well run, fully portable, and fully paid for by the employees and employers. And it has funds that will mean it will operate sufficiently for the next 70 years. So now obviously the Canadian Pension Plan has significantly more, multiple

times more members than the public employees plan of Saskatchewan. But still these two act hand in glove, and it's really critical that we take the time and do the due diligence here to make sure that the pensions are solid.

Because, as I said earlier, seniors, particularly those who've worked and saved money, feel that they have done the job to have a secure retirement. And whether that means our housing will be paid for and . . . You know, we've argued and we've raised this issue many times: the cost of housing for seniors is unstable. And at times in the last 5 years we've seen rent gouging here in this province, and the government refusing to do anything about that — just saying, don't worry, we'll try to get you in a different place. But there's this lack of stability and lack of predictability when it comes to the cost of housing.

So seniors at least want to have confidence that their pensions will be there and that they'll be adequate to pay for housing, food, the essentials of life. And so it's really important that we take the time to think about this. We see too many times and we've heard it so many times in the past few weeks here in question period. We have brought concerns for seniors around long-term care, what's happening with that.

And we see a bill before us in fact in terms of the government talking about having their inspections of long-term care homes posted on websites, on the Internet, and how that's important for seniors to make the right choice. But you still have so many more seniors who are living at home, or in fact those in long-term care, who want to make sure their pensions will pay for the costs that they face in their senior years.

And so this is no small thing. This is really important. I do want to say it's very . . . The minister did not say who brought forward these changes. I would assume that it's a public employees pension plan board that did. Now I would hope that there would have been more points in the government's, the minister's statements in his second reading speech, particularly around who brought this forward, why did they bring it forward, what were the concerns.

But often we see that in second reading debate speeches by the ministers, not nearly enough detail for us to go on. And in fact quite the opposite, they caused more questions than answers, and we're not sure what was the impetus for this bill. Much of it makes common sense. But as I said, the question around the moving to a simple majority from a unanimous vote leaves us with some question marks because I know that is not a small thing. That's a pretty significant change. And what are their range? Is this just for money bills? Or is this for ordering catering? I don't know. Do you have to have a — now that would make sense — simple majority? You don't need to have a unanimous decision if you're doing just simple operations.

But as I said, there's lots of questions here. And so I know that many of us will want to get into this debate. Many of us will have more questions. But as I said, before I take my place, that this is a critically important piece of legislation. Anything that deals with pensions for seniors is because really this is what so many seniors look for, to make sure their senior years are looked after and that they are not a burden but in fact that they can see the fruits of their savings. They've been led to believe that it will be there for them, and we want to make sure that a

fair return on their investments is happening so they can retire with dignity and look after all the needs they have but have a little bit more so that they can enjoy life.

[15:00]

And we would hope that the government — I just want to say one last time — really engage in the debate around CPP because that is a really worthwhile one, particularly for low-income workers. It's a great program and I think any chance that we can get to say, let's do more work on that. Let's make that a real priority. Because we can do our part here in Saskatchewan to make sure all Canadian workers are well looked after, and particularly Saskatchewan residents because we know many Saskatchewan residents do travel. Their home may be here, but they do travel about, and it's important to have one good, well-run national pension plan. And plans like the public employees plan will work well in conjunction to that providing the majority of the funds, but CPP is hugely important.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 98

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 98** — *The Child Care Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 sur les garderies d'enfants* be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to rise today and join the debate on Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act*, or *Loi de 2013 sur les garderies d'enfants*. It's again referencing the French language there, Mr. Speaker, because the primary purpose of this legislation is to render *The Child Care Act* bilingual and replace that Act, currently only in English, and replacing the Act with bilingual legislation, but again, embracing the French language.

And I guess I'm very glad to see this legislation coming forward, Mr. Speaker, because there is nothing more fundamental than that early French language instruction in terms of the importance of having linguistic development there as part of early childhood development and what that means for developing the potential of a child and then the way that accrues dividends for a culture and a society, Mr. Speaker. Linguistic development is absolutely critical.

And so I was glad to see that the Conseil des écoles francsaskoises, the CÉF, and the Association des parents

fransaskois, the APF, were consulted and that in fact these changes come as a result of requests that have been made by those groups that do such critical work on behalf of the Fransaskois in the province of Saskatchewan in the advancing of and promotion of the French language in so many different spheres of life in this province.

But again, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more critical than that early childhood development in many respects. But as regards that development of linguistic capacity, if you can learn French as your mother tongue, if that is how you are reared, and then of course, Mr. Speaker, that is a critical part of your early childhood development, then you're going to be that much further down the line, and the French language will take a solid root within your life.

And again, Mr. Speaker, certainly for myself I look at the involvement that my niece has had in French immersion and how French immersion has been more broadly available throughout the city of Regina than it was when I was growing up in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. And you think about the different sort of pedagogies or the approaches to instruction and learning that are there, Mr. Speaker, that certainly as someone that had the, you know, a couple of hours of French language instruction from about grade 5 on through to grade 12, Mr. Speaker, it was . . . You know, and I think my teachers did the best they could with the student. But it was not sufficient for me to really advance in the French language either in how I was able to speak French language or to comprehend, and it's something that I still struggle with to this day, Mr. Speaker. And again if you can have that immersion, you're so much the better. And it goes of course almost without saying that if you can not just have immersion but if you can have that French language component of early childhood development, then the better off you will be.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we live in a global village. We live in a global economy. We've just very recently celebrated the Year of the Fransaskois and the 100 years of the Assemblée communautaire francsaskoise in Saskatchewan. And we're all very happy to raise the Fransaskois flag and to salute and all of this, but without that French language, without that French culture, then the flags . . . That shouldn't be the sum total of how we make our approach to nurturing these things, to honouring these things, to promoting these things, Mr. Speaker.

And again in terms of the French language, the more that you can inculcate that French language capacity in our law and in the regulations that flow from that law, and then moreover, Mr. Speaker, how those laws shape the activities that are guarded over and watched over by the Conseil des écoles francsaskoises or the Association des parents francsaskois, then the better off we will be.

And again as is sort of the hallmark of the legislative agenda for the government this session, Mr. Speaker, many of the pieces of legislation that are coming forward are very much housekeeping in nature. But again in terms of providing a bilingual translation of a piece of legislation, arguably it would fall into that category. But again that this is in response to the request coming from the Conseil des écoles francsaskoises or the Association des parents francsaskois, again, Mr. Speaker, it may be housekeeping and it may be a relatively simple matter of

translating the legislation en français, mais c'est très important. C'est très bon pour la province de la Saskatchewan et pour la société de la Saskatchewan. [Translation: into French, but it is very important. It is very good for the province of Saskatchewan and for Saskatchewan society.] Mr. Speaker, it's very important for Saskatchewan.

So again while it may on one level seem to be part of this ongoing onslaught of housekeeping legislation that is coming forward from this government, in this regard, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we have this linguistic capacity in the very laws of this province, in the very regulations of this province. And again, in terms of not just having that bilingual translation available but again making the law and the regulations available en français to the six francophone child care centres presently operating in the province so that they may understand in the French language the very rules and regulations governing how they approach the nurturing and care of children is of critical importance.

It would beg, at that point, Mr. Speaker . . . I know that within the francophone community as well as in broader Saskatchewan that the supply of child care does not come anywhere near to meeting the demand, and I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize that at this point, Mr. Speaker. And I know that in the francophone community for les fransaskois, c'est la même chose évidemment, monsieur le Président. [Translation: the Fransaskois, it's the same thing of course, Mr. Speaker.]

There is a shortage of good quality, qualified French-language capacity child care in this province. And again that's I think part and parcel of broader initiatives that we see at play in this province, Mr. Speaker, wherein the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises are currently engaged in legal action with the province of Saskatchewan to try to secure their rights under the constitution, to try to secure their rights to access to French-language service and instruction and support for French-language education in this province.

And we see that unfolding, Mr. Speaker. We watch that with great interest, and again it's part of I think a broader area of conflict between the Fransaskois community — which is a very generous, very congenial, very vibrant community, Mr. Speaker — and this government, where unfortunately this has had to go before the courts to ensure that French-language education in this province is getting its due from this government.

And we hope to see speedier resolution of the conflict, Mr. Speaker, and we hope to see . . . We'd have thought that with all the celebration and recognition that was evident in the Year of the Fransaskois, the 100th anniversary of the forming of the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise, monsieur le Président, you'd have thought that that would have been a good time to resolve the outstanding grievances between the communities but, unfortunately, that goes on.

With the legislation though, in terms of the housekeeping on offer here today, referring to the minister's second reading speech, the minister states:

. . . some minor changes were made that are housekeeping in nature: first, removal of alphabetical listing from interpretation; secondly, removal of previously repealed

sections; third, legal modernization of language; four, reorganization of sections for clarity; five, references to department change to ministry; six, section on inspections and investigations split to provide legal clarity and, in addition, allows the investigations section to include search of vehicles.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the changes of substance again are relatively housekeeping in nature. But I think the signal accomplishment with this Act is the presentation of it in a bilingual format and the translation into French, and then in turn the making of that available to the partners we have out there in early childhood development in the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises and the Association des parents fransaskois.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at the legislation itself and paging through the different provisions, again being glad to see the changes to French language and the provision of French language translation, I'm reminded that — this is the year 2013 — that the French fact in Saskatchewan has been here for many, many years. And you think back to the earliest voyageurs that came to this province. And in terms of the deep roots of the Fransaskois community, and certainly in our family tree, monsieur le Président, nous avons beaucoup de fierté avec l'association de la famille McCall avec les famille Breton et Laverdiere, monsieur le Président. [Translation: Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of pride with the association of the McCall family with the Breton and Laverdiere families, Mr. Speaker.]

[15:15]

It's obvious that in Saskatchewan many, many people have these French connections and these French aspects to their lives. And you need look no further than different of the members of this Assembly. And I think for example of my colleague from Cumberland and himself bearing . . . being a proud Métis person, but bearing a proud Franco-Métis name, Mr. Speaker.

In the application of the legislation though, Mr. Speaker, or in the consideration of this legislation here today, it's the first time to . . . The best time to plant a tree is 40 years ago. The next best time is today. So we're glad to see this legislation coming forward here today. And I think it's also sort of . . . It's part of the broader recognition that is taking place in this province around the importance and the vitality of the Fransaskois in this province.

And I also think of the fact that my colleague from Nutana, in asking questions in question period in the French language . . . And this is a surprise and then in some ways a bad surprise, Mr. Speaker, but in some ways a good surprise. When she asked her questions in French, it was accorded as the first time that questions had been asked in the French language in the history of this province.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if you think about, you know, 1905 and the founding of Saskatchewan and all the history that has gone before that and how that worked into the history of the north-west territorial chambers, Mr. Speaker, and again, I've always had an interest in that because in the middle of my home community, North Central, mere blocks from my house, there's the old territorial administration grounds where the whole of

then the North-West Territories which consisted of the lion's share of Manitoba, the whole of Saskatchewan, the whole of Alberta, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, all of that was at one time administered from the territorial administration buildings in the middle of north central Regina on Dewdney Avenue.

And again, Mr. Speaker, that for all the great individuals of French heritage and extraction and no doubt language capability, and then moving on to 1905 and the founding of the province and on from there, that we never had questions put in a question period that were placed in the French language is again . . . It's something that I'm very proud of my colleague from Nutana for having done so. But again, Mr. Speaker, I think it's signal to, you know . . . It's the year 2013. We've got a lot of catching up to do. So this piece of legislation is part of that catching up. This legislation is part of that recognition of the importance and the fundamental nature of the French language to the province of Saskatchewan, its importance under the constitution and under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that I think we all cherish very, very dearly in this country, Mr. Speaker, that it's fundamental to what is Canada.

So glad to see this legislation coming forward here today. And the legislation itself, Mr. Speaker, the different . . . the application of the Act and how it is, as is often the case, as is the case in legislation, Mr. Speaker, the application of the Act being enumerated en français.

Champ d'application de la loi

3 La présente loi ne s'applique pas:

- a) aux personnes qui ne fournissent des services de garde et de surveillance qu'aux enfants qui sont membres de leur famille immédiate;
- b) aux services de garderie qui sont fournis exclusivement à un enfant, au domicile de l'enfant, par une personne autre qu'un des parents de l'enfant;
- c) à toute autre personne ou à tout autre service exemptés par règlement.

[Translation:

Application of Act

3 This Act does not apply to:

- (a) persons providing care and supervision exclusively to children who are members of their immediate families;
- (b) child care services that are provided exclusively to a child in the child's home by a person other than a parent of the child; or
- (c) any other persons or services exempted by the regulations.]

Again and from there, the application of the law and who's entailed in the application of the law, Mr. Speaker, again referring to not applying to "persons providing care and supervision exclusively to children who are members of their immediate families"; section (b), "child care services that are

provided exclusively to a child in the child's home by a person other than a parent of the child"; or (c), "any other persons or services exempted by the regulations," again how the Act is itself applied.

Moving through the Act itself, Mr. Speaker, to the question of the general prohibition of the Act, wherein "No person shall provide child care services except in accordance with this Act and the regulations."

Peut-être en français, monsieur le Président:

Interdiction générale

4 Il est interdit à quiconque de fournir des services de garderie sauf en conformité avec la présente loi et les règlements.

[Translation: Perhaps in French, Mr. Speaker:

General prohibition

4 No person shall provide child care services except in accordance with this Act and the regulations.]

Carrying on through the legislation, Mr. Speaker, we turn to the question of who is requiring a licence. And of course in the existing legislation it refers to, section 5(1) states:

5(1) No person shall operate a child care centre or a group family child care home, or cause a child care centre or a group family child care home to be operated, unless the person holds a licence for the child care centre or group family child care home.

Or section 5(2):

(2) A person may operate a . . . child care home with or without a licence.

Et en français:

Licence obligatoire ou facultative

5(1) Nul ne peut exploiter ou faire exploiter une garderie non résidentielle ou une garderie résidentielle de groupe en milieu familial, à moins d'être titulaire d'une licence d'exploitation pour ce genre de garderie.

(2) Dans le cas d'une garderie résidentielle en milieu familial, la licence est facultative.

[Translation: And in French:

Whether licence required

5(1) No person shall operate a child care centre or a group family child care home, or cause a child care centre or a group family child care home to be operated, unless the person holds a licence for the child care centre or group family child care home.

(2) A person may operate a family child care home with or without a licence.]

Again carrying on through the legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of the interesting things that will emerge is regarding what

happens with the regulations itself. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd turn to the question of what regulations that the Lieutenant Governor in Council is able to make.

En français, dans le projet de loi:

Règlements

30(1) Le lieutenant-gouverneur en conseil peut, par règlement:

- a) définir, élargir ou restreindre le sens des mots et expressions utilisés, sans définition, dans la présente loi;
- b) établir des catégories d'établissements, de licences, de licenciés ou d'enfants pour l'application des règlements;
- c) désigner des services qui ne constituent pas des services de garderie au sens défini à l'article 2;
- d) établir des normes relatives à la conception, à la construction, à l'exploitation, à l'entretien, à l'ameublement et à l'équipement d'établissements ou de catégories d'établissements, et imposer le respect de ces normes;
- e) établir des normes relatives à la santé, à la sécurité, à la nutrition et à la discipline au sein des établissements ou de catégories d'établissements, et imposer le respect de ces normes;
- f) fixer les heures d'ouverture des établissements ou de catégories d'établissements;
- g) prescrire:
 - (i) les exigences en personnel dans les établissements ou des catégories d'établissements,
 - (ii) les qualifications professionnelles que doivent avoir les personnes qui exploitent des établissements ou des catégories d'établissements ou qui y fournissent des services, ainsi que leurs fonctions et responsabilités;
- h) établir des normes relatives à la protection contre les incendies et aux procédures d'urgence dans les établissements ou des catégories d'établissements, et imposer le respect de ces normes;
- i) soustraire un établissement ou une catégorie d'établissements à l'obligation de satisfaire à une norme prescrite par la présente loi ou les règlements;
- j) désigner des éléments de programmes, d'activités ou de services à fournir dans les établissements ou des catégories d'établissements, et rendre obligatoire la prestation de tout ou partie de ces programmes, activités ou services;

k) indiquer quels documents doivent établir les exploitants des établissements et les circonstances dans lesquelles ces documents doivent être conservés;

l) fixer le maximum, le cas échéant, d'enfants ou de catégories d'enfants qui peuvent être inscrits en même temps à un établissement ou à une catégorie d'établissements, et interdire le dépassement de ce maximum;

m) fixer le maximum d'enfants, par catégorie, qui peuvent être présents en même temps dans une garderie résidentielle en milieu familial ou dans une garderie résidentielle de groupe en milieu familial;

n) fixer le maximum, le cas échéant, d'enfants au sein d'un groupe dans un établissement ou une catégorie d'établissements;

o) fixer le maximum de places réservées dans un établissement à des enfants en bas âge

p) pour l'application de l'article 25, autoriser et réglementer l'octroi et le versement de subventions à des licenciés ou catégories de licenciés ou d'allocations à des parents d'enfants inscrits à un établissement ou à une catégorie d'établissements;

q) réglementer la prestation de services aux enfants à besoins spéciaux;

[Translation: In French, in the bill:

Regulations

30(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations:

- (a) defining, enlarging or restricting the meaning of any word or expression used in this Act but not defined in this Act;
- (b) establishing categories of facilities, licences, licensees or children for the purposes of the regulations;
- (c) designating any services as services that are not child care services as that term is defined in section 2;
- (d) establishing standards for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of facilities or categories of facilities, including standards for furnishings and equipment and requiring compliance with those standards;
- (e) establishing standards of health, safety, nutrition and discipline in facilities or categories of facilities and requiring compliance with those standards;
- (f) prescribing the hours of operation of any facility or category of facilities;
- (g) prescribing:

- (i) the personnel requirements for facilities or categories of facilities; and
- (ii) the qualifications, duties and responsibilities of persons who operate or provide services in facilities or categories of facilities;
- (h) establishing standards for fire protection and emergency procedures in facilities or categories of facilities and requiring compliance with those standards;
- (i) exempting a facility or category of facilities from the requirement to meet a standard prescribed by this Act or the regulations;
- (j) prescribing elements of programs, activities or services to be provided in facilities or categories of facilities and requiring all or any of those programs, activities or services to be provided;
- (k) prescribing the records to be kept by persons who operate facilities and the circumstances under which the records are to be retained;
- (l) prescribing the maximum number, if any, of children or any category of children who may be enrolled at any time in a facility or a category of facilities and prohibiting enrolments greater than the maximum number;
- (m) prescribing the maximum number of children in a category of children that may be in attendance at any one time in a family child care home or a group family child care home;
- (n) prescribing the maximum number, if any, of children who may be cared for in a group within a facility or a category of facilities;
- (o) prescribing the maximum number of child care spaces in a facility for the care of infants;
- (p) authorizing and governing the making of grants and payment of subsidies pursuant to section 25 to any licensee or category of licensees or to parents of children enrolled in any facility or category of facilities;
- (q) respecting the provision of services to children with special needs;]

Mr. Speaker, I think you get the idea. It's good to see that this language is brought forward to provide that complement, to provide that French language capacity in the legislation for something as fundamental as the laws and regulation governing child care in this province.

It's the year 2013; we're glad to see this legislation coming forward, Mr. Speaker, if I might speak for myself. But I think that's maybe a shared sentiment amongst my colleagues as well, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that this is in response to the

Fransaskois community, both le Conseil d'éducation scolaire as well as the l'Association des parents fransaskois.

It's good to see this legislation coming forward, Mr. Speaker, but again there are so many more needs that must be addressed. There are some very important ways that this government is engaging or not engaging with the Fransaskois community. But again we'll discuss those as they arise.

But today it is good to stand in this legislature to recognize Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 sur les garderies d'enfants*. It's good to see this, Mr. Speaker. I know that other of my colleagues desire participation in this debate as well, and with that I would move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[15:30]

Bill No. 100

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 100 — *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To join in and debate Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*. I guess I want to start out with making some comments about the school divisions, the municipalities. And I know that's how they pay for, you know, some of the services that are provided to residents in municipalities. A part of I guess a community you're a part of, the requirement is that you pay for some of those services. And some small communities, we know through the assessment, there's different values.

And I'll get into the assessment process and what SAMA [Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency] does for the municipalities, school division, and the province. But having said that, I want to just talk about some of the service that smaller communities get or don't get. So you know, your mayor and council will determine with consulting with the community residents, you know, what type of . . . whether they're going to have pavement, gravel roads.

There's many things that the municipalities have to do, and I want to commend our mayor and councils in northern Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan, and urban centres who are elected by the people to represent them and to carry on the business and take care of I guess the business of running the city or a small, you know, rural community or a northern community. They're there. They do great work. And they have challenges.

But you know, at the end of the day, part of the funding they get, whether it's from the province, programs that they applied through federal government, but they provide services to the residents they're asked to serve. And as a mayor and council they do that.

And part of the assessment, when the tax notice goes out to them each year to the residents like myself . . . I live in a small community, and you know, we have an assessment. We get our tax notice. It tells us how much we're going to pay based on the mill rate that, you know, the municipalities pay. And that's determined through an assessment of the value of . . . I guess I'll use my own property. There's assessment done, and that determines how much . . . When the mill rate comes out, how much the municipalities set the mill rate at will determine how much I'm going to pay for that year on the property I own and the residence I live in. And that's a good thing. I mean it helps to pay for part of the, I guess part of the services that I've asked the leadership that I voted for or, you know, that's elected by the people.

So they carry on the business, and they do that. And that whole process, it works good. Some will have issues with it, and that's up to individuals. And they will raise those issues, like I have, with my mayor and council. If I'm not happy, I can go to mayor and council meeting and raise my concerns, whether it's a letter . . . So I can let them know whether I'm happy.

But this assessment, that's done to determine how much they will send me a tax bill for each year. And the assessment is done by SAMA who does the assessment, you know, every four years. So having said that, they do the assessment. They determine from the tax notice I get or tax bill, if you want to call it, that I get from the municipality, but also on the school division portion. So I said earlier that the municipality will determine the mill rate, the mayor and council will, and so what services we're going to get. And that's fine. You know, they have to answer to the people if people are unhappy. And that process is there.

But it's interesting. Government came in, and then when this current government, Sask Party government came in, they decided they were going to change that. And they've gone on, and now school divisions can no longer designate a mill rate to bring in dollars to the school division to service the schools and to take care of them. It is set by the government, the Ministry of Education. The government decides what mill rate will be levied against the taxes.

So school divisions used to, and you know, when I sat on the school division we ran . . . You've seen challenges that you had in the school division. You had the funding that would come in from government which assists you as a school division to operate. And sometimes we have our rural school divisions. We have northern school divisions. We have urban ones where they look after students in making sure that the students get a good quality education. They try to do what they can with the resources at their disposal. But the boards of education used to have an opportunity to set the mill rate. And if they seen that there was certain projects or areas where students needed more supports, the school division could, you know, look at that and say, we're going to have to raise the mill rate a bit to help us make sure our students are getting a good quality education.

Now we know that a majority of the funding for school divisions would come in from . . . For some of them, not all of them. Some would say most of the funding would come in from the government. Some communities, it's less. Some urban centres might argue that and say, well no, we pay more. So there's a formula that's worked out, and it works. And that's how they operate the school division.

And you know, at the end of the day, again it's through that assessment done. It's the agency that looks after doing the assessment every four years. Then it allows the school division . . . The municipalities know what the property is worth so they can levy the proper mill rate and come up with a bill for taxes. So each year you have to pay your taxes and hopefully, you know, that process works fine.

But you know, having said that, I know the school divisions, it worked well. They got to determine getting the funding from government, and if they needed assistance, like I said earlier, they could generate it. And unfortunately this government, I believe in 2009, took that ability from school divisions to generate any income basing on the mill rate on properties that . . . when the residents are serving the students. And some will say maybe it was too high. There's different arguments all over. At the end of the day, it was based on trying to do what's best for the students and the families that live in the communities and the boundaries of school divisions.

So again I want to say, it's the good work that our schools do with limited resources. And we hear some of the challenges right now with school divisions, with support staff, and all the different challenges they're based on. Well if that would have been the case for school divisions, they could have generated, you know, some income from raising the mill rate to actually help students in the classroom, if that's what they needed to do. They could identify certain things.

And the school divisions do do a great job. Like you know, they're elected by the people to represent them. And they do a great job, and they try to make sure they stretch every dollar they have in making sure that they take care of the employees that work there, whether they're within the school division, as far as support staff, or their teachers. But you know, they do the job, and the school division has an obligation to take care of them. But that's all determined by an assessment. You know, SAMA does the assessment and determines what the . . . [inaudible].

But having said that, I wanted to just show and explain my understanding of where we're at. And for those listening, that I can from my view . . . the way it's changed. This government has changed the school division's way of generating that. They took that away from the school divisions. And that was something that the school division I know . . . I heard they were very frustrated individuals I talked to and school division members that I heard.

And when I was on the board, that was something that was really, it was a tool that we used to assist us to make sure we were doing what we can with limited resources. But it gave you that opportunity, whether you were dealing with the education of our kids or facilities, you had the ability to generate some income to assist you in years that you were struggling.

But unfortunately again the Sask Party government decided to eliminate that and have done that. And they can have their arguments based on whatever it is they want to use. That's fine.

You know, that's up to them to explain to Saskatchewan residents why they've done and to the boards of education and to the struggling . . . You know, if you look at the teachers and the families, they're struggling. And you look at capital and all the different things that are going on, the P3s [public-private partnership], building schools, and different things that they're doing. That'll be up to them to explain to residents and our boards of education why they're doing what they're doing. So at the end of the day, like I say, I'll leave that with the government to explain what they've done. And they owe an obligation and they owe an explanation to the residents and our taxpayers in our province and the children that go to our schools.

So having said that, now I talked a little bit about municipalities, and I talked about school divisions and what they try to do, and they're elected. But it's this whole assessment. Some are frustrated with the assessment. And I've had somebody . . . There's an opportunity and I know that this is going to try to clean up some of the issues that they have.

And it's interesting, you know, when they talk about Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, when they talk about the agency that does the assessment. So they go around making sure there's a formula. It's very complicated, so I'm not going to try to say that . . . Many people I've heard are frustrated saying, what does it mean? They look at their tax bill and they see the amount. And if it goes up 100, \$200, some it goes ridiculous, they're upset and they're wondering why. And they're angry. And they're saying, I'm paying too much tax. And I've heard that. People have shared that with me over the years that they're frustrated.

Having said that, that agency does a process. There is a process for individuals to, you know, appeal their assessment, their assessment, the notice. And they can. There's a process going. And I had people who came into my office in the last year that were unhappy with the assessment and wanted to appeal it, and there was a process that they had to go through. And there's a time limit that you have to notify them that you want, you're going to appeal your tax assessment. So you could do that. There is a process, and that agency will hear that. And I guess if you meet the requirements and you feel that, you know, your tax notice is too high, you can have that appeal process. You can go through that process, making sure you meet the deadlines. The assessment, they will hear your case if you meet the requirements, and they'll go through it.

Now they could, from my understanding, could say there needs to be . . . I guess your property would be reassessed. They could look at, there's a reason why you could show some reason why your property . . . Or they would explain to you maybe better why your property has gone up in value, whether it's the property or your home's gone up. But having said that, that's part of that process that they go through to determine your assessment and the value, and then after that the mill rate will come.

Now according to this, what I can read — and I know the

minister's comments that he's done, and I know some of my colleagues have responded, and there will be more to respond to it — there's a formula. And at the end of the day when the tax notices are all sent out and everyone's divided up, municipalities get their share of the tax. School divisions get their share of it. There's a formula, and I think it was 39/61 per cent. Sixty one per cent goes to, I think in the 2012 year, went to the municipalities; 39 went to school divisions. And it's quite a large amount of money to assist them to do the services that they've been asked to do.

Now having said that, government also puts in some dollars into the agency, and government pays the part . . . Now I'm not sure, and I think in committee we're going to have some questions. And I think, you know, we need to find out. It sounds like government will continue to go to the budget process to fund dollars to the agency that does assessments, but it almost sounds like, from what I can get out of it . . . And it's what I'm taking from it, but like I said, we'll have to get clarification in committee. And we can ask some direct questions and go through this, and I'm sure my colleagues will do that.

Now having said that, they'll go through getting the information. It sounds like right now the cost is shared amongst municipalities. It's shared amongst government for the agency to carry on the duty that it's asked to do. Now whether there's enough resources for them to do the business and, you know, we'll have to see. And I think it sounds like they consulted with the municipalities. I'm not sure if, and I don't believe the school divisions pay anything into it. I'm not sure. I'm not sure what the formula is. I don't have all the details. But I know the provincial government out of the . . . each year looks at the budget and allocates dollars. And I think they're going to be allocating more dollars to the agency to carry on the work that they have to do.

Now this agency that we talk about that does the assessment, I'm not sure at this point, you know, is it a private company? Is it ran like a Crown? Is it ran independent? Like I'm not sure how it does it. So I'm not sure of the partnership. And I guess we'll ask those questions and get cleared up. And that would be an interesting, you know, process when you go through this as you come on and as we develop this. And I guess we can ask questions. Some may know that answer because they've dealt with this before, and that's great if they do. But for me, I think I would like some more clarification, and it would be good to know that.

[15:45]

But having said that, they're also coming up with, I guess cleaning up some of the wording, maybe some of the language to allow, and some of their amendments to allow some of the amendments that they're asking to have happen. And at the end of the day, I guess the ability to make sure — and that's a concern — for the agency to be able to make sure that they're allocating or asking for payments for services that they're doing for municipalities, it almost sounds like . . .

And again, we're going to have to go through this to find out from the municipalities and, you know, SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] to see how will they be

impacted and what type of impact will they have. And I think government refers to that. They have talked to SUMA and SARM, and there's no issues, if I'm correct, you know. And we need to check with them to make sure that's the, you know, that's what's going on, that there are no issues with it.

But I guess, it could be more cost to the municipalities. If what I get from this amendment, there could be more actual cost, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to municipalities for the services that they get from the agency that does their assessments.

So having said that, there's a process. I'm not sure. And I think there'll be some questions, and we'll be in contact with some municipalities. I know the critic will do their job to find out, yes, is that exactly the case? And you know, maybe some municipalities that might have issue with it, and if they have concerns, we know that we would advise them to get a hold of, you know, our critic and the official opposition to raise those concerns. They can also, you know, get a hold of the ministry and the minister to ask them what's going on, what the changes are.

And I am encouraging municipalities, who do a great job . . . Our mayors and councils do do the great job that they do, and you know, the people have voted them in and asked them to do it. They do a great job. I don't know how this will impact them, how much more they will have to pay, you know, if an agency is asking for more resources to do the work it needs to do.

I guess I hope it's not just a . . . They have the opportunity. They had to go through I guess a process to ask for those extra dollars. And whether it goes through cabinet or through the municipalities, there's a mechanism or a process in place if they are concerned, that they can ask, you know, why are we getting this increase? Why the changes?

And I think there could be questions. And if there's not from municipalities, well fine. If they understand it and they're comfortable with that, that's fine. I just hope the process is there to make sure there's protection and there's an opportunity for them to ask some questions when they have concerns. And I want to, you know, look at that clearly to make sure that that happens. And I know we'll ask some questions.

So having said that, overall, you know, there are some financial opportunities. There's some, I guess, accountability. There's even some cleaning up of the school divisions in here, and it might be just language, that they're getting rid of some of the wording on it or changing it. And we'll have to see how it all plays out at the end of the day and through committee and when we talk to individuals, our mayors and councils. And I know, you know, I'll have an opportunity to talk to some of the mayor and councils that I represent and seeing if they're understanding it and if they're agreeing with this. And if they have any concerns that we can raise in committee, then we will do that for them.

So at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 100.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of

the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 101

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 101 — *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today this afternoon to enter into the debate on Bill No. 101, *An Act to Amend The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*. And it is of interest to reflect on how our higher education is organized in this province and the universities play a major, major role and particularly . . . well both have, over the course of time, the University of Regina . . . But it is a newer university and the University of Saskatchewan, I think, in the minds of many people in Saskatchewan play a unique and special role because of its age and it's one that many of us have attended. Myself, I have a degree from the University of Saskatchewan, have one as well from the University of Regina, and so I feel like I can speak both . . .

An Hon. Member: — Both languages.

Mr. Forbes: — Both languages of both cities. They're both fine, fine institutions. But this afternoon we're talking about the University of Saskatchewan. And to many families, the U of S has a special place in their heart because it's a place where many kids went to school and got their degrees and represented the first degrees that some families, family members attained.

And they both have a unique role in Saskatchewan, and of course now we have other institutions that can grant degrees, and this is part of the place before us now. But I think I just wanted to reflect on the University of Saskatchewan and, you know, the role it plays in the province or in the city of Saskatoon. The architecture, the incredible knowledge that has come out of the U of S, and the role it plays across Saskatchewan, across Canada. And whether it be in the typical areas you would think of, whether that be agriculture or where you think of the synchrotron or where you think of the arts, it's a fine, fine institution. It's one that deserves a lot of support and recognition, and I hope that the province can continue to do that. And of course that means that there's always the tweaking of the original legislation, and this is what we're here to do is to amend *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*.

So I was taking a look back through that Act and it is interesting when you think about how the university in so many ways . . . You know, you would think things could be simpler, but it has thought of a unique process of how they do their business. And of course we have the convocation and that's what we all strive to actually be part of, that day of convocation where as graduands we are entered into that and come of out of that day with our diplomas and recognized and become alumni and all

the things that are before us.

And then you have the chancellor, the senate, the board, and all of these have their duties and responsibilities and processes of becoming members of and that's all very, very important. And of course there's the council, the university council, how do you . . . what's it made of and what do they do and who is the secretary and who's the chairperson and how do you get elected to the council and what do they do? And of course then you have the assembly, the assembly, and what do they do and who's the secretary and who's the chairperson? And this is all . . . And then you have the officers of the university, of course the president and the deans and the heads and the secretary there as well and the controller. So it's all very interesting how this, how something . . . You know, I think it's maybe a thing of beauty. Other people may think it's a thing of bureaucracy. I don't know.

I'm trying to read through this and get a sense. I don't have a chart in front of me that makes the flow of this. But it comes from a tradition many, many years, hundreds of years old — not this university hundreds, but it is getting on in age. But the university tradition is one around the world that is . . . you know, speaks to independence, speaks to academic excellence, and speaks to a larger role within the community and within the province and within our country.

And clearly this university strives to do that and has done a fantastic job in the past, and I'm really confident it will do so in the future. It's one that has a high level of integrity, and it meets the challenges of the times and has done that in the past and will continue to do that. And whether it's at the individual level of hoping to contribute more to society, have a more meaningful job because you have a degree, and now you can have a diploma . . . And that's what we're talking about is the ability to have a diploma. And that will be interesting to see how that . . .

Well in fact I have from the University of Saskatchewan a post-graduate diploma and then moved that up to a master's. I'm not sure what the exact term of what that . . . Master's of administration I think it is. I don't know. I should know. I have it, but it's been a while now. So at any rate it's a very important, it's a very important institution. And this is the debate that we're having here today.

And I know many, many of us in this Chamber have a degree or diploma probably from the . . . or a certificate. I remember when my brother got his voc ag. I think it was a one-year certificate program, vocational agricultural certificate from the U of S. It was a big deal. It was a very big deal. And for him, particularly as a farmer, that meant an awful lot as particularly . . . And I think that was back in the late '70s that my brother went, got the voc ag papers. But as you know, farming has changed so much in this province and particularly through the '70s, '80s, '90s, and on, and you really had to become much more technically adept.

And it was the beginning . . . Even at that time I think in the late '70s or mid-'70s, computers were not quite, you know, in everybody's home yet. That happened more in the '80s but right, very close to that time period.

And of course I remember in the mid-'80s is when the

Agriculture Building got built at the U of S, and there was some controversy in terms of some of the funding that happened from the corporate sector and what that all meant. That was not a, you know, straightforward thing. There was a lot of discussion about the independence of the university. And of course the universities more than ever now — and it's an unfortunate circumstance but maybe it's part of the world we live in now — have to go out and do a lot more fundraising than they ever did before. It's a reality, and much of that is through the corporate world. And the corporate world is stepping up, and of course they see it as their role as a good corporate citizen.

We see that, whether it be in the commerce area, whether that be in the business, the law area. There is a lot of that now happening in universities and in post-secondary, and that is to a certain extent a good thing. The problem arises when they start to impinge or influence the independence of the university and expect certain things to be done. And we hope that doesn't happen, or particularly that it can influence scholarly work and research, because this is where that kind of work gets done, at the universities, and we want to make sure that . . . It is so important that that research is left at an arm's length from undue influence.

And I know that the academic world strives to make sure that is the case. And we have to make sure that there are the proper checks and balances. So perhaps this is why we have so much governance at the university level, whether it be the senate, the board, the council, the assembly, and the roles that they play, you know, to make the wheels of the university move forward. But having said that, this is why we are here today, to talk about that.

But as I said, it's a critically important piece for us because if we don't get this right then that influence can, you know, creep its way into places where it ought not to be. And that's why it's important that universities and anything that receives public funding and purports to be neutral and not biased, has to have that level of transparency and accountability.

[16:00]

And that's why it's really important when we talk about, how do people get onto these places of decision making within the university? It's not just as straightforward as filling the seats. That's probably the least of the issues. We want to make sure there's good, credible people making decisions of the places that we hold in such high regard because of the role within our communities.

And it's hugely important, whether it be health care . . . and you know, the university has done so much work in terms of that. And we can talk about the different kind of things that they've done, whether it be nuclear medicine and how the University of Saskatchewan has done so much in that area, or other areas as well, whether it be in agriculture and whether, you know . . . And I know that there is a huge debate, a huge debate in terms of the role of GMOs [genetically modified organism] versus organic farming, all of that kind of thing. The efficiency of equipment, machinery, all of that, that's a debate that needs to happen. But it must be done in an appropriate way that lends credibility to the university.

Of course, engineering is another one, and today we'll go meet with a lot of people from the APEGS [Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan], many of whom are graduates of the University of Saskatchewan. I know my oldest brother actually and two of his children — might be three; I think it's two — are actually graduates of the engineering department at the University of Saskatchewan. So a huge impact in terms of our province, and whether that be mining engineering . . . And that was what my brother graduated from. He was one of the last graduates from the . . . that offered the mining engineering degree. I'm not sure if it's come back into play.

An Hon. Member: — It's started up again.

Mr. Forbes: — Has it started up again? Right on. But it went out for a while. It went out for a while which was really unusual for a province that has done so much in terms of mining. I appreciate the correction because it just didn't make any sense to have a university that didn't have a mining engineer degree.

Of course, civil engineering and all of that kind of thing is there. And of course, you know, in the work that it's done in terms of the oil fields is so hugely important, and probably of any of the brain drain that we've experienced in this province, the number of people who got their engineering degrees here and went to Calgary . . . And of course there was always that famous sign on the side of the bus that says something about how your boss is from Saskatchewan because so many of the people had engineering degrees.

And so that's really important, whether it be nursing and the medical area of doctors and the whole range there, and of course teaching. Now this is where I do have to admit that I did get my first degree of . . . my B.Ed. [Bachelor of Education] from the University of Regina. And there was always this big controversy where the best teachers came from, whether they came from Saskatoon, the U of S, or did they come from the U of R [University of Regina]? You know, this is where my loyalty gets really kind of dicey because I do have to say the U of R has a pretty good program when it comes to B. Eds. Now for a master's, I think that the U of S is pretty darn good. But this is something we can debate at another time because right now that's not the debate before us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it? It's not Bill 101, which has the best teaching program, the U of R or the U of S?

But we kind of moved away from that as well. And I think for many of the bills that we have before us today, we're seeing . . . And it would be interesting to hear more from the other side about this because there used to be such a debate — and I never really supported this — about how we should have just one big university here in Saskatchewan. I really valued the idea that when you have two or more, you had a real opportunity for different approaches to how you taught, how you did research. And you really met the needs of students. And we see this now with SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and Briercrest and other institutions being able to offer degrees.

So I think it's important, and I think this is a very worthwhile debate that we have around our post-secondary education and what does that mean. And you know, the wonderful thing of it

and the amazing thing we're going to be debating today is in terms of the fact that the universities do have some . . . The alumni have some input into the decision making at the university level.

I'm not sure, and this is something that we can find out more, but I don't think that's happening in the SIAST area, the technical area, that they don't have that same kind of board. They don't have the same kind of senate, that kind of thing, that's made up. It's a very different kind of governance model. And this is something that we really have to guard in terms of the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, that we don't lose that input both from the alumni and as well the students. That's critically, critically important.

So having said that, I do want to take a minute to review the comments of the Minister of Advanced Education when he introduced this bill back on November 12th. And he wanted to talk about the proposed amendments and what they're all about, and I think he identifies about six of them. Of course the sixth one would be the housekeeping ones, and I don't need to go through that.

First there'll be “. . . help to clarify the awarding of diplomas in the list of powers of convocation.” And of course the current legislation calls for the ability for the convocation to award degrees and certificates and not diplomas. But you know I have to say, I guess this is just catching up with what practice is because I did get a postgraduate diploma. It wasn't a certificate, so I better make sure that's what it was because I did pay something for it. But at any rate, it adds that in and is clarifying that, and that's an important piece.

Next, they'll help to ensure that individuals elected to represent the senate, most specifically and especially outside [of student] members of the senate, they will work to ensure that they represent the senate, will be graduates of the university.

And I assume that that makes a lot of sense. I think that's important. Now it's interesting that we do have members of the senate that aren't necessarily from Saskatchewan, and I think that was done intentionally, so we would have a broader experience across Canada or in particularly Western Canada. Now I could be wrong on this, and this is why we'll have questions in committee about this, that they have to have degrees from the U of S, or I guess diplomas or certificates. And that's very, very important. That's very, very important.

But I think that we'll have to ask some more questions about that because I know that there . . . I'm pretty confident there are members of the senate who are not residents of Saskatchewan. Now they wouldn't be the ones who were . . . Now this is maybe the catch. They weren't elected, but I think the senate can have appointments on it. And so that will be . . . We'll have to find out more about that, but maybe it's the board that you have people appointed to. But we'll have to clarify that. Do they have to be a resident of Saskatchewan as well? And so that'll be very, very interesting to talk about that.

And they talked about . . . The third point is the process by which student members of the senate are elected and this is carried out in sections 29 and 32. And then it talks about this

one, and this is one that I know I think that my colleague, the member from Nutana, talked about: the terms of office for the senate nominees to the board to allow them to serve a three-year third term, but how inconsistent that is with the faculty. And that's stuck at two years. And we'll talk a little bit about this because I went back and looked at the Act. I thought that was very, very interesting and a good catch. Why is it the faculty members are limited to two years and the other ones from the senate are for three years? But I'll talk more about that because I want to hold up the Act and talk a little bit about that.

And of course the fourth one is about student members on hearing boards and how they'll work through that. Requirements of corporate seal, and I think that's an important issue; and I really appreciated reading about that. And that was an interesting conversation about that. The fifth one is allowing a senator to serve a third three-year term to bring parity, that type of thing. And that's straightforward, and as I said, housekeeping.

I do want to talk a bit and go . . . And this'll be interesting because we've had this same discussion prior to when this government did away with the visitor part of the legislation. The member from Greystone, the Minister of Advanced Education, talked about how he had got a letter from the University of Saskatchewan requesting these amendments to the legislation. So that's who asked for it. That's fair enough. We know that. And then he talked about how the ministry then consulted with the University of Saskatchewan and the U of R on the proposed amendments. So they got the two letters from them in support, and that was good. And then they went back out and worked through the discussions with the university's secretary's office. And they also consulted with the University of Saskatchewan's Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association, and they both have provided letters of support.

At least one letter that's missing I think here would be from the Faculty Association, particularly when they're the ones who are diminished in terms of their role on the board, I would assume, from how I'm reading that. And if I go to section 45 . . . Well, let's just go to section 41. I'm looking back at *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*, and section 41, the Board of Governors, who are also known as the board. And of course they have quite a role of responsibilities, their powers, that type of thing, but I want to talk about . . . So the Board of Governors is composed of the chancellor, the president, president of the students' union, five members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council — so that's by cabinet, essentially — two members elected by the senate, and one faculty member selected by members of the assembly who are faculty members, secretary, secretary to the board.

44 talks about the chairperson, who that is. And that is critically important because the member, the minister talked about how the reason they're doing this is to provide for some sort of continuity so you can develop leadership. So he's talking about the five, or the two members elected by the senate as special, that they should be considered for leadership roles. But what about the faculty member? They seem to be able to be the chairperson. There's not any limitation saying you cannot be a faculty member and a board member, not on this role, not on this, not in this section anyways.

So what we're really talking about is members of the board, in clauses 42(c) and 42(d), may be re-elected to the board but may not serve more than two consecutive terms. And I think that they're actually saying you can now serve three consecutive terms, so that's fair enough. That's what they want to do. But then they change the one to say that the senate nominees who are elected get to be three years and not two years. So essentially saying you can go three years times three, that's nine years. But if you're a faculty member, you can now go three terms times two, so you go six years. So there's a limitation of that, and I wonder why, why would that be?

And the letter from the faculty association is not part of the consultation. So maybe I'm missing something. But I would think that if you're singling out a group, the faculty member who is elected by members of the assembly, why is that person not elected to a three-year term as well?

And so now it may be a straightforward answer, and that's why we have committees because we don't get a lot of time on this. But I do think it's somewhat ironic that the faculty association has not been part of the discussions here today, and so that's interesting.

[16:15]

And I just want to make sure as I review this that I . . . Well those will be questions that we have when we have this in committee. And of course we'll be talking to the faculty association over the winter months and say, so how do you feel about that? Is this correct? Are we reading this right, or are we misreading this? And were you consulted in this? Because clearly the minister has not identified them as one of the groups who was consulted.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that we always want to make the legislation as best as we can, and so our job is to do the due diligence on it, the scrutiny. The unintended consequence . . . We don't want to see a bill back here next year, you know, *An Act to amend the University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995* with one line . . . Oh we forgot the faculty, and there was no good reason for that. So why don't we find out the reason now?

So I know that there will be many of my colleagues who will want to also speak to this. We hope this wasn't just an oversight, that there was a real reason. Or maybe I'm reading this wrong. Because you know, I got to tell you when I started reviewing the original legislation, I saw you have the convocation. You have the senate. You have the board of governors. You have the council. You have the assembly. It's quite an interesting thing to keep track of.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know others will want to speak to this, and I think it's appropriate at this point to move adjournment of Bill No. 101, *An Act to amend the University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 101, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 107

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 107 — *The Wildfire Act*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To rise and debate Bill 107, *The Wildfire Act*. To make some opening comments, and I guess before I get into details of this document and some of the changes that the government is proposing and coming in compliance with I guess today's wildfires that we're dealing with and the way industry and everyone has a role to play, I want to start out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by talking about northern Saskatchewan and where my home is and where I live and some of the challenges we've seen with wildfires in some of the communities and some of the hardship that, you know, happened to some of the northern communities.

And I think about, in '99, the Mallard fire that happened in La Ronge. You know, that was a fire in itself. It was a, you know, a challenge. But having said that, the community went through that process and today I guess the municipalities, they have I think they've come together. They learned from it. Hopefully government and the ministry has learned from it to protect . . . and safety of homes, of cabins, and, you know, just of life. No one wants to, you know, lose a loved one or have a Saskatchewan resident have a, you know, an incident where you lose someone in a wildfire or a fire.

But having said that, you know, I want to talk about the good work that many in northern Saskatchewan . . . And it's not just northern Saskatchewan, but a majority of I guess the fires that happen, happen in northern Saskatchewan. But I guess the fire protection workers, and I'm talking about the good men and women who fight the fires as they're asked to do, and you know, the good work they do to protect homes, communities, business that are out there in some of the communities.

And I want to talk a little bit about that and give a, you know, to the support that firefighters do, you know, whether it's initial attack teams that go out and initially start attacking a fire should a fire happen. And just the way they do that, I want to give some credit to the good work that they do. They're very dedicated. You know, some of them are well trained and they do a great service to this province. And sometimes, unfortunately, you know . . .

And I'm going to talk about, going back and forth as I talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, referring to this bill, *The Wildfire Act*. I'm going to be giving you some of the good work that's done, some of the challenges and some of the concerns people have raised about wildfires. And let's talk about the legislation, some of the challenges RMs [rural municipality] had with the buffers. But I'll talk about that.

But I want to give, you know, some credit where the good work

that many of our firefighters do and the good job they do. And you know, they do . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Tochor: — To introduce guests, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Everyone in this Assembly can't do what we do down here if we didn't have the loving support of our family and spouses. And I'm lucky to introduce my wife who's in your gallery. Danielle, a wave? And for the first time ever in the Assembly on the outside, we're going to introduce Jacob Tochor — a little wave there, Jacob. So please join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 107 — *The Wildfire Act*
(continued)**

Mr. Vermette: — Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in and, you know, to start out and, I guess, to the member, welcome his family to the Legislative Assembly. Join him in that.

Having said that, I'm going to get into some of the details of what I was talking about earlier is the good work that the . . . fighting fires in our province and wildfires in northern Saskatchewan, but they're not just in northern Saskatchewan. We know rural communities have a lot of grass fires. And we know that there's, you know, there's good people out there, whether they're with the fire service, volunteers, fire department. And I know there's a number of the volunteer fire departments. But also the good people that work for the, you know, the environment and they work in the fire area for wildfires and the good work that they do.

And then I think about some of the challenges that they're faced with sometimes and some of the challenges that I guess government puts onto some of the workers that do the fine job. And you know, I've heard some of the challenges that some of the workers have expressed with . . . I guess you want to make sure everyone is safe when they're doing their job.

And this is a job that, I'll tell you, we've seen in Saskatchewan and other parts of our world where, you know, you have the men and women who try to protect our homes and to save lives. Sometimes unfortunately the sad accident happens and you lose those workers. And I just want to talk about, commend the good

work that individuals do and not take away from the great job they do and the tough job they do and what they do for our province and for Saskatchewan residents.

They do. They put their life on the line for us to protect our homes, to protect our businesses, to protect our communities. And you know, that in itself is a great job. And I tip my hat to those workers who put themselves in harm's way to protect our homes, our province, and what is . . . But having said that, the challenge is . . . I know that it's not only on the ground, front-line workers who go out and fight fire and, you know, try to deal with them once they start.

But you know, we have the fire protection base in La Ronge and we see the good work that, you know, our fire protection does when it comes to the planes and the water bombers and the good work the base in La Ronge does. And I know they're set up in different communities to protect the fires and the good work that they do, the many hours that they've put in. And whether it's the pilots, whether it's the maintenance people, whether it's support staff, the secretaries — they all do a great job. And I just want to commend that, the job they do, and again thank them for the good work they do. Because it's important that we have that service.

There's also helicopters, whether they're, you know . . . And some of those are private business ventures and they assist with wildfires and, you know, protecting us again. You know, they go out and protect our homes and our communities and our resources. You know, you look at the trees and you look at our natural resources that are out there. It has great value not only for the industry that's harvesting some of that. And I talk about, you know, how our trees and many of our trees . . . And we have to have a lot of trees that protects and, you know, cleans the air and helps us with our environment. And we see that. So it's important that we keep that resource, not only in harvesting the wood but in keeping it there to make sure that, you know, the natural cycle of the tree that takes out pollutants out of the air. So I just want to say that in itself is a good thing.

But having said that about the good work that our fire protection people do and the good work that they do do, you know, I want to again just give credit where credit is due. But you know, you see some of the challenges. And I know we've talked about right now the workers that worked in the fire towers in northern Saskatchewan and the rest of the province. You see the challenges that they're seeing, the concerns that they have raised. And we have seen a lot of people raising concerns. My colleagues have talked about it. It's been in question period. There are concerns about safety and about having cameras in our fire towers taking the place of employees, people that that was their job and they did a great job. And I commend the fire tower workers who did that, spent the hours that they've gone up.

And I've talked to some of the I guess supervisors that were within the industry years ago and have seen it. And you know, I asked them, was there a lot of, you know, safety issues or loss of life with these towers? And the government says it's about, well the reason we're taking them out is because of safety. And that's a good thing. We want to make sure people are safe and our workers that do the job, there's provisions, regulations that protect, you know, our employees whether they're working in

the fire tower.

But having said that, they . . . No longer we will have towers. Government has decided to scrap the fire towers. And having those watchers and those individual workers who did a great job, they took care of their family. They provided a good income for their family to make sure that they can provide for their family. And a lot of these jobs are in northern Saskatchewan. But again we see what this government is like when it comes to northern Saskatchewan. It wants to take the good resources and take all the money down to Regina and take care of, you know, the situations that they want. Like it's take, take, take. And I think northern Saskatchewan people are getting a little bit . . . They're frustrated. And you know, they're going to start raising it.

And you know, again I talk about the leadership. You know, the leadership, you talk about. And they're doing their part to raise the concerns. And I give the credit of the leaders in northern Saskatchewan when, you know, when they talk about, it's not just about taking the resources out. And they're doing their part to raise it at the table. Whatever minister they deal with, the ministries they deal with, they raise the issue. Whenever they meet with the government, they make sure that the government understands the challenges. It's not just about taking our good resources. And we have many resources.

And it's not about keeping those resources to northern Saskatchewan, and all the wealth. It's sharing it. They're willing to do their part in northern Saskatchewan. It helps. We have many people coming in the mining industry from southern Saskatchewan. We encourage that. It's good. There's people working. But we have to ensure that the services are there for northern residents too, to make sure they're taking a good opportunity, that they can make a good living for their family.

So I want to just show some examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of some of those challenges. And this wildfire Act that they talk about . . . And I'm going to talk about some of the challenges that are out there. And we heard some of them, frustration that came out when they announced some of the changes in this Act that they were going to change.

And I guess the one is the buffer. They talked about a 4.5-kilometre buffer around communities. Well you sure heard an outcry from RMs and from those communities, the leaders. And I've talked about that in, you know, one of the bills earlier about the good job. We elect our leaders, mayors, and council to serve us and to serve the residents. And right away when they seen this could impact their communities greatly, they did what they needed to do, and they made it clear they were not happy with the Sask Party government's pushing at this and the way they were going at it. So they made it very clear.

But you know what? It's interesting to see, you know. And I encourage our municipalities; I encourage our First Nations, our Métis leaders, residents of the province, when you're unhappy with government . . . And we're seeing that. People are starting to speak up. They're not going to sit back and be quiet anymore. They've given the government years to do some of the stuff, the good work they're supposed to be doing. And they're demanding that there's some action on it.

When you talk about a government talking about resources, and they have so much wealth and our province is doing so great, then, Mr. Speaker, they expect more from their government.

And we see that with our seniors. We see that with our municipalities. So having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly the RMs were very frustrated and they voiced their concern. They've done what they needed to do.

[16:30]

So having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the provisions that the government's . . . [inaudible] . . . into *The Wildfire Act*, and they're saying it hasn't been amended since, I think the last time was somewhere in the '80s was the last time. So they're saying now it's coming into compliance, and it's giving them certain ability to regulate and to come in with some regulations, whether it's industry. And some of the industry when they're developing a plan, when they're going out and the developers are going to develop an area where it hasn't been developed, from my understanding . . . And we're going to have to ask some of these tough questions, and we'll work through those tough questions in committee. And I know we'll make some comments. But having said that, from what I got from some of the comments and some of the information so far that we've been shared with, you know, from comments the minister made from the bill itself, it has to go through.

But having said that, there is a clause in here where there has been some industry, whether I think something like . . . Would it be outfitters was one of them? They weren't included in regulations. If you are the one that has caused a fire, from what I can get, then you would be responsible to pay. The government could come and take action, and if it's the cost to cover a fire, whether it's a developer, there were certain clauses and individuals that I think were in the existing legislation. Now they want to add those that were exempt or for some reason at the time. And I think some of those, it talks about oil and gas operations, mineral exploration, road construction, public utilities, outfitters, peat moss operations, railway operations were not included in the legislation. And now the government is going to include those so that, should those industries or those organizations create or happen to cause a fire that, you know, creates a wildfire, then the cost will give provisions in the ministry to go after them to cover the costs that the ministry has.

Now I've talked about the buffer. They were going to charge municipalities dollars, and they weren't going to cover that 4.5 kilometre buffer. And they've made it clear that no, no you're not, and municipalities . . . And so the government has. And there again it shows, when we have our elected officials raising concerns, organizations taking government to task on some of the things they're trying to do, and that's good. That shows me people don't have to be scared. If you've got concerns, and you want to raise those concerns when legislation's being introduced or changes that the government's going to make impacts the residents you've been asked to represent or organizations you've been asked to, let the government know. Let them know. And I mean, there's ways of doing it with respect, and they can do that.

There's also ways to use the opposition. There's many ways.

There's petitions. There's meetings with officials, with ministries, with government to raise your concerns. And some of them do that, and they do a good . . . [inaudible] . . . And some of the organizations that advocate for municipalities and I guess groups don't have a problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with raising their concerns. And they do that greatly.

So having said that, that's another area where I say I want to make it very clear. I commend the organization, the RMs that brought forward their concerns about the buffer. Whether they're northern municipalities, urban, rural, your voice was heard. You raised your concerns. You didn't think it was fair that this government would do that to your residents that you impacted, the cost. So you covered yourself, and you made sure that you did do the good job of representing the people you've been asked to serve. So I want to give credit where credit is due. Sometimes it needs individuals, organizations to take the government to task, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make sure that they're doing what they need to do for many of our Saskatchewan residents.

But having said that, you know, there is provisions in here that are going to come into play. And they talk about regulations. And regulations are something that you have to watch because we may pass an Act and legislation that gives the government . . . Later they will come up with the regulations. I'm hoping and I wonder who they're going to consult with. And will they consult? And you know, they have done some work, initial work in some of the communities. They did some visiting of communities and got some information.

But I know there was many other challenges from the information they got about *The Wildfire Act*. They went out and consulted and, you know, I know that there was some meetings that happened around the province. And that's good. You're supposed to do that, and you need to do more of that. This government's track record when it comes to consulting hasn't been too good and, you know, people are frustrated with that. But having said that, they did a little bit of it, and they're moving forward.

But these regulations after the fact that will come into play will be determined by the ministry and give the minister the powers to bring in regulations. I'm hoping, at the end of the day you know, after this part of the Act is proclaimed and it goes forward, when the government comes up with the regulations, they'll make sure that they talk to the RMs; to the municipalities, whether they're urban, rural, north; they make sure they consult with industry, with the people that will be impacted on these fires.

When I think about, you know, another part of the communities that get evacuated from a wildfire, and I think of the community of Wollaston Lake. And they went through quite a time, and their whole community was evacuated because of a wildfire that happened. And I know there was a group from the universities — I believe there was two of them — did a research and interview with the community members and chief and council from Wollaston Lake, the Hatchet Lake First Nation.

And I know there's been some recommendations. I think there's about 13 recommendations that they've brought out that said from the report or the interviews they did. They interviewed a

lot of community members — like I said, chief and council — and they've made some good recommendations on how, when you're going to evacuate a whole community like Wollaston Lake . . . the whole community was evacuated and they were separated from their families. And they were separated from, you know, their language. You had some families going with young children. Some of the older children we heard were left behind and they were split, went to different places. So they weren't all together, and I think that caused a lot of grief and some concern for children and parents and family members. Whether you're an adult or 18 or 19, 20, I don't know, families sometimes stick together. And that's good.

So when you're separated and you went to three or four different communities as you're being evacuated, and that whole process, I guess some good things needed to be learned. And there's about 13 recommendations in there. I hope this government will take those recommendations when they're making regulations. And any of those regulations that they're going to adopt, they will look at those 13 recommendations that come forward when they're developing the regulations. I hope they will take all that and consider it, and the ministry will look at all that because this is a good report done by a couple of students from the university. And they did a lot of work and they developed a report with recommendations, and it's crucial.

And some of the concerns . . . And I know we'll make sure, and I think everybody needs to have a look at these, the report that they provided to deal with some of the challenges in northern Saskatchewan. And it's not just about fires. Any time you're getting a northern community and you're going to evacuate that community, you make sure that you work with the leadership and community residents to make sure, when you're going to evacuate a whole community, you've done what you need to do as a government or as an agency supporting those evacuees, that you have all . . . Whatever you can do, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that those residents . . . And if it means that you evacuate them to a community close to their home, you do that. If it's available, you do that. You make sure.

And I think that's one of the recommendations they talk about, being close; where it's a community that has the same culture, the language. It's important to them and that makes them feel as close as they can to home because they have the language, they have the culture. And that's important.

I think that's one of the recommendations in there as well. So there's many things to look at when you're evacuating a whole community, and you know, whether you make sure that when they're evacuated they don't go for hours without water, food. And unfortunately in this situation in Wollaston Lake, that happened, and they talk about that in there. And I think some people, community members that were interviewed, shared some of the tough stories about, you know, not having access to some of those provisions for hours because they were transported by small aircraft from Wollaston Lake to another small . . . to a bigger airport where they could then be flown with bigger airplanes. So you talk about that. Those are the challenges and the grief and the stuff that those community members went through.

So there's an opportunity for government to look at those recommendations and to deal better with communities when

they're going to be actually evacuating whole communities in that situation and determining when it's the right time to evacuate and when should you evacuate, who should go to make sure they're working. And I know there's emergency measures and they have an agency that works with that. And they do a great job too, and I want to give credit to that, you know. That's the process. They do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do a great job. And that's important.

Now having said that, in this report it talked about, like I said earlier, 13 recommendations. The recommendations came out of the research and the interviews that they conducted in the community of Wollaston Lake. But it wasn't only Wollaston Lake I think. Clearly, they also talked to the fire commission's office, I believe. I just want to make sure I have that information on me here. Yes. Yes, that's where it is. It's with the provincial commission of emergency management and fire safety office that works with communities when they're evacuating and making sure that provisions are there. I think when this situation and the fire . . . It's something that they work closely with the communities to make sure that . . . And I guess with Red Cross they set up a lot of the discussions and the planning when you're evacuating a community, whether it's for wildfire or for any other reason.

But having said that, the reason this community got evacuated, Wollaston Lake, was because of a fire, a wildfire, that happened close to their community. Then the community members were evacuated out of the area.

So having said all that, the regulations will come down. And I want to make it very clear about the regulations after this legislation is proclaimed, making sure that, making sure that individuals are consulted that will be impacted. And whether that's mayors and councils, whether it's First Nations leaders, chief and council leaders, whether it's residents . . . And here we have an example of communities that were impacted greatly in northern Saskatchewan, and I think it's important that government does its due diligence. And whether you use this report, you also consult with the leadership from those communities. You bring forward that information.

It's important that we get that backup and we do this right. It's about safety. It's about protecting people's personal properties, their homes, the family home. It's about protecting businesses who operate in a community when you have a wildfire and you have challenges going on. So that needs to be where government needs to focus on, clearly.

But I know there's other provisions that government is looking at in the bill. In the minister's comments he talks about certain Acts that he will bring forward, and giving him certain authority for the ministry then to carry on the business. So at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shared a little bit. I know my colleagues will have more to say as they join the debate.

I know in committee we can, you know, ask a lot of questions and get some clarification and talk to community members and, you know, northern leaders and our rural, urban mayors and councils, and ask them how does the First Nations industry . . . How will this impact you? You know, are you okay with this? Is there anything we could do better? Is there any amendments we could do? Is there any regulations that we could bring

forward that would help?

And sometimes I think that's important that we sometimes can share with the government. And our leader has made that clear. We'll work with government when it makes good sense. We're willing to work and pass legislation that helps Saskatchewan people, protects them. We want to do that. And that's what we're asked to do. And we're all elected, and that's what we're asked to do. So having said that, there's a provision in that where government can listen to the opposition when we bring in information to share with government. That's good, makes sense to protect Saskatchewan residents. That's what it's about, and that's a job that we've been asked to do. And we will continue to do that.

There's more I could say on this bill, Mr. Speaker. But at this point I'm prepared to adjourn debate on this bill.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 107, *The Wildfire Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 111

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 111 — *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Glad to join the debate tonight on Bill 111, *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013*. It's a relatively short piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, coming forward. But referencing the minister's second reading speech where he talked about the intent being "... to improve accountability and better inform residents and families about personal care home inspection results," obviously, it's a hugely important endeavour, Mr. Speaker. Personal care homes are just that, you've got people that are in a very vulnerable circumstance, Mr. Speaker, in some cases. And it's of vital importance that these are properly monitored, properly regulated, and properly accounted for, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

In terms of the safe and appropriate care, safe and appropriate environment, it's interesting how this legislation comes forward at this time, again responding to recommendations from both the Provincial Auditor and the Provincial Ombudsman around the need for more information about personal care homes being available to the public. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is of vital importance. And certainly in an era where the Health ministry can post information on restaurant inspections on the web, then surely to goodness the time has come for something like this so that this regulation, this monitoring isn't just being performed, but that the public is able to access this information in a readily available manner.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, looking at *The Provincial Auditor Act*, one of the formative pieces as regards to the need for this legislation to come forward, I'm referring to chapter 34 of the 2012 report volume 2 from the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan. Again chapter 34, Regulating Personal Care Homes for Resident Health and Safety, that this has now been responded to by a relatively precise piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is good. I'm glad to see that.

But again in terms of the broad front of action that is required around the question of whether or not we have adequate care for our seniors — but certainly the way that that's represented in personal care home situations but the broader question of long-term care in general, Mr. Speaker — I think we've seen a debate in this province about whether or not this government is doing the job that need be done by our seniors in particular. And I think it's pretty plain, Mr. Speaker, that the job is not being done by the members opposite when it comes to providing the care that is so desperately required for our seniors.

We see them coming forward with different measures, Mr. Speaker. After saying that there was no cause for alarm in the spring, the minister then sent the CEOs out on a tour. The CEOs have come back with the report, which again provides some pretty bracing reading, Mr. Speaker. And the emotional response, the communications response on the part of the minister was appropriate. He said that reading various of that information made him angry. And it should, Mr. Speaker. But then the response that the urgent action fund of \$10 million being put forward as the answer from this government for the situation that confronts our seniors in too many places across this province, I don't know that that does the job, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know that the minister coming forward and expressing anger after reading the CEOs' tour report, after being part of a government that gutted the minimum care regulations under which long-term care is regulated, Mr. Speaker, without any fanfare, certainly, in the summer of 2011 ... and again it's interesting to see that this was supposedly done in the name of providing better personal care and better personal care plans.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the idea that it's some kind of mutually exclusive proposition where you can't have a basic standard of care and at the same time some kind of personal care plan for an individual senior, defies belief, Mr. Speaker. But that's what we see put forward in somehow a valid argument on this front. And again, it does not do the job that need be done by our seniors in this province, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't do the job around long-term care and it doesn't do the job in terms of what this government has been entrusted with by the people of Saskatchewan.

And it certainly doesn't satisfy the people that are contacting our offices, that are contacting the official opposition, saying that when they hear that government skate on platitudes and say that there's no cause for alarm, they come forward with a situation that describes something very different, Mr. Speaker. And the more that those voices come to the fore, I think the more that government will be forced to act. And not to say, you know, pass the buck and say there's no cause for alarm; not to pass the buck on the CEOs' tour that receives a half-hearted response in terms of the so-called urgent action fund but that

sees the actual response of this government work its way into the regulations, that works its way into the funding, that works its way into the kind of human resources strategy and capital strategy that needs to be brought to bear.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think of last night on the 6 o'clock news, again the situation with Barbara Blyth coming forward and the way that she spoke up in that article. And here's a lady in advanced age but still . . . you know, has her own personal challenges with cancer, but somebody that is not just looking to her own circumstance, Mr. Speaker. But the fact that she looks at the response of this government and says, okay, they acknowledge that there's a response. Or in the case of the North, Mr. Speaker, in the case of La Ronge and area, there'll be a study come forward saying that here's the long-term care need for the North, but that Ms. Barbara Blyth comes forward and says, you know, they recognize that there's a problem, but what are they doing about it? And the unsatisfactory nature of the response that's been made from this government.

I guess I'm inspired, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that somebody that's got her own problems to look to, to attend to, and the way that she has reached out to community, the way that she has reached out to the member from Cumberland, the way that she is speaking out not just for herself, Mr. Speaker, but she's speaking out on behalf of the aged and the infirmed, and that she won't stop until there's a better response being made. And surely to goodness somebody 84 years of age, 84 years of age, Mr. Speaker, and you know, I'm sure she's got better things to be doing with her time. But that she is there speaking out, not just on her own behalf but on behalf of those that are of that age that can't speak out on behalf of themselves, Mr. Speaker, as in northern Saskatchewan, is a tremendously inspiring thing.

And again she looks and says, you know, how is it that this government recognizes the problem but then they can't see through to do something about it? How does that work, Mr. Speaker? And she used stronger language than I'm sure you'd allow me to use in terms of the rules of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I see you nodding in agreement. But I think she stated it forcefully and accurately in terms of taking the measure of this government and taking the measuring of what they're doing around long-term care in this province and how it is failing the seniors of this province. And again, you know, Barbara Blyth, 84 years of age, struggling with cancer and, you know, has got her own circumstance to be looking after, Mr. Speaker. But the fact that she can see clear to speak and not just on her own behalf, but behalf of others, again is one of the things that gives me hope that we'll some day see a better response from the Government of Saskatchewan to the seniors of this province.

Again in terms of this piece of legislation that is in front of us here today, Mr. Speaker, it's a relatively short, short piece of work. It provides for better accounting of the situation in personal care homes as it is experienced around this province. In terms of the providing of information from the monitoring and the issuing of licences and again in and of itself, Mr. Speaker, that's an important thing.

The more information, the more knowledge that consumers can get their hands on, get their heads around, then the better

decisions they will be able to make. And in terms of the work that the Ombudsman and that the Provincial Auditor have conducted around personal care homes in this province, again as is often the case with the work that they do, bringing the powers of analysis and research to bear, an audit function to bear on different of the pressing files facing this province, we owe them a debt of gratitude.

And again as good as it is to see this one piece of legislation coming forward, Mr. Speaker, we owe that work so much more. I think again in terms of chapter 34, regulating personal care homes for resident health and safety, I think about when the auditor states the case as they saw it in the province:

For the period of April 1, 2011 to August 31, 2012, we found the Ministry did not have fully effective processes to regulate personal care homes.

Carrying on from the report, Mr. Speaker:

The Ministry did not have a formal process for identifying and inspecting high-risk personal care homes more frequently. During April 2011 to April 2012, the Ministry inspected personal care homes about every two years. As a result, the Ministry issued licences without recently inspecting personal care homes. After April 2012, the Ministry began inspecting or visiting personal care homes every year.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the way that things have made some small progress being drawn attention to by the auditor, but the fact that again they did not have fully effective processes to regulate personal care homes — which means, Mr. Speaker, you know, the government doesn't know what's going on. And they're the ones that are responsible for knowing what's going on. People have a reasonable expectation that the government knows what's going on in the personal care homes, and that that information can be provided to the people so they can make informed decisions for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the period under consideration for this report, there were 245 total licensed personal care homes in the province. And again you think about the, you know, ranging from the range of circumstances that would be involved in those 245 homes across the province and again that the government didn't know what was going on and was being called out on that by the auditor, Mr. Speaker, that is cause for concern. That they didn't have the process in place and they didn't have the appropriate monitoring and regulation regime in place, Mr. Speaker, that is cause for concern. And that they weren't able to provide this information to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, to again equip people to make the best possible decisions that they can, again there is a small remedy before us here today in Bill No. 111, but again you think about the broader context of these questions. It's a relatively small step on a long journey that needs to be undertaken.

You think about the way that complainants are followed up on. You think about the issuance of the licences. You think about the fact that each personal care home has typically about 10 residents. But again quoting from the auditor's report, page 297, that "each personal care home has about 10 residents, although there are some with as few as one resident and others with over

100 residents,” Mr. Speaker. Again that we follow up on restaurants . . . There’s all kinds of activity that the Ministry of Health keeps track of, Mr. Speaker, but the fact that here we are today and this is when they’re finally coming forward with this kind of approach, again we’re glad to see it coming forward, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of the timeliness of this, it’s late. In terms of the adequacy of this measure, in terms of the broader matters to be considered before the province, it’s late. It gives us pause, Mr. Speaker, for . . .

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of 5 o’clock, this House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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