



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

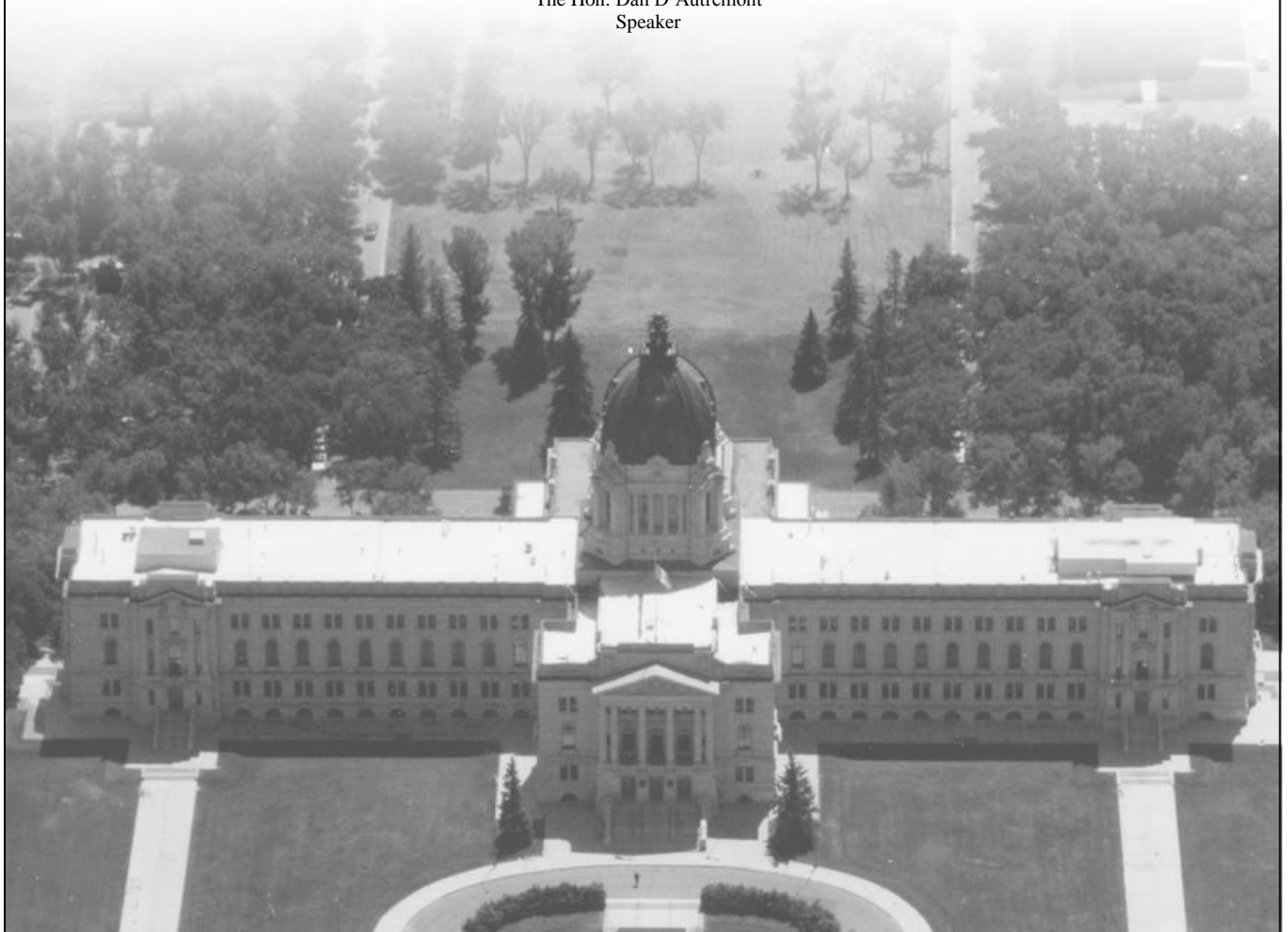
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
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
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
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
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
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 Minister of Crown Investments.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly an honour today to introduce to you and through to all members of the Assembly, in the west gallery there are 41 fabulous students from the Humboldt Collegiate, of course in Humboldt. And accompanying them is their teacher, David Millette, who has brought students each and every year that I can remember, and the chaperone, Janet Nunn.

Mr. Speaker, I'm told that the highways were passable yet, so hopefully these students can make their way home too, or else it might be fun to stay overnight if they get stormed in. But at any rate, may everyone welcome them to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce Mr. Max Poelzer. He's spent time in Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario. He's completed his degree, undergrad degree at the University of Saskatchewan. He went on to do a graduate degree in media and film studies at Carleton. He's acquired a capacity to speak Spanish, and he's returned to Saskatchewan to complete a second graduate degree at the Johnson-Shoyama School.

He's currently interning at the office of the Provincial Auditor, where he's finding the work both challenging and interesting. And he's looking forward to being able to exercise and practise his skills right here in Saskatchewan as he successfully completes his studies and then moves successfully into his career. I'd ask all members to help join me in welcoming Max Poelzer to his legislature.

**The Speaker:** — At this time I'd like to take the opportunity to do an introduction. Seated in the Speaker's gallery is Senator Rich Wardner of North Dakota. Senator Wardner makes his home in the Dickinson area and is passing through Regina on his way to Calgary and Lake Louise for the Energy Council meeting. So I'd ask members to welcome Senator Wardner to the Saskatchewan Assembly.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in with you in welcoming Senator Rich Wardner to the Legislative Assembly.

It's quite a number of years ago that Senator Wardner came up with an investigation crew to see whether our Legislative Assembly was of a high enough standard to become part of the

Council of State Governments Midwest Legislative Conference. And I think that dinner at our house outside, which then went inside, where we talked and talked and talked was a big part of them inviting us all to be part of the Midwest Legislative Conference. And I want to thank Senator Wardner for the good work they did back then, I think it was 1999. And we appreciate the thing that he's done, but welcome, and I look forward to seeing Senator Wardner in Lake Louise. Thanks.

### 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 in support of anti-bullying initiatives. And we know that bullying causes serious harm, and the consequences of bullying are devastating, including depression, self-harm, addictions, and suicide. And we know that this government is not doing enough to create safe spaces in our schools for gay and transgendered students or students bullied because of their sexual identity. And this government must act so that students have simple, easy-to-understand information about gay-straight alliances, GSAs in their schools, how to form a GSA, and who they should talk to in order to form a GSA today.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request 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 present. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents, families, farms, and businesses in our province as it relates to the unacceptable, unsafe condition of Highway 220. They note that currently too many highways and roads are not being repaired or maintained across Saskatchewan; that a responsible growth strategy would make our highways and roads a priority; that the state of this highway is unsafe and dangerous for all, including residents, farms, businesses, and travellers; that the state of this highway causes harm to the local economy and business activity in the region. And it goes on and talks as well about the damage to personal vehicles, recreational vehicles, business vehicles in the region. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: push the Sask Party government to make

repairing and maintaining the province's highways a priority, specifically Highway 220 from Bulyea to Rowan's Ravine, which has not been properly maintained or repaired by this government and as a result is unsafe and dangerous, causes costly damage, and hurts businesses and the economy in the region.

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

Now I have a thick stack of petitions to present here today, and I understand many more that are coming in for Highway 220. But these petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Bulyea, Strasbourg, Regina, Torquay, Lafleche, Radville, Milestone, Avonlea, Saskatoon, Coronach, Eldora Beach, Sunset resort, Lumsden, Southey, Earl Grey, Collingwood, Estevan, and Assiniboia. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition because the leaders and residents of northern Saskatchewan are concerned about seniors' care in the North. The Croft report of 2009 showed a serious shortage of long-term care beds for seniors and the problem has gotten worse. Seniors have done their part for this province, and it's time the government to do its part. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to treat northern Saskatchewan senior citizens with respect and dignity and immediately invest in a new long-term care facility in La Ronge and area.

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out the following: 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. These petitioners are aware that a temporary solution has been arrived at, Mr. Speaker, in terms of refurbishing the old sanctuary at the old Sacred Heart Church, but they are calling for a permanent solution.

They are also pointing out the fact that Sacred Heart Community School is the largest school in North Central Regina with 450-plus students, 75 per cent of whom are First Nations and Métis. They point out that enrolment has increased by 100 students over the past four years and that attendance and learning outcomes are steadily improving, and they point out that as a matter of basic fairness and common sense that 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 and Moose Jaw. I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

#### World AIDS Day

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sunday, December the 1st marks World AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] Day. Our province has proclaimed World AIDS Day; AIDS Awareness Week, November 24th to December 1st; and Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week, December 1st to 5th.

Mr. Speaker, this gives us an opportunity to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome] and highlight provincial efforts to address the issue.

HIV touches the lives of many people everywhere, including here in Saskatchewan. Our government remains committed to reducing the HIV rates and supporting people affected by HIV/AIDS in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the number of new HIV cases has been declining since 2009 despite increased testing. We are encouraged by this trend. Significant progress has been made in a number of areas through the provincial HIV strategy. There is increased access to HIV testing. More HIV patients are receiving treatment and experiencing successful outcomes, and, from 2011 onward, there have been no babies born with HIV through mother-to-child transmission. We will continue our efforts to reduce the risk factors and help people access testing, treatment, and care, Mr. Speaker.

Today I want to thank all partners — health care professionals, front-line service providers, community-based organizations, and others — for their work to prevent the threat of HIV. We can all play a part in creating greater support for people living with HIV. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day, and it was initially recognized in 1988. Stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with HIV, often preventing them from seeking treatment and support they need. This day not only unites people in the fight against HIV and AIDS but also aims to show support for people living with the disease.

Globally it has been estimated that 34 million people have HIV. We are encouraged to see this number stabilizing, Mr. Speaker. Though an estimated 2.6 million people become newly infected with the virus every year, the number of people newly infected with HIV is declining, and AIDS-related deaths are decreasing.

Unfortunately our province continues to have a high rate of new

HIV cases, often associated with drug use. World AIDS Day provides an opportunity to remind the public and our governments that HIV is still a reality and the need persists to increase awareness and to fight prejudice.

I would like to recognize the work of the Canadian AIDS Society, the Saskatchewan HIV Provincial Leadership Team, AIDS Programs South Saskatchewan, AIDS Saskatoon, and other organizations for their hard work providing outreach, education, and support for people living with HIV and AIDS.

I would like to ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing World AIDS Day, December 1st, and to also remember the importance of public education and support all year round.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

#### **Thanks to Movember Participants**

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The month of November is over and December is upon us. That means that the Movember challenge is now complete, and moustaches across Canada have been shaved. And, Mr. Speaker, my wife and daughters are very happy that my Ben Stiller *Dodgeball* look is gone, for a year anyway.

Mr. Speaker, over \$99.7 million has been raised through the Movember movement this year. Mr. Speaker, our very own Saskatchewan Party caucus, Team Growth Plan, raised over \$6,000 with online and manual donations. Thank you, everyone who made generous donations. And of course thank you to our caucus participants: the ministers of Rural and Remote Health, Justice and Attorney General, and Advanced Education, as well as members from Moose Jaw North and Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Speaker, every one of us knows someone affected by prostate, testicular cancer, or mental illness. And it is crucial to raise awareness to end the stigma around these illnesses.

A huge thank you to all the Movember participants on both sides of the House and throughout the province for raising funds and awareness of these illnesses. I ask all members to join me in recognizing the Movember 2013 movement, participants, and donors. And remember, Mr. Speaker, if you can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Centennial Year for International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees**

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Local 295 Regina and 300 Saskatoon, for celebrating their 100th anniversaries. These IATSE [International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees] locals were officially granted their charters on July 10th, 1913 for stage workers and film projectionists.

The Saskatchewan locals maintain a membership of over 250, covering 30 craft departments in film, stage, and projection areas. Major events such as the Grey Cup, the Junos, and Paul

McCartney, all were IATSE workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, since the 1960s these locals have been representing film production technicians. But as you can imagine, IATSE was not supportive of the decision to axe the film tax credit.

John Lewis, international vice-president and director of Canadian affairs for IATSE, wrote a letter to the Premier in May of 2012 warning him that the replacement of a non-refundable tax credit spells doom for the local film and TV production sector. I quote: “There are few industries that are as mobile as the film industry,” he wrote in his letter. “It’s an industry capable of packing up and setting up elsewhere in a matter of days.” Unfortunately this is what happened in many cases.

Many members persevered though, and the IATSE locals celebrated their anniversary in Saskatoon at Persephone Theatre and here in Regina at the Conexus Arts Centre this past August. I ask all members to join with me in congratulating IATSE Local 295 and 300 on their centennial year, ensuring that while we enjoy the game, the movie, or the play, that the work is well done and everyone is safe and treated fairly. Thank you.

[13:45]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Melfort.

#### **New Facility for Naicam Sarcan**

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday I had the pleasure of bringing greetings and extending congratulations to the Naicam Sarcan on the grand opening of their new facility.

Sarcan has been in the town of Naicam since January 1991 and since that time has recycled 10,882,902 containers, Mr. Speaker. With this new facility, Naicam Sarcan can continue to meet the recycling demands of growing neighbourhoods. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize depot supervisor Brian Lukowski who has worked at the depot for almost 20 years, starting just three years after the depot was opened.

Recycling and protecting our environment is a priority of this government, and reducing the amount of waste going into our landfill will protect our environment and sustain the quality of life we have come to enjoy in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I would like all members of the House to join me in recognizing Sarcan and the residents of Naicam in their continued commitment to the reduction of waste. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Sutherland.

#### **Company Supports Community School**

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m happy to rise in the Assembly today to recognize some great work that’s happening in the city of Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, WBM Office Systems has graciously been supporting Vincent Massey Community School for over 15 years in a variety of ways, some of which I’d like to mention today.

WBM has generously provided funding for off-site learning experiences such as attending Persephone Youth Series performances, and supported senior students on camp trips through fundraising as well as additional human resources. WBM staff also go to the school during the workday to participate in weekly reading sessions with the youngest students. They also have hosted the grade 8 students at their office to experience a day in the workplace. Mr. Speaker, WBM staff are always at the school's events, ready to help, such as holiday lunches, National Aboriginal Day, and other school functions.

Through their unwavering commitment to Vincent Massey School, WBM has a nutrition-positive program as well as supporting learning and building community.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to ask all members to join me in recognizing WBM's great corporate citizenship and important work they do in engaging students at Vincent Massey School. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Wood River.

#### Plans for Long-Term Care Facility

**Mr. Huyghebaert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Janice MacKinnon, former NDP Finance minister, wrote in a report, *Health Care Reform from the Cradle of Medicare*, that "... Health care costs could be reduced and patient care improved if governments adopt a long-term care strategy, which includes using public-private partnerships ..."

Well, Mr. Speaker, on November 27th, our government announced that we were proceeding to the request for proposal stage for the Swift Current long-term care facility. Three qualified bidders have been shortlisted to participate in the next stage of the competitive P3 [public-private partnership] selection process to build the new 225-bed facility.

Mr. Speaker, once procurement is complete, value-for-money calculations prepared by the external financial advisor and the report from the independent fairness advisor will be published, publicly demonstrating the savings we will achieve by utilizing a P3.

The project is a design, build, finance, maintain public-private partnership procurement model, and the winning bidder is expected to be selected by the spring of 2014. Construction is expected to be under way in the summer of 2014 with completion targeted for 2016.

The Cypress Regional Health Authority will maintain full ownership of this facility and will operate all aspects of direct care. Most importantly, the new facility will create a home like atmosphere for residents and incorporate lean operational best practices.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Long-Term Care Conditions

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us if the government is considering requiring a residents' bill of rights for all seniors' care homes?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, it isn't an initiative that the government is considering at this time.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well we keep hearing concerns from Saskatchewan people about the quality of seniors' care under this government, Mr. Speaker, a quality of care that is getting worse; about seniors not receiving the kind of care they deserve, the kind of care that families expect; about their basic rights, Mr. Speaker, not being respected.

The government received a report back in May from its own Law Reform Commission. The commission recommended that a residents' bill of rights be required for all seniors' care homes and that an enforcement mechanism be specified in legislation. My question to the Premier: why has the government ignored that very clear recommendation from its very own Law Reform Commission?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this House will know and I think the public will know the tremendous strides that this government has taken and will continue to take to improve seniors who are in our care in our residences across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, from time to time we will get advice and input from organizations, whether that be through legislative secretaries, whether that be through organizations like the Seniors Mechanism or in this case the Law Reform Commission, Mr. Speaker. We have looked at the findings, the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission, as we have with other organizations that have put forward recommendations to government. We will in the future consider those recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

At this point though, what we're going to continue to do is institute the CEO [chief executive officer] tours, Mr. Speaker, respond to those CEO tours with an Urgent Issues Action Fund, make a determination of whether or not additional funds would be necessary in the future and, Mr. Speaker, have a reporting mechanism for both the public and for CEOs on an ongoing basis.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, what we see from this government is step after step where they have reduced the quality of care, Mr. Speaker, for seniors. We saw the removal of minimum hours of care for seniors. We saw a removal, Mr. Speaker, of any reference of sufficient staffing when it comes to the care of our loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, the Law Reform Commission's report was entitled *Civil Rights in Saskatchewan Long-Term Care Facilities*. It talks about, Mr. Speaker, how current protections for civil rights of seniors in the province simply are not good enough. Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia all require seniors' care homes to have a residents' bill of rights.

The government's own Law Reform Commission specifically urged this government to follow Manitoba's lead by requiring care homes to have a residents' bill of rights that meets a legislated minimum standard. My question to the Premier: will this government commit to implement this change as soon as possible?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct the member. We still do require minimum basic standards within long-term care, Mr. Speaker. They are tailored around the individual though, Mr. Speaker, not a regulation that was put in place in the 1950s, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it's important that the Leader of the Opposition acknowledge that the standard that was in place from the 1950s, while for some people it did speak to two-hour minimum, for some it also spoke to a 45-minute minimum and for some people a 20-minute minimum, Mr. Speaker. So I don't think the Leader of the Opposition is telling the entire information when he talks about the regulations that were changed, Mr. Speaker.

And in terms of sufficient staffing, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we've added 700 full-time equivalents to the long-term care system in only six years, Mr. Speaker, I think it speaks to this government's commitment to ensuring that we have the appropriate level of staffing, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite who didn't take those steps.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the actions that we see from this government show a very different picture, and what we see are actions that have reduced the quality of care for seniors here in the province. We see a removal of minimum standards. Instead of trying to raise the bar, instead of trying to make care better for everyone, we see the removal. We see the elimination of sufficient staffing references, Mr. Speaker. We see a one-time payment fund to address the huge issues that Saskatchewan people have brought forward, an approach that even the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region says won't address the actual problems that we're facing.

And now, Mr. Speaker, we see a very clear recommendation from this government's very own Law Reform Commission saying that a residents' bill of rights should be in place as another measure to ensure that seniors receive at least the basic level of care. But, Mr. Speaker, consistent with their track record, they just stubbornly ignore the recommendation.

My question to the Premier: what will it take for this government to actually address the quality of seniors' care in this province? When will they stop stubbornly dismissing the concerns that are brought forward?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what it took for a government to start paying attention to the needs of seniors across the province. It took the election in 2007. It took the defeat of members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

And what has happened since then? Well since 2007 there's been a 14 per cent increase in nurses at LTC [long-term care] facilities, a 10 per cent increase in staff overall. Overall staff-to-bed ratios in the long-term care sector have improved by 9 per cent since they were in office, Mr. Speaker. This side of the House is building new long-term care facilities, adding new beds, when they closed beds including the one just referenced by the member for Wood River in Swift Current.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, beyond that in terms of seniors, we have doubled the number of seniors eligible for the seniors' income assistance plan, tripling the benefits under the plan from the days of the NDP where for 16 years they offered nothing, Mr. Speaker. And we've created a personal care home benefit up to \$4,400 per year, Mr. Speaker, since the 2011 election. That speaks to action, Mr. Speaker. After 16 long years of ignoring seniors, question period doesn't change the fact that the people of this province got frankly ignored by members opposite on this issue, and action from members on this side of the House.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Okay, Mr. Speaker, here's the facts of the matter. The Law Reform Commission, a commission of this own government, Mr. Speaker, says that seniors' civil rights are being violated in care facilities. Because of what it has seen, Mr. Speaker, it puts forward a recommendation that there should be a residents' bill of rights. My question to the Premier, who'll get up and give the rah-rah, Mr. Speaker, but will he answer a clear question: why is this government ignoring the recommendation from the commission that there should be a residents' bill of rights?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think again it's important to note the record on this side of the House when it comes to seniors. Notwithstanding the question with respect to bill of rights, the Minister of Health has said there's no immediate plans for this. The Law Reform Commission has made these recommendations. They weren't necessarily solicited by the government, but it's something that in the long term I think governments are going to look at, Mr. Speaker.

But what we also need to look at is the record on this side of the House because day after day that Leader of the Opposition stands up and says, look, the actions of this government underscore the priority in which they place long-term care. You bet the record of this government does just that, Mr. Speaker. We have added to the number of nurses working in long-term care facilities — it bears repeating — by 14 per cent, Mr. Speaker, a 10 per cent increase in staffing overall.

We are not closing long-term care beds like members opposite

did, like the member for Regina Lakeview did when he was the Health minister, Mr. Speaker. We are opening new long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker. We took the seniors' income assistance plan, ignored, unincreased by the NDP for 16 long years, Mr. Speaker. We've tripled the benefit, Mr. Speaker. And we've added as well a personal care home benefit of up to \$4,400 per year, Mr. Speaker. I think that's why, that's why seniors in this province and their families in the last election said, I think we're going to go with action rather than rhetoric from members opposite.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, in the research undertaken by the Law Reform Commission regarding civil rights and care facilities, food was the most commonly mentioned topic. The commission heard that meals are times of stress for residents, that residents are not given adequate time or assistance to eat the meals provided for them, and that many families believe their loved ones don't eat unless a family member or hired private care aid is there to feed them. Shockingly the commission's interim paper said, "Three families believe their loved one died as a result of the lack of assistance available for residents to eat and drink." To the minister: why did the government ignore this?

[14:00]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, as we've indicated on this issue, Mr. Speaker, the government has not ignored the issues of seniors, Mr. Speaker. We commissioned the first ever long-term care tour within this province's history when it comes to long-term care, where CEOs and senior managers, those responsible for managing these organizations, Mr. Speaker, actually went out and spoke to residents and their families, Mr. Speaker, solicited information, and we will act on that report, Mr. Speaker.

We're also putting in place, as I've mentioned before, an Urgent Issues Action Fund to identify those urgent issues that we need to address, Mr. Speaker, \$10 million that will be flowing over the next number of weeks, Mr. Speaker, to address those issues, and a reporting mechanism, 60-, 90-, 120-day reporting back, Mr. Speaker, to the ministry to see what further work would need to be done.

Mr. Speaker, we take this issue very seriously. That's why we've increased the supports for seniors, those that live within personal care homes, private personal care homes. There is legislation before this House to publish, be transparent with the licensing around personal care homes, the private personal care homes, Mr. Speaker. And we have added significant dollars to the budgets of regional health authorities, 48 per cent, \$1 billion additional money, Mr. Speaker. This government is not overlooking or ignoring this issue.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, it was three years ago that the

government heard from its own Law Reform Commission that families think their loved ones died due to the lack of assistance available for residents to eat and drink. Yet what did this government do? A year later it watered down the special care home regulations to remove any reference to minimum care standards and sufficient staffing. Food- and nutrition-related concerns are not only quality of life matters. They are civil rights matters and according to what the Law Reform Commission heard from families, they are matters of life and death.

To the minister: when will this government recognize that food and nutrition are a major concern in care facilities and when will it finally do something?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these are the types of issues that we have recognized as a government, going back to 2007 when this government was elected, Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite, when their plan for long-term care for our seniors, for those people that built this province, was to close 16 facilities, to close 1,200 beds, Mr. Speaker, and to increase long-term care fees in this province to the point where seniors would have to go on welfare to be able to afford to pay their fees, Mr. Speaker. How today the NDP in this province can now stand up and be the defenders of seniors in this province, Mr. Speaker, is beyond me.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, in the law commission's research, food was the most commonly mentioned concern. And we know that this government has heard about families who are concerned about their loved ones who died due to lack of assistance with eating and drinking. And these concerns were mentioned numerous times in the CEO report.

We know that the government's one-time payment fund will only go so far to address problems in senior care facilities throughout the province, but surely some of it will be devoted to address these types of concerns. To the minister: how many business cases were received regarding food- and nutrition-related problems and what is the total cost attached to those business cases?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for allowing me the opportunity to talk about this government's \$10 million Urgent Issues Action Fund that this government is allocating over the next number of weeks, Mr. Speaker. We received reports and business cases from all of our health regions, Mr. Speaker. We've had to go back to some of the health regions to have them provide some additional information. Some did speak to issues around food quality and food preparation, Mr. Speaker. Others spoke to some small maintenance projects, Mr. Speaker, that we look to be able to fund.

Mr. Speaker, the \$10 million will be flowing over the next couple of weeks. We will then do an evaluation over 60, 90, and



120 days to determine whether or not the dollars actually got to the front lines so that residents could actually see a positive effect from the dollars. It'll allow us also an opportunity to evaluate what more we can do to improve the life of seniors within our care, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think this demonstrates in this one small aspect, Mr. Speaker, that this government is taking this seriously as a priority. Unfortunately the members opposite never did when they were in government.

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

### Minimum Wage

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in July the Labour minister promised changes to the minimum wage legislation by the end of this year. Here's a quote from the media, and I quote:

Don Morgan's pledge comes after the NDP yesterday accused the government of unnecessarily delaying a minimum wage index. Morgan says a formula is being developed and that a policy will be in place before the end of this year.

To the minister: will this government actually keep that promise?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite had some 16 years in which to index minimum wage. They didn't. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has regularly and routinely increased minimum wage. We have the third-highest after-tax income for full-time minimum wage earners. We've increased the minimum wage some five times from 7.95 to \$10 per hour. Yes, Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is, we will be indexing minimum wage and they'll see it soon.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, back in July the Labour minister also said the usual effective date for minimum wage changes is December 1st. Mr. Speaker, it's December 2nd and we still have no word on when this government will finally index the minimum wage. To the minister: when, when will this government release the full details of the formula and timeline for indexing the minimum wage?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it's the intention of this government to index minimum wage to provide security for minimum wage earners and to ensure business owners have some predictability.

In the five years, last five years, we've increased the minimum wage on average 5 per cent per year, over a 25 per cent increase, well in excess of what cost of living's done. We have in addition to that increased the basic personal tax exemption so it will have the effect of eliminating personal income tax for some 114,000 people in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we will be introducing legislation later this week dealing with other parts of the employment Act, and, Mr. Speaker, the members will soon learn when things are going to be rolled out. And the fact is, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that cares about and values low-income workers, unlike the members opposite who in 16 years did absolutely nothing for low-income workers.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, the cost of living has gone up significantly here in Saskatchewan. We know there are many people who are struggling to pay their bills and make ends meet. But it's absolutely essential the minimum wage be indexed at an appropriate level. Mr. Speaker, only one province, only one province has a minimum wage that is lower than Saskatchewan's minimum wage. To the minister: will he guarantee that the minimum wage will be indexed at an appropriate level so it provides a living wage for hard-working Saskatchewan people?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd urge the members opposite to stay tuned, watch for it. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's something we're going to do.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention something about the previous leader of the opposition. He was somebody that knew absolutely nothing about the minimum wage. He reported on CHAB radio, Dwain Lingenfelter, August 4th, 2011, "Minimum wage workers in Moose Jaw have not had an increase in three years." Absolutely false, Mr. Speaker. Not correct. The fact is that we have routinely and regularly increased minimum wage, on average 5 per cent per year. Usually every year this government has raised minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to do so.

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

### Funding for First Nations Education

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of interesting and concerning details in the Senate scandal documents released recently by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. And buried in that stack of papers is proof that the Prime Minister's Office stubbornly refuses to ensure First Nations students have the equality of opportunity that they deserve. An internal government memo authored by Nigel Wright and several other senior staff specifically say it is against government messaging and direction for Senate committees to have urged the government to "invest heavily in Aboriginal education."

Mr. Speaker, this is a huge issue of importance to our province. In the last few weeks, Mr. Speaker, we've have motions come forward from the Premier on the Senate and on CETA [Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement]. My question for the Premier today: will he agree to unanimously pass a motion condemning the federal government's inaction, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to fair funding for Aboriginal education?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well here the opposition and the government agree. There needs to be parity in funding education on-reserve, Mr. Speaker.

I just had the occasion last month to visit with the Prime Minister and Mr. Valcourt, the minister responsible for the file, as did the Minister for First Nations and Métis Relations in the province, together with the Minister of Education. We've made this case, Mr. Speaker, not just in this year but in many years previous, including just prior to a federal government decision to actually increase funding for on-reserve education by about \$200 million, Mr. Speaker.

We're concerned to see actually how that money has flown to First Nations in terms of education. We have not seen that yet. We expressed that concern when we met with the ministers. We do have, frankly, some positive developments to report to the House beyond whatever motion my friend is proposing, including, Mr. Speaker, a recognition by Minister Valcourt, I think it's fair to say, that we need to agree on the appropriate measure for funding so we can actually do something about it. And hopefully that would mean federal government investment in on-reserve education. That continues to be the position of the government.

We're not waiting for that though, Mr. Speaker. We're actually providing adult basic education on-reserve today. We're providing driver education on-reserve today, Mr. Speaker. But there is an issue here for the federal government, and I think it's one we share with the members opposite.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While there may be discussions with the minister, what is very concerning, Mr. Speaker, is the signal and the messages being given by the PMO [Prime Minister's Office] as revealed through the item, Mr. Speaker. The PMO is not just stubbornly refusing to fund First Nations students attending reserve schools at the same level as their provincial counterparts. They actually find any talk, Mr. Speaker, about investing in Aboriginal education as threatening.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that the underfunding of First Nations education on-reserve is a huge concern for our province, where on-reserve students receive half to two-thirds of the amount of funding that students off-reserve in the provincial schools would be receiving, Mr. Speaker. We know this is a huge concern, especially when we see the words coming straight from the highest office, the Prime Minister's Office. My question to the Premier: does he agree that this is a huge concern for our province, and will he agree to pass a motion in the Assembly today condemning the federal government for its inaction?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, a motion is I guess an option. Another option is to engage directly with federal parties, Mr. Speaker, and we've done that on many occasions with the federal government, with the Prime Minister. So it's interesting

to watch the Leader of the Opposition go through some verbal gymnastics to try to connect the important issue of First Nations education funding with the Senate scandal, Mr. Speaker. But fair enough. Whatever entree into an important issue, I'll certainly accept that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that increasingly we have the federal government's attention on the issue. That's why a couple of budgets ago, I think, they have increased funding of \$200 million, again notwithstanding concerns about where the funding has gone and how it's gotten to where it was intended to be. Moreover though, Mr. Speaker, in meetings with the federal minister, response from Minister Valcourt, there has been indications from the province that they're prepared to look at some pilots, maybe even here, right here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And so I would encourage our government and all parties to support that kind of piloting. That'll absolutely clear a path to solving this problem.

And I would also ask the Leader of the Opposition what efforts he has made with the federal Leader of the Opposition to raise this issue in the Parliament of Canada or in the course of his meetings that he's had with his federal counterpart, Mr. Thomas Mulcair.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An internal memo authored by Nigel Wright and several other senior staff, Mr. Speaker, says it was against government messaging and direction for Senate committees to have urged the government to "invest heavily in Aboriginal education."

The Premier's absolutely right, Mr. Speaker, that this is a very serious matter. It is a serious matter for the future of our province, a serious matter for so many children, so many communities throughout the province.

We've had motions that come forward, Mr. Speaker, on CETA, motions on the Senate where we have a common voice, Mr. Speaker, from the Assembly in talking about issues that have relevance to the province. So the motion later on, Mr. Speaker, that I would ask the Premier if they would agree to is:

That this Assembly condemn the Prime Minister's Office for the disdain it has shown for any discussion about the underfunding of First Nations students; and

That this Assembly call on the federal government to immediately provide fair funding for First Nations education.

My question to the Premier: will his government support this motion this afternoon?

[14:15]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — No, Mr. Speaker, we won't support the motion, and here's why. We are aware that the federal government is looking carefully at this issue substantively in the way of some pilot projects that could actually . . . [inaudible]

interjection] . . . Well if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is interested in this answer . . . They say it's important to them. If he's interested in it, I'd invite him to pay attention and perhaps even to support, to support our government's attempt to provide our own support, our own resources to the extent they're needed for some pilots that we understand may be under way for right here in the province of Saskatchewan and perhaps some other jurisdictions in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important for this legislature and that Leader of the Opposition and his seatmate, and his seatmate, to recognize that some sort of a general motion condemning something before they know what they're condemning, or some sort of motion condemning something that for whatever reason might jeopardize progress that can be made on this file in this province, is not probably the wisest, most prudent action for this legislature to take. If they wish to bring a motion, they can do that on Thursday, and it'll receive the attention from the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime the minister responsible and our office, my office, is going to continue to make this issue a priority. And we're hopeful to see some early results, Mr. Speaker.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill No. 126 — *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)***

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 126, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has moved that Bill No. 126, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment 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. Wyant:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting. Why is the Leader of the Opposition on his feet?

#### MOTION UNDER RULE 61

##### **Funding for First Nations Education**

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the

day, Mr. Speaker, I stand to seek leave under rule 61 to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity. I've already outlined in question period with regard to recently released internal documents that show the disdain with which the Prime Minister's Office treats any discussion about fair funding for First Nations students.

This is an issue of critical importance to Saskatchewan and I think it's important that this Assembly sends a clear message to the federal government for passing a motion, Mr. Speaker, by passing a motion, Mr. Speaker, to that effect. If there's unanimous consent to do so, I'm prepared to move that motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Leader of the Opposition requests leave to move a motion regarding First Nations education. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — The motion fails.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### **Bill No. 121 — *The Election Amendment Act, 2013***

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Election Amendment Act, 2013*.

Mr. Speaker, the Chief Electoral Officer has advised that he will not be appointing an assistant Chief Electoral Officer as required by the Act. This bill will remove this requirement to avoid non-compliance by the CEO [Chief Electoral Officer] with his governing legislation. The other changes are being presented now to ensure that they are in place prior to the next general election.

Mr. Speaker, the election Act 2013 will also amend the deposit refund provisions to remove the requirement that a candidate must receive at least 50 per cent of the votes of the winner in order to get back their deposit. This will ensure the provision is not a deterrent to smaller political parties or independent candidates.

It will revise the pre-election advertising rules for government ministries and agencies to address technical problems identified in the last general election. These include amending the current process of counting back from an uncertain writ issue date to determine the start of the restrictions to instead now count back from the fixed election date.

It will change the monthly average advertising spending restrictions provisions to require government ministries not to

exceed the amount they spend in the corresponding four-month period in the previous year, rather than a monthly average determined from their twelve-month advertising spending, allowing the restrictions on advertising spending in the 120-day period prior to the election to be spread over the four-month period rather than limited to a per month limit.

The bill will also remove the uncertainty as to what agencies of the government are subject to these restrictions by defining government ministry to include a ministry and any other government institution as that term is defined and listed under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The bill will also exclude routine advertising by government ministries for employment or the procurement of supplies from the advertising and publications bans prior to a general election, and the bill will also provide that the 28-day minimum written period be reduced to 27 days. This would allow the Chief Electoral Officer to avoid having to issue the election writ on a holiday such as Thanksgiving during a fall general election.

Members of the House will be aware that we are now in receipt of additional proposed changes to the Act suggested by the Chief Electoral Officer. These proposals, along with changes suggested by other stakeholders, will be considered for further amendments in future sittings. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Election Amendment Act, 2013*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has moved second reading of Bill No. 121, *The Election Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to stand today and to give the first few comments on *The Election Act*, Bill 121. And, Mr. Speaker, as we went through the bills, we were very interested as to how the Sask Party is going to be proceeding with going through the election process and how they have worked closely with a number of players. I want to ensure that there is fair elections and that there's as much involvement of the voters as possible.

I think that's very important, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to stress that because as you look at some of the evidence, Mr. Speaker, we go back to the earlier statements about the manner in which they have selected or made the choice to go from 58 MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to 61 MLAs. That was an increase of three more politicians, Mr. Speaker, and that's not what the people of Saskatchewan asked. And, Mr. Speaker, not only have they put the extra MLAs on the agenda, they have also spoken, Mr. Speaker, about how the MLAs are to be selected and how they rationalized their decision around the manner in which to increase in number of MLAs here.

So, Mr. Speaker, they talked about the concentration of voters, and they looked at only the voters 18 years of age and up, Mr. Speaker. They did not include any of the children, any of the young people, and certainly a number of people that were excluded includes the future of the province of Saskatchewan. So we're seeing that particular manipulation, if you will, in terms of justifying how they wanted to come along and increase the number of MLAs from the current complement of 58 to include three extra ones to make it to 61.

So, Mr. Speaker, the first thing they do is they increase the amount of MLAs. The second thing they do is they make sure that young people are not included, anybody under the age of 18 are not included as to how they justify those numbers. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen evidence time and time again that the concentration of voter per constituent is really, really high in other areas. And here in Saskatchewan they've somehow magically justified to increase it by three and, Mr. Speaker, once again they're trying to push that item forward.

The second thing they want to do, Mr. Speaker, and I noticed that they've taken some of the examples around the US [United States]. And we look at that as voter suppression tactics, where the previous Justice minister brought in these rules in the sense that they have to provide photo ID before they're allowed to vote. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the second particular aspect that we're concerned about.

And we tell a lot of people in northern Saskatchewan, and I guess all throughout the province, that most people that do not have voter ID, Mr. Speaker, include the elderly. Sometimes they include the new Canadian that is here for the specified time because I think many of them can't vote immediately, but they eventually do have that option of voting. And, Mr. Speaker, what happens is they simply do not have the driver's licence that they need, even though they have stayed here the minimum time frame. And of course these are the new Canadians, the people that have settled in Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, many of those people do not have a driver's licence or a photo ID. And of course, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the Aboriginal people don't have photo ID.

So if you look at the older Canadians, Mr. Speaker, you look at the new Canadians, and you look at the Aboriginal Canadians, Mr. Speaker, these specific groups do not, many of them do not have the privilege of having a voter . . . a photo ID. And again what the minister of Justice previously done was he certainly put these rules and regulations into place to suppress that particular demographic of the province, to encourage them not to vote, Mr. Speaker.

And we also know that the fourth kind of action, that look at some of the minutes that the Board of Internal Economy, BOI, where you see a number of ministers, a number of people from the Saskatchewan Party really challenging the current elections officers in terms of the amount of staff that they need to run an election fairly.

So you look at all these activities, Mr. Speaker, and we really begin to want to watch and monitor as to what the Saskatchewan Party has in plan and what plan they have in place to try and skewer the free democratic right for people to vote as they wish.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at this current bill, Bill 121, *The Election Act*, and we think that some of the changes are common sense. But before, as I mentioned, we're kind of tainted. Every time the Saskatchewan Party bring forward any changes under *The Election Act*, we watch it very, very carefully. We scrutinize the bill to make sure that there isn't any processing here that's going to help complement some of their earlier works that they have done as I've spoken about earlier. And that's one of the things that we want to be careful as we

watch for.

So one of the things that we obviously also want to encourage, as a result of this bill, is to have people out there that watch the elections because the fundamental rights of people to expect a fair and unencumbered election process is key to our democracy. That's what a lot of people have fought for over the years and, Mr. Speaker, we cannot gerrymander that process in any way.

And all the evidence that I've seen thus far, all the evidence that I've seen thus far, Mr. Speaker — whether it's the voter ID [identification], whether it's increasing the amount of MLAs, or whether it's the suppression tactics that I spoke about earlier, Mr. Speaker — we're finding more and more evidence that the Sask Party's doing all they can and leaving no stone unturned to try and manipulate and gerrymander election processes as much as they can, even to the extent where they are arguing publicly during meetings here in the Assembly over the role of the electoral office, that's the independent office of this Assembly, as to why they would need more staff, and certainly more opportunities to run a fair and full election.

So you see all the evidence, all the activities, Mr. Speaker. It does not suggest that any way, shape, or form that this government is going to do anything positive when it comes to advertising. So what we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is you want to see exactly what they have in mind with this bill, Bill 121. And yes, once again, once again we're seeing another plug-in for the Saskatchewan Party plan to try and manipulate the election as often and as many times as they want for the next election.

And this is where people ought to be told as to what, from our perspective, is wrong with the whole bill. And certainly they need to know and need to learn how the Saskatchewan Party is doing their business when it comes to gerrymandering some of the processes here, Mr. Speaker.

And I can remember a number of . . . eight or nine years ago, in which we were in government and they were in opposition. And, Mr. Speaker, the most surprising thing, the most surprising thing, Mr. Speaker, is that they were very critical of any advertising that we'd done. They said that it was wrong and we shouldn't be doing that kind of activity.

And my goodness, Mr. Speaker, the world was coming to an end when the Sask Party in opposition spoke about government advertising. When they spoke about government advertising, Mr. Speaker, they were condemning it. They were arguing against it. They were making motions. They were screaming. And they were just creating a ruckus over there, Mr. Speaker, when they were in opposition, talking about government advertising, accusing the government of the day at the time of using advertising to their benefit, Mr. Speaker.

And here we are a short seven years later, and what is the Sask Party now doing, Mr. Speaker? They're doing exactly what they were decrying seven or eight years ago, Mr. Speaker, what they were decrying as being very wrong with the whole process, trying to make sure that they position their government to do as much advertising before an election is called. And, Mr. Speaker, they use a lot of baseless allegations about government advertising in the electoral process.

And, Mr. Speaker, where are we today? Again nothing has changed under the Sask Party when it comes to trying their darndest to manipulate the future elections for the province of Saskatchewan. And with this particular Act, Mr. Speaker, we have some serious concerns around the advertising that they're speaking about and that particular mindset that they have.

[14:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, if I can kind of draw a map to the people of Saskatchewan, where the minister has spoken about this bill, of how they want to look at the previous year's spending and do the four-month average and look at how they could take any four months and kind of mimic that during the election year. And, Mr. Speaker, what's going to happen is that they're going to . . . They know what month they're going to call the election. And then what's going to happen is the year before in the time frame that they want to select for the election, they're going to spend as much of the advertising dollars in that time frame, the year before.

You'll watch, and as plain as I'm standing here today, they will advertise as much as they can and want during that four-month time frame. They'll concentrate all their advertising dollars. And what will happen is they'll ramp up the spending in that four-month time frame the year before so they can justify in the election year that they can do the same amount because that's what they've done the year before. So we see that kind of comparison and that kind of activity happening, Mr. Speaker, because after all they're doing all they can to gerrymander the election.

And as I mentioned, some of the meetings that we watch during the committee of how members of the Saskatchewan Party have steadfastly attacked the provincial elections office to try and reduce the amount of resources and staff that this office needs, Mr. Speaker, it's really, really important that we leave the office as independent, unencumbered, and with the proper resources in place to run a really clean, free election for the province and for many, many years to come.

So they go there, give this person a hard time or this office a hard time. They add three more MLAs, which nobody asked, and they're trying to insist on photo ID. And now they're talking about advertising within a compressed time frame a year before the election so they can do exactly that. When the election starts happening, they can start rolling out their good news and do it for four months as opposed to doing the right thing, which they used to cry when they were in opposition, of trying to encourage the government to not gerrymander the election process through government advertising. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? They're doing exactly that. What they cried and complained and bellyached about for years, that's exactly what they're doing now, Mr. Speaker. We can see it as plain as day.

And, Mr. Speaker, let's do another example of we're talking about advertising. Look at the SaskPower ads, Mr. Speaker. They're running the SaskPower ads. And, Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of SaskPower. We're very proud of the employees of SaskPower. We're very proud of some of the resources and some of the revenues that they generate for the people of Saskatchewan. We all know we own SaskPower but you don't

have to spend \$700,000 on that type of advertising, Mr. Speaker, to be able to tell the people that we should be proud of SaskPower because we all are proud of SaskPower.

And what adds insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, is that when you look at this particular SaskPower advertising, this is a thing or a practice yet to come, Mr. Speaker, by this government. They have increased the rates 15.5 per cent, and all they're trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is to try and minimize the criticisms over these increases. And so they run these SaskPower ads, Mr. Speaker, but the people can see right through them. They're running and if they're paying the ad, if the people are paying the ad to tell them to be proud of SaskPower, why would you want to manipulate the customers in that sort? Why you don't just simply, why don't you just simply have their bill not increased instead of being jacked up to pay for your political process? That's what we can't understand.

And the people that are paying a lot extra for their power bills, don't forget that is courtesy of SaskPower . . . sorry, not SaskPower, but courtesy of the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, using SaskPower to justify their political agenda through advertising of that sort.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say again we're really proud of SaskPower. We've always, always advocated ownership, public ownership of the Crowns — our telephone companies, our insurance companies, and of course our power companies, Mr. Speaker. We think that they're really important overall for the future of the province and that they give us good sources of income.

But when it comes to the electoral process, when it comes to elections, once again we're seeing the Sask Party using our Crown corporations to pay for their political ads. And then what happens, Mr. Speaker, is after they run their political ads to justify their existence as the government, they send the bill to the SaskPower customer, Mr. Speaker. They send the bill to the SaskPower customers. So as people begin to pay 15.5 per cent, Mr. Speaker, more on their bill, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that people are quite upset over that process.

And I can remember, Mr. Speaker, reading an editorial, and I think it was in the Kindersley area, in which the editorial simply said, thankfully the NDP are bringing up the increases in SaskPower to try and counter some of the huge increases people are paying in SaskPower. And I can tell you that that sentiment is all over the place. And I do wish I had that paper in front of me so I'd be able to read out the exact quotes, Mr. Speaker, of that editorial, but basically the editorial was decrying the fact that this Sask Party government has increased the rates for SaskPower 15.5 per cent, and nobody seems to want to fight back, Mr. Speaker. Everybody's angry about it.

But what's really amazing, Mr. Speaker, is now they're doing this to run advertisements which the people of Saskatchewan simply do not want. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan do not want to pay extra on their power bills, but this government is forcing them. And guess what they're forcing them to pay? It's primarily for their advertising plan when it comes to trying to manipulate the next election.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of concerns on this particular bill. And mark my words, we need to monitor very closely what

. . . the time frame that they want to manipulate. The year before the election they'll start putting all this advertising out. So the year of the election they can say, that's what we spent in that time frame last year, so this bill basically allows us to do that. And, Mr. Speaker, once again we see that kind of activity.

So we have a lot of concerns around this particular bill, and we would encourage people out there to pay attention. Anything that's to do with elections, Mr. Speaker, as we've indicated, we want to make sure, we want to make sure people know that they have a right to get up and speak. We want to make sure that they have a right to participate. We want to make sure that they know that the opposition will certainly bring up their arguments and bring up their points. And we want to make sure that elections in the future are fair, that they're very well run, and, Mr. Speaker, that they're democratic. And we don't need to have the manipulation that we've seen evidence of, of the Sask Party, over the last number of years.

And we're still very, very upset, Mr. Speaker. We're still very upset that they forced three more MLAs on the people of Saskatchewan when nobody wanted extra politicians, Mr. Speaker. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, they put in all of these restrictions on people willing to vote and this whole notion of a photo ID. This is one of the things that I think is really important, Mr. Speaker.

And then I can also remember the last time we spoke about the electoral process. I actually asked the electoral commission here to see if they could get us a copy of all the information and the actual recording of the advertisement that they ran through their phone bank when they talked about resource revenue sharing and when they talked about First Nations involvement, Mr. Speaker, how the wording of that message was to the many people in the province of Saskatchewan. I think if there's that kind of process to the conservative phone banks or the Sask Party phone banks to try and tell people in Saskatchewan, to manipulate them in that sense, Mr. Speaker, then we should have a copy of that, the verbatim of that particular recording in which they phoned every house to ask them about their opinion on First Nations and resource revenue sharing.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was asked . . . I asked for that, and today we haven't got a copy of that. Because it'd be sure interesting as to what they were saying to the people of Saskatchewan through their phone bank because I think that's also an improper act to try and sway people and to try and manipulate people over an issue that was unfair to all the parties involved, including the people of Saskatchewan.

So you look at all those things, Mr. Speaker, and we still have a fundamental problem when we look at how they're trying to manipulate all the election processes in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we tell people that these are some of the areas that we're quite concerned about.

And once again it comes to advertising, the election advertising scheme, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what this is. It's a scheme to justify how they're going to advertise. Added a ramped-up pace the year before so they can justify that that's what they've done the year before. So come election year, they'll ramp up their spending and getting government advertising the same corresponding time that they'd done it the year before. And, Mr.

Speaker, we can see right through that particular tactic.

So everything that I've spoken about, Mr. Speaker, is that the whole issue is that people of Saskatchewan ought to know. And that's one of the reasons why we're giving the time. And this is one of the reasons why we're going to go back to the organization and the groups, encourage them to do one thing — and that's to come out and vote in great numbers.

We're also encouraging the Chief Electoral Officer and his office to fight for a fair and democratic election process. That's what we're asking them to do — to keep it independent, to keep it focused, to keep it on encouraging people to come out and vote. And to resist, on many occasions and on all occasions, to resist the manipulation of the electoral process because it does a great injustice to the people that should be allowed to vote and people that have the right to vote and, Mr. Speaker, that should have every, every defence given to ensure that the Chief Electoral office is given the right resources, the unfettered support to make sure that there's one place that we can encourage clean, clear elections, Mr. Speaker, is through that office.

We do not trust the Sask Party government, and this is another example of how a party in power can manipulate the process and can really seriously create what I think is not acceptable in this day and age — a skewered process, a skewered process in which they benefit. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not how you should run elections in Saskatchewan. This is obviously not an American-style election process, Mr. Speaker. You can see the ads that they run every now and then.

So you look at all of the examples that I've spoken about, and once again we're quite worried. We're quite concerned. We're worried in the sense that we're allowing this kind of activity to occur under their watch, and our job is to expose that, Mr. Speaker. But we're also worried, Mr. Speaker, that the future electoral process of Saskatchewan is being severely compromised by the Sask Party's activities. And, Mr. Speaker, that should not be accepted in any Assembly anywhere that speaks about freedom, that speaks about democracy, and that speaks about fairness.

So we have a lot of issues, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot of issues of how elections are being operated on, Mr. Speaker, or being operated under. We are quite frankly concerned that the process is unfair. We think that quite frankly that the process is being skewered as I mentioned earlier. And, Mr. Speaker, there is no way that the people of Saskatchewan would stand for this if they were aware, if they were aware of what the Sask Party is trying to do when it comes to all the different tactics that they have to try and stay in power, Mr. Speaker. And this is where we encourage people in groups and organizations to come forward and share the information with us.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more speakers that are going to come forward from our side of the Assembly to talk about this. We encourage people to get involved, to get involved. Because that's exactly what is happening on the government side. Once again we're seeing evidence of that today.

So on that notion, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 121, and I now take my place.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 121, *The Election Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 122 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)/Loi n° 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:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise and introduce for second reading Bill No. 122, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997. The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997* establishes the foundation for the regulation and licensing of alcohol and gaming products in Saskatchewan.

The changes being proposed to the Act have four primary themes. The first is providing authority for a First Nations gaming licensing authority to register on-reserve charitable gaming employees and suppliers. The second is allowing SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] to establish a subsidiary corporation through an order in council. The third is ensuring effective regulation. And last, Mr. Speaker, is other housekeeping amendments.

[14:45]

The 1995 Gaming Framework Agreement contained commitments respecting the regulation of on-reserve charitable gaming by First Nations. This commitment is continued in the 2002 agreement.

To facilitate delegation, the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] created Indigenous Gaming Regulators or IGR. Since 2007, IGR has been responsible for the licensing and registration of on-reserve charitable gaming, including bingos, break-open tickets, raffles, Texas hold'ems, Monte Carlo and table games in SLGA casinos. During that time, IGR has fulfilled its responsibilities diligently, and IGR and SLGA continue to share a co-operative relationship that is beneficial to both parties.

Registration is a tool commonly used by gaming regulators to contribute to the integrity of the gaming industry. Currently SLGA registers gaming employees and suppliers whether they are involved in gaming on- or off-reserve. Earlier this year, SLGA and IGR began discussions respecting IGR's authority to register on-reserve charitable gaming employees and suppliers. Provision of such authority necessitates amendments to this Act.

As a result, I am proposing amendments to the Act that will authorize a First Nations gaming licensing authority such as IGR to register on-reserve charitable gaming employees and suppliers. The authority can only be exercised by a First Nations gaming licensing authority that has an agreement with

SLGA. The amendments to the Act will provide similar powers and authorities as those already provided to SLGA.

In addition amendments to the Act will enable the Liquor and Gaming Licensing Commission to review decisions by IGR with respect to registration decisions. The commission already has similar abilities with respect to licensing and regulatory decisions made by IGR. Again, these authorities will resemble those in place respecting commission reviews of SLGA decisions.

Presently SLGA does not have the authority to have subsidiaries. Changes to the Act will provide this authority subject to order in council approval. Subsidiary corporations are a common accounting and management tool used by corporations to effectively manage assets and operations. The ability for SLGA to have subsidiary corporations will allow SLGA to fully explore options to ensure savings and benefits are present.

In November 2012, I stood before you to introduce amendments arising from the red tape committee's review of liquor regulations in Saskatchewan. I also made a commitment that we would continue to look for ways to reduce red tape and remove redundant regulation for business. Bill 122 continues to end red tape using the same principles applied during the red tape review. The changes included in Bill 122 are irritants that no longer have relevance to the effective regulation of alcohol in this province. They include eliminating the requirement for medical use, non-consumptive use, and educational use liquor permits and removing provisions that grant SLGA authority to demand explanations from permittees when a person has been refused entry.

We are also taking the opportunity to remove outdated legislation. For example we will be eliminating the discretionary ability of SLGA to require a permittee to stock beer manufactured in Saskatchewan. This provision has not been enforced in recent memory, and there is no need for SLGA to regulate this area.

While we continue to look for ways to remove red tape for business, we continue to recognize the government has a role in the effective regulation of alcohol in order to maintain public safety. As a result, Bill 122 contains an amendment that places increased responsibility on permittees to not only refuse to serve alcohol to persons who appear to be intoxicated but to ensure that those persons are not in possession of beverage alcohol.

Mr. Speaker, we will also be taking this opportunity to implement a number of smaller housekeeping amendments identified by SLGA that are aimed at reducing redundancy in the Act and ensuring consistency with current practices and processes. An example of these changes include placing definitions for terms used in the gaming sector in regulations to better allow SLGA to respond to changes in the industry, and better organization and clarification of sections related to the Liquor and Gaming Licensing Commission. Ultimate implementation of all the changes will require amendments to the Act, *The Alcohol Control Regulations, 2013*, and *The Gaming Regulations, 2007*.

I am pleased to take the first step towards implementation by introducing this bill. With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and move second reading of Bill No. 122, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Crown Investments has moved second reading of Bill No. 122, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. Is the House ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm very pleased to stand in my place today to offer initial comments of this particular bill. There is a lot of issues that the bill is going to certainly present to a lot of organizations out there, Mr. Speaker, because there's a lot of different issues that the minister spoke about.

And certainly I can remember the discussions we had around the partnership that we enjoyed with SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority Inc.], Mr. Speaker. And certainly SLGA's co-operation with SIGA in the early years certainly proved of significant advantage for the people of Saskatchewan because there were certainly some challenges when we looked at the authority of First Nations land as it relates to the provincial government's role.

And, Mr. Speaker, back in 1995 I can remember those discussions. There were some very tough choices and there were some very tense moments, Mr. Speaker, that I can remember that people were speaking about, in the sense of trying to make sure that we can rationalize how gaming overall works within Saskatchewan, because you had many First Nations that simply said, look we have authority on our lands. The province is not recognized. You do not have the authority to come on the First Nations land, and so we'll basically do what we want to do and that'll be it. By the same token, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan were certainly wanting to see a good framework put in place, and that obviously that there was a lot of folks that really wanted to see a good co-operative effort being made by the provincial government and many of the First Nations that were operating casinos or gaming rooms of any sort.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think some of the examples and the challenges we had of earlier years were . . . SLGA's relationship with SIGA, Mr. Speaker, is something that we ought to learn from when we look at any go-forward strategy or bills of this sort, when we want to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan, including First Nations, are a full partner in the opportunities and meeting some of the challenges attached to the gaming file.

So, Mr. Speaker, obviously there is a lot of activity within a lot of the First Nations communities. I know that I attend a number of Texas hold'em tournaments. It's a great fundraiser. I know people sell break-open tickets, Mr. Speaker. They also have a number of table games, and it's a lot of great fundraising that is happening locally.

And when you see the effort that the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority has undertaken over the past number of years to really work, to really work with the province overall, and you look at the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming as a good example of



how in this particular bill they want to make sure that they begin to name the gaming employees of some of the SIGA operations or the SLGA operations, they also want to name some of the suppliers, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a great opportunity, a great opportunity for many of the First Nations operations to show their co-operation. And that's exactly what they're doing, Mr. Speaker.

But I would argue, Mr. Speaker, and it's really important that we do that, is that you've got to respect the relationship that you have with many of the First Nations and the ones that are operating many of the not only the casinos but some of the table games and the Texas hold'em and certainly some of the other break-open lottery sales that they have on many First Nations throughout the province.

So they have come a long way. The First Nations certainly have had to recognize the role of the province. They didn't have to do it, Mr. Speaker. They certainly had autonomy, and many people to this day certainly take that position, that they have total authority. But they understand now that there has to be a respectful one-on-one discussion with the province, and that's the only way that this is going to work. And I see some of the bonuses, Mr. Speaker, when they come along, they say okay, we will not only start working close with some of the other fundraising that we're having with SLGA, but we'll also talk about putting forward gaming employee names and certainly the suppliers as well.

And you see bit by bit, Mr. Speaker, how the co-operation is coming forward from many First Nations operations. And it's all under one thing, and that is having a respectful partnership with the province. And that's why when the province comes along and starts talking about gaming, and SLGA's part of the mix, we want to make sure that the . . . Sorry, SIGA's part of the mix, we want to make sure that SIGA has a partnership of power, a partnership of decision making and certainly a partnership of building the gaming industry together, alongside of the province. And once that particular mindset is established, Mr. Speaker, then you're able to successfully say that this is a true partnership.

And that's some of the concerns that we have. We want to make sure that we speak about how SIGA has met with some of the obligations behind this bill. Have they been consulted? Do they support some of these bills? What are their positions? What kind of concessions were made to SIGA, which I think are really important? And that you should know that this government's track record of managing some successful industries within gaming has not been positive, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly I mentioned the horse racing, Mr. Speaker, you know, that you look at some of the problems that occurred as a result of this government making a choice where they picked winners and losers, Mr. Speaker. And I want to just for the record make reference to a press release, Mr. Speaker, that was issued this past June. And this is exactly what I warn the First Nations about everywhere we go: do not trust this particular government because you can show good co-operation, you can show some really good support to them but, all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, you will see that they'll try and change something somewhere along the line, and that's simply meant to use the process to their advantage and to be very careful when you deal

with this particular government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to read this press paper and the headline is, "No 2013 Racing at West Meadows." This is an example, Mr. Speaker. And I quote:

On Wednesday, West Meadows Raceway President Jane Grainger announced that the Regina-area track will not host live harness racing in 2013.

"This is probably the most difficult announcement I have had to release," said Grainger in a statement. "We are forced to cancel the 2013 racing program due mostly to the Saskatchewan Government's refusal to issue a Home Market Area (HMA) licence to us for Southern Saskatchewan."

The move to cancel the West Meadows meet came as the result of the province cancelling racing grants that have been previously issued annually in the province for 35 years, and refusing it an opportunity to earn industry-related revenue through HMA assignment.

"The province of Saskatchewan is a rich province. It is plenty big to share two Home Market Areas as it has through several decades, so that both industries have an opportunity to grow," stated the release. "The government basically chose to support one city, one group . . . over the other . . . It is just wrong that revenue from the Regina area would go towards the Saskatoon track and not the Regina track."

Home Market Area was created by the Canadian Pari-Mutuel Agency to support and protect local racetracks and [have] their live . . . race programs. Being assigned a HMA allows a track to generate revenues to support live racing by setting up teletheatres and telephone account betting accounts in their designated area.

Prior to 2002, Queensbury Downs and Prairie Park mutually agreed that it would be fair to split the province for HMA and Saskatoon (the thoroughbred race program) would have HMA from Davidson north and Queensbury Downs (the Standardbred program) would receive HMA from Davidson south. When Queensbury Downs decided to change priorities and discontinue live horse racing, Prairieland Park purchased the teletheatre equipment from them and SLGA transferred the teletheatre license to Prairieland Park since Queensbury Downs was no longer able to operate the teletheatres without a live racing program.

In fact, the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority issued a three-year license to thoroughbred track Prairieland Park in Saskatoon and granted that track the HMA for the entire province. According to the release, this is the first time the annual license has ever been granted for more than one year at a time.

[15:00]

"West Meadows Raceway was built by shareholders who wanted to be a part of the revival of harness racing in this

great province,” continued Grainger. “We built a great facility and set modern day wagering records in both years we raced and it proved we were right — Regina loves harness racing. They want it back for good and responded even better than we expected. Showing much promise for the future, the daily wager for harness racing increased dramatically in those days . . . at the West Meadows Raceway, something we worked hard at, and are very proud of.”

Saskatchewan’s other racetrack, Cornerstone Raceway at the Yorkton Exhibition grounds is operated by the Yorkton Exhibition Authority. That group entered into an “Agreement in Principle” with Prairieland Park (Marquis Downs) in Saskatoon to explore “mutually beneficial” funding opportunities for horse racing on a going forward basis. Prairieland currently conducts a thoroughbred race meet during the summer, and Yorkton was approved earlier this year to host 12 days of racing, giving Saskatchewan’s harness racing community its only live racing dates for this year.

“The other harness track chose not to join us in pursuit of an HMA license for the harness racing industry, but instead entered into an agreement with the thoroughbred track in Saskatoon,” stated the West Meadows release. “We could have had six months of harness racing between us, which would have been a win-win for everyone. It is a sad time here for those who worked so hard so the industry would have a permanent harness racing home in a bigger market and a future that horsemen could build stables around and depend on for the long term.

Standardbred Canada, Mr. Speaker, certainly brought forward some of those issues as a result of how SLGA was very argumentative with them and basically chose winners and losers. And, Mr. Speaker, this particular association of harness racers, they actually got advertisements. And I have a picture of this here, Mr. Speaker, where they say quite frankly “Horse racing cancelled. Sask Party picks winners and losers.” Mr. Speaker, that was the billboard that they put up in which SLGA really walked these guys down the garden path and — bang — Mr. Speaker, they put this kind of proposal in front of them. And they basically, from our perspective, they basically told this particular organization that they don’t have a right to exist any more and that they chose winners and losers.

And, Mr. Speaker, there’s a lot of them that are quite, quite upset over this. And this is one example, Mr. Speaker, of . . . And the reason why we’re bringing this up is we tell people in Saskatchewan that SLGA has not been fair and certainly has not been proper in its approach to a number of players out there in the gaming industry. And the horse racing is one particular example that I would want to highlight as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier this week about Guy Bouvier who ran horses as well. He worked very hard all his life, and I basically spoke about Métis politics in general. But Guy was also a guy that spent a lot of time working with horses, and I know that his younger brother is now doing that as well. So we wanted to recognize not only Guy and his passing for some of the work but also his brother Mervin. Mervin Bouvier is currently working to try and build a horse business, Mr.

Speaker, for riding and certainly for providing extra opportunities in and around the Northwest, and we wanted to commend him for that.

But, Mr. Speaker, we’ve got to be very careful that we don’t look at the horse business in terms of not only the raising of the horses but actually getting into the racing, that we do all we can to support them. And this is why SLGA and their rules and regulations need to have a lot of scrutiny, and that’s one of the reasons why we would tell people to come forward with stories of that sort.

And you look at SLGA, Mr. Speaker, and the relationship that they had with SIGA, the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, that was also built on the premise of, look we have to work together to build this industry. We have to be accountable to each other. We can’t all have a whole bunch of casinos. There has to be some rhyme and reason as to how these casinos are developed and where they’re placed. And I think SIGA come a long ways. I think SIGA come a long ways to recognize the role of the province and to work with the province, Mr. Speaker.

So it really looks . . . I look at the history. I look at the history of SIGA. I look at how they’ve really reached out to the province, and how they’ve made concessions here and there. And we need to talk to SIGA. We need to see what their take is on this particular bill because there’s a lot of issues that could affect that partnership. And we don’t want to see the apple cart upset, so to speak. We want to see that co-operation continue.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister spoke about looking at the regulations. They want to look at the regulations. So I’m assuming that it’s regulations that would have some effect and impact on SIGA. They want to talk about subsidiary corporations where they’re fully able to explore how they can build these subsidiary corporations. Are they inviting SIGA into this subsidiary corporation fold, so to speak? I don’t have that information, Mr. Speaker, so we need to make sure that we take the time to understand what exactly they want to do through this bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we’ve said time and time again, if there’s some common sense points that this bill is bringing forward, our leader has indicated that as long as they have done the proper consultation and that there is good support for it and it makes common sense, we would not stand in or on the way. That was the message we got. And we certainly want to make sure that that is the message that is getting out there.

So when our leader talks about ensuring that the common sense issues that have good agreement on and certainly are very, very apparent to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and they do make sense, then we wouldn’t hold up any part of the bill that fit that criteria.

However, the other message we get is we need to network with our organizations that are impacted by this bill, sit down with them and speak with them, get their perspective and their take on how and why this government cannot be trusted on certain parts of the bill. That is what some of the work that we’ll be undertaking. So I would encourage people out there that are being impacted by this particular bill to reach out to the, you

know, to the opposition and to talk to the opposition about how we can strengthen this bill from their perspective to make sure that the Saskatchewan people are being served and that there is no untoward act by the current government, Mr. Speaker.

So actually I look at some of the aspects of this bill. At first blush one would assume that there is some intrusion from SLGA that comes to the SIGA operations, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important that we be very, very careful on that front, that it not be considered intrusion but a co-operative effort between both parties. If we had that kind of language, it would make much better sense for us.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated time and time again, that SLGA could be only useful is if they work with the organizations that they're supposed to monitor and the organizations that they're supposed to work with, that if they come on to a First Nations community or any . . . even Métis communities, Mr. Speaker, and they start dictating rules and regulations around break-open tickets or gaming tables or Texas hold'em, then they ought to be told that we need to take a more proactive, co-operative approach and not have this kind of confrontational approach when it comes to working with the Aboriginal community. And I would certainly include Métis communities on that front as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of questions as to what SLGA's proposing, what the minister wants to do. There is a history of failure on their part when it comes to working with the different players, which I've identified. There's a history of co-operation between SIGA and certainly SLGA that we built when we were in government. We want to see that protected. We don't want to see that compromised. And, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that our First Nations partners, in dealing with some of the SLGA intrusions into their particular land or their operations have been met with co-operation.

The First Nations community have co-operated a lot with SLGA, and that's why it's so important, it is so vitally important that we keep that relation respectful. That's what's really important to us because we do not want to go down the path of confrontation. Because the First Nations will defend their rights. They will certainly stand up and they will defend their territory or they'll defend their lands, Mr. Speaker.

So it's not as if they do that in disrespect to the rest of Saskatchewan. It just goes to the natural instincts of any people that they want to be protective of their home territory, that they want to be protective of who they are and, Mr. Speaker, that's all they're trying to do, is assert who they are when they sit down and say, look you don't come and give us a whole bunch of rules and force them on us, that we have to work our way through and negotiate our way through this stuff. And that's exactly what they afforded us when we were in government. And we're telling the Sask Party they should afford them today to ensure that we have peace in the valley when it comes to gaming, when it comes to casinos, and when it comes to all kinds of fundraising opportunities that are being undertaken throughout the province.

And I've read just one example of how this government has betrayed the trust of one particular player when it comes to gaming or through horse racing, Mr. Speaker. I think there's a

lot of history of how this government has muddled through some of these files.

So again we have a lot more issues that we want to raise and we'll continue looking at this particular bill. And on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 122.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 122, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013*. Mr. Speaker, this new legislation will repeal a number of public and private health Acts, related Acts, that are obsolete and outdated. The public Acts included are: *The Dental Care Act, The Medical and Hospitalization Tax Repeal Act, The Mutual Medical and Hospital Benefit Association Act, and The Senior Citizens' Heritage Program Act*.

The 14 private Acts included in this legislation are connected to community organizations and, in particular, religious congregations. Mr. Speaker, these organizations have played a significant role in our province's health care system. At the time these groups became active in the delivery of health services, the only way they could be given authority to provide services was through a private Act of the Legislative Assembly. Typically private Acts are almost always amended or repealed at the request of the Act's sponsor and are handled through the private bills procedures of the Legislative Assembly. However a number of these organizations have, over time, withdrawn from providing health services. While these Acts have no direct effect on health care delivery, their continued existence does create ambiguity around the status of these facilities. Repealing these outdated Acts and amending several others will clarify the status of these facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this government is providing leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen and sustain the system in the future, for the future. For this reason we believe it's important to bring this legislation to the House today. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013*. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Health has moved second reading of Bill No. 123, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act (No. 2)*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to again, on behalf of the official opposition, give the first look at this bill and certainly share some of my comments on this

particular bill. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that when you look at some of the organizations that helped deliver health care over the early years of the province of Saskatchewan, we obviously want to give them thanks, Mr. Speaker, because I know that there are many organizations out there that had a history of supplying supports to those that needed health care, Mr. Speaker.

I look at some of the examples: the Grey Nuns out of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker; and in Ile-a-la-Crosse, the Catholic Health Council operated the St. Joseph's Hospital, Mr. Speaker. So I'm assuming these are some of the organizations that the minister's speaking about when he talks about repealing some of the private Acts of some of the folks that operated some of the hospitals or volunteered to operate some of the hospitals and the fact that they've withdrawn that activity over the years as the government has more and more of the challenge of . . . or meeting more of the challenge of delivering health care to the people of Saskatchewan.

[15:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have had a great look at some of the challenges that many in the health care system has had in the province over the last number of years under the Sask Party watch, Mr. Speaker. You look at some of the hospitals that are currently being impacted by this government. I've got a list of them, Mr. Speaker. And it's kind of, it's kind of important that you look at the impact of what they're doing versus what some of the organizations that used to operate some of these facilities, what some of the efforts that they undertook, when you look at their history and their involvement and you compare that to where the government is currently operating these services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the early years, I can tell you that the Catholic Health Council would come into the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse. And I served as a mayor there. And they certainly were involved with health care. They made decisions around the hospital, and they would be involved with many, many of the activities and the fundraising and the direction that the facility took. Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously as life goes on, you see some of these organizations that would not be playing a role in the delivery of health care overall and that gradually that their role and their importance would be again it would be diminished over time.

Now if this is what this bill is doing, then obviously it is a signal to all those organizations that certainly that this government sees that their role has been diminished to a point where they're now actually repealing their activity. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to be able to say one thing to them first of all, and that is thanks for the many, many years of commitment towards health care, and thanks for the many, many years of working with many of the organizations as in the case that I was involved with for working at the Ile-a-la-Crosse hospital and the Northwest in general.

I think La Roche's hospital and Ile-a-la-Crosse's hospital were operated by the Catholic Health Council, Mr. Speaker, and many of the members of the health council would come into the communities, and they would sit with local people and talk about some of the decisions around these facilities. And I can tell you that in the early years, some of their advice and some of

their involvement was very, very crucial and very, very important to the community overall.

So I'm assuming that the minister's talking about repealing some of the religious entities that operated facilities and, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that if that's the case, that's the intent of the bill, that we offer our thanks and support for their guidance and certainly recognition of their service to their fellow man. I think it's really important that we do that. But now that we're in the process of having this government again take over the health care field, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we recognize their particular challenges of how they have made so many mistakes. And we need to get on this, Mr. Speaker.

Things like the Wolseley hospital. Certainly the Pasqua Hospital, the emergency services that they were going to interrupt till they got exposed by the opposition. And the overcrowding at the General. These are all some of the things that people are starting to see when it comes to the health care field. The fact that there are many, many people out there that have many concerns and, Mr. Speaker, we're just starting to get some of those concerns sent to us by email, by telephone calls, and certainly by people coming to visit our offices.

And you look at some of the challenges that we have throughout the province, whether it's the town of Wakaw where they have an emergency room that's closed. Watrous, the emergency room is closed. Central Butte, the emergency room is closed, no in-patient acute care. Lestock, emergency room is closed, no in-patient acute care. Redvers, emergency room closed, no in-patient acute care. Big River, emergency room closed, no in-patient acute care. Mr. Speaker, Spiritwood has the same problem. Shellbrook as well, that the room is closed. Balcarres, Maple Creek, Preeceville, Turtleford, Biggar, Rosetown, Davidson, Macklin, Estlin, Kerrobert, Coronach, Weyburn. A lot of these services, Mr. Speaker, are in the Sask Party's backyard, and, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible] . . . we're seeing evidence on a daily basis of how this government has not met its obligation to deliver a really solid health care plan that is required for the people of Saskatchewan.

And once again these kind of bills that come forward are taking players out of the game, so to speak. And I hate to use the word players, but for lack of a better word, people that have committed so much of their time, so much of their fundraising, and so many, so much of their resources overall that they come along and you say, oh okay, we're happy to see you have served. Now we're kind of exiting you, and we're taking over the health care field. And some of that work's been done in previous years. I recognize that.

But the fact of the matter is that you look at some of the challenges that we see in front of us when it comes to health care. We still don't have no confidence when it comes to this government and its bungling of all the health care files throughout the province, and we need to find some better solutions from a lot of players.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to again indicate to people out there, the people that had been involved with the delivery of the health care system, the volunteers at the local bases, if they have information for us on this bill that they want to share with the

opposition, now is the opportunity to do so, where you can actually contact our office or our critic and to bring forward some of the concerns.

And that's exactly what I think is important here when you look at the bill and its intent is, did they consult with the people that they're going to impact? And did they really, really sit down with these organizations and tell them, this is what you want to do? And what were these organizations' reaction to some of the intent behind this bill? We don't have that information, Mr. Speaker, because the government is not going to give us that information. They're going to put a brave face on everything and anything they do when in fact there could be a lot of potential problems.

And that's the role of the opposition, is to make sure, to make sure that we have that particular information ahead of time so when the bill does come to the floor that we're able to debate it; when the bill does pose some questions that is deserving of a good answer, that we're able to bring it up in question period and hope and pray for a good answer so the organizations and people out there can hear what the government has to say and can basically judge the government from their answer.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more on this particular bill that we have to pay attention to. It is something that I think any time we talk about a health bill, we've got to take the time to read it. And that's exactly what we're going to do. There are many people in the opposition that have a special interest on any bill this government brings forward when it comes to health. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that these folks have had a lot of problems in health care, a lot of problems.

And that's why when any health care bills come forward, we pay very close attention to that, this and *The Election Act* because, Mr. Speaker, they're trying to do a number of things that I think are probably improper on the election front. But certainly when it comes to health care, we want to learn as much as we can about what they're intent on or what their intent is on any bill as it relates to health, Mr. Speaker, and this bill is no different.

So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 123.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 123, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**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 Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on behalf of my hon. colleague, the Minister of Health, to move

second reading of Bill No. 124, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Consequential Amendment) Act*.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the new miscellaneous statutes repeal Act, 2013 will repeal a number of public and private related Acts that are obsolete and outdated. As a result of this, three other pieces of legislation require minor amendments to remove references to an Act that is being repealed: *The Health Information Protection Act, The Insurance Premiums Tax Act, The Pharmacy Act, 1996*. Each of these Acts will have references to *The Mutual Medical and Hospital Benefit Act* removed as it is being repealed under *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013*.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to keeping Saskatchewan's legislation up to date and relevant in support of a strong, effective health care system. Accordingly, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Consequential Amendment) Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved second reading of Bill 124, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Consequential Amendment) Act, 2013*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm very pleased to stand on behalf of the official opposition and give our first comments and our first points I'm going to raise on this particular bill.

I think the bill, Mr. Speaker, we look at the whole notion of . . . I think the intent of the bill right now is to talk about the community clinic in the sense of making sure that the word community clinic cannot be used in the generic term. It has to be a co-operative. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of rule changes that I want to make myself familiar with when it comes to the difference between a community clinic versus a co-operative because obviously we want to make sure that what the bill is trying to do . . . that there is some good support for the bill.

There's no question, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about trying to formalize and to update language when it comes to health care, that is absolutely crucial, I think. And any time that you're able to modernize language, to bring some of the legislation more in line with what modern language is, Mr. Speaker, we don't have a fundamental problem with that. But we want to make sure that the intent behind identifying some of the changes that the government is trying to undertake is pure. And many times we find, based on our experience with this particular government, that there's a lot of hidden agendas, Mr. Speaker, and that there's a lot of different intent that the government has when it comes to dealing on some of these particular issues.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that when we talk about health care in general, it's so important that, even some minor changes when we talk about the community clinic as an example, of modernizing the language as another example, that there be some consultation. We have always indicated that that's important. And consulting and getting support from these organizations, as I've always made that point as well, is that we

need to find out which groups have they consulted with. Who's driving this particular change? Is it the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association]? Is it SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses]? Is it a different organization? Is it all the organizations that are involved?

Mr. Speaker, from our perspective as an official opposition, we support co-operative health clinics. We think that there's a lot of opportunity for a lot of these clinics to offer some great services. As I mentioned, having good service for patients and having medical staff governed by a co-operative is a great idea. We think that these kind of ideas serve our health care system well and there is something that's really fundamentally important when you recognize the co-operatives' role, that governments cannot fix health care with the wording changes. We need to have more clinic options for people and more efforts to recruit physicians and health professionals that Saskatchewan needs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I noticed in a list of challenges that the northern communities as well . . . I know La Ronge, that my colleague will have the opportunity to speak about the Cumberland constituency. But in our area, whether it's the Far North hospital, Mr. Speaker, that's in Black Lake or whether it's the St. Martin's Hospital in La Loche or whether it's the St. Joseph's Hospital in Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Speaker, that all these facilities, Mr. Speaker, there's constant challenges to bring doctors to these facilities. And even though the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], through the northern medical services, does provide hospital services and clinic services, Mr. Speaker, that there's always a constant challenge of finding the doctors to stay in these communities, to come to these communities and to live and work and play in these communities. That is a constant work-in-progress.

And, Mr. Speaker, many of the community leaders, they aspire, and I know that to be the case in Ile-a-la-Crosse and I'm sure it's the same in the other facilities, that they really want to see the doctors live in their community. Which community in this province does not want to see their doctors stay in their particular community? I think every northern community aspires to that as well. I think La Loche wants to keep their doctors there. I think the Far North wants to keep their doctors at the hospital on Black Lake. And of course Ile-a-la-Crosse is there as well.

Now some of the struggles that they're having, Mr. Speaker, is that in particular the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse — I'll certainly use that as the example — that when you have these co-operative clinics in place, Mr. Speaker, where you go in and there's three or four doctors working, in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse they have worked very hard to try and make the doctors feel welcome. And they've had some success, Mr. Speaker, they've had some success.

Ile-a-la-Crosse has certainly got a lot of supports that they direct towards their doctors. I think the community is very welcoming. I think they make the doctors feel at home and, Mr. Speaker, there's housing that's available as well. And overall they're trying their best to bring a social life to the doctors' experience in Ile-a-la-Crosse as well because it's not always about work. And so there's a lot of effort locally to try and get the doctors coming to Ile-a-la-Crosse and staying there.

[15:30]

And we've had some great success over the past number of years. If you look at Dr. Britton who's been there for a great number of years . . . I think he's been there over 20 years. And you look at some of the examples of some of the doctors that lived in Ile-a-la-Crosse for a great number of years. And Dr. Chandler was another one that stayed there for 15 years. And we have other doctors that actually live in the community and are glad to be there. Some of them have been there for four or five years because when they come to the community they certainly like living there and they certainly stay there for a long time.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we as MLAs recognize one fundamental point when it comes to the northern placements of doctors, is that the communities aspire to keep those doctors there to live in those communities. And northern medical services, Mr. Speaker, who bring the doctors to us in the first place, we have to recognize that, that they do their best to find these doctors and to recruit the doctors. And when they bring the doctors to, whether it's La Loche or whether it's to the Far North or whether it's to Ile-a-la-Crosse, they have a process called the itinerant physician. And what the itinerant physician, Mr. Speaker, is, is they find temporary doctors and they fly them in to do their clinics and to provide their services. And so they do that to facilitate an ongoing challenge of finding doctors to work in these communities. And some of them are there on a short-term basis. Others stay for longer periods of time.

And to me, I tell people that are involved with this particular aspect of trying to find doctors, whether it's the local leaders or whether it's the folks at northern med services, that they should allow the communities every option, every option to find doctors that want to come live in Ile-a-la-Crosse permanently or for as long as possible. Let the communities do some of that work. We think it's important. Because the longer a doctor stays in the community I think the greater the relationship the people have with him locally, and they trust him more and so on and so forth.

And, Mr. Speaker, that kind of action and activity is so important. It's so important that we allow the local communities to do that kind of work. At the same time northern med services has the difficult task of finding doctors to staff all their clinics throughout the Northwest, including La Ronge and La Loche and of course the Far North. But the problem that they have is that they're not going to find enough doctors to want to move and live in these communities. So they have this itinerant model that's put in place, where they place these doctors in these clinics on a temporary basis, some as short as two weeks and others as long as two years or three years.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is not necessarily a clash between the two basic models that are being proposed when it comes to getting doctors in place. I think that there should be a co-operative approach between the two entities. By the two entities, I'm talking about northern med services and I'm talking about the local leadership that are requiring, requiring recognition of what they think is their role, and that is to attract and retain doctors to live in their communities for as long as possible. And what's wrong with recognizing that the communities want to achieve that?

So I think we need to have a lot of discussion on that particular front because the community clinics that we're talking about, the co-operative health clinics where you have a number of doctors operating and working, we need to be able to have some experience in learning from each other and talking to each other about how we deal with the doctors issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that there's a lot of issues that we want to pay attention to when it comes to health care. When we talk about a co-operative health clinic, those are some of the experiences I have, when I see the co-operative effort that is in place in some of these northern communities. We think that that's a good model to use. There's always, always challenges, and the number one fundamental problem we have as a province is finding the adequate doctors and nursing staff and lab techs to man many of the facilities or to operate many of the facilities throughout our province.

So again it's important that we encourage people to look at the co-operative health clinic because the governments cannot fix the health problems that they've created as a result of the lack of focus that they've had on this particular file, and that we need to do some of that work locally on our own. And I want to say at the outset that the doctors that do stay longer in these northern communities, longer than they planned to, that we want to say to them, thank you very much. Because the region and the northern communities desperately need doctors, and this need is apparent all throughout the northern communities.

So these are some of the initial comments we want to make on this particular bill, and there's much more comments that we have to make from a number of perspectives from the official opposition. So on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 124.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 124. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 125 — *The Traffic Safety  
Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)***

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. The Act administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance outlines the laws regarding road use in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the first few amendments I'd like to outline are designed to help save lives and prevent injuries on Saskatchewan roads. These changes came out of the recommendations made by the Special Committee on Traffic Safety led by the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Speaker, drinking and driving continues to be a leading cause of fatalities on Saskatchewan roads. To address this,

we're proposing a number of changes focusing on inexperienced drivers, repeat offenders, and drivers with high blood alcohol levels — all are drivers who are overrepresented in fatal crashes involving alcohol. These changes include implementing zero drug and alcohol tolerance for drivers under 19 years of age and for all drivers in the graduated driver licensing program and the motorcycle GDL [graduated driver's licensing] program. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the changes will subject drug-impaired drivers to the same sanctions as alcohol-impaired drivers.

We also want to strengthen penalties for drinking and driving, based on the driver's experience and the number of offences they have. Amendments include longer suspensions, vehicle impoundment, and mandatory ignition interlock requirements. Mr. Speaker, these changes will give Saskatchewan one of the toughest packages of impaired driving legislation in Canada but, more importantly, will help to save lives and prevent injuries on the road.

We're also making other changes in the interest of traffic safety. Mr. Speaker, booster seats are proven to significantly reduce serious injuries and deaths in young children who have outgrown the car seats they used as toddlers. That's why we're making booster seats mandatory for children up to the age of seven or who meet certain height and weight guidelines outlined in the legislation.

We also want to ensure children are protected in school zones, Mr. Speaker, as well as protecting all road users in high-collision areas. That's why we're making legislative changes to allow for a two-year photo radar pilot project, another of the recommendations brought forward by the Special Committee on Traffic Safety, for school zones and specific high-risk locations.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the ultimate goal of all of the changes I've mentioned so far is to save lives and prevent injuries on Saskatchewan roads.

The next set of changes I'd like to outline, Mr. Speaker, are part of harmonization efforts under the New West Partnership Agreement. First we'd like to shift vehicle registration exemptions from legislation to regulations. This will allow Saskatchewan to align its vehicle registration regulatory framework more closely with Alberta and enable SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] to be more responsive to new and emerging registration issues for vehicles of unusual size, weight, and operating characteristics.

There are also a number of changes affecting commercial carriers, Mr. Speaker, and these include increasing weight thresholds for monitoring, moving the authority for commercial carrier safety from Highway Traffic Board to SGI, and publicly releasing carrier safety information which will align Saskatchewan with other Canadian jurisdictions.

In addition to above, we are making a number of minor amendments that are housekeeping in nature. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Crown Investments

has moved second reading of Bill 125, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I am very pleased to stand and speak and give our initial comments on Bill 125. Now, Mr. Speaker, we want to speak about some of the experience that we've had as the official opposition in our role on a committee that was established to look at some of the bills that are being proposed under Bill 125.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we should point out that the two representatives that the opposition put in place, the member from Cumberland and the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, where they spent a number of weeks this past spring I believe and travelled through a number of regions and certainly attended a number of community meetings to talk about the traffic safety issue that challenges many jurisdictions.

And certainly Saskatchewan is one of the jurisdictions that deserves some attention. Mr. Speaker, I understand from some of their comments and some of the points that they've raised that Saskatchewan leads the country — correct me if I'm wrong — and certainly the provinces, they lead the provinces in terms of death created by alcohol overall. And that's one of the things that I think when we talk about vehicle safety, that's one of the issues that we need to certainly highlight and that we need to speak about.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that when the two members joined the process they had some very good intentions to look at the issue overall. And at the end of the meeting they talked . . . of the series of meetings. They issued a second document that they put forward. And the government had their particular agenda and they put through their changes that they'd like to see. And the two representatives of the opposition, they also said, well we agree on some of the points that you've raised, but we don't fundamentally agree on one of the most important issues that needs to be part of the directive.

And, Mr. Speaker, that fundamental change that I'm speaking about, I'll get to it in a minute. But I would like to read what was the press release that was made by the opposition caucus. And I'll just read very quickly:

NDP submits minority report on Traffic Safety.

[Mr. Speaker, it says] Opposition MLA Danielle Chartier and Doyle Vermette believe a life-saving measure was wrongly dismissed by the Traffic Safety Committee, and have submitted a report alongside the committee's final recommendation.

Chartier and Vermette, the two Opposition MLAs on the seven-member committee, believe short-term vehicle impoundment should be included in the committee's recommendations and implemented in Saskatchewan. After Alberta and British Columbia each implemented a three-day vehicle impoundment the first time a driver is caught with a .05 blood alcohol concentration, the number of alcohol-involved traffic deaths dropped by half in each of those provinces. This information was presented to the TSC, but short-term vehicle impoundment is left out of the

committee's final recommendations.

"It's our neighbours, our friends and our kids out there on the highways. The evidence says short-term impoundment saves lives — the NDP wants to take that step," said Chartier. "This government is missing an opportunity to get it right and prevent as many deaths as possible."

Chartier and Vermette agree with the 26 recommendations made in the committee's final report, and urge the government to act on the recommendations and not let the report gather dust.

"I urged the government to act on traffic safety at the end of last year when the number of highway fatalities, sadly, hit record numbers, said Chartier. "Convening a committee is only a first step — Saskatchewan families need to see immediate action to help everyone get home safe."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the things that's really, really important when you have a government that's moving forward to address the challenges of deaths and injuries on our highways, and they all basically have some very compelling information presented to them on impounding a vehicle for three days. Mr. Speaker, BC [British Columbia] and Alberta, as was indicated in the press conference, basically followed that particular advice. And again you've seen a huge issue that was averted in terms of, I think the number was half the deaths that were . . . or the deaths were cut in half when they implemented that particular three-day impoundment of the vehicle.

So that's one of the reason why I think, I think that the two members of the opposition deviated somewhat from the government's position, that they thought, our two members, thought that they ought to have a three-day impoundment on the first offense for anybody above .05 in terms of blood alcohol concentration. Because, quite frankly, they have heard from Alberta and BC when they put that measure in place, it does save lives.

[15:45]

Now why this was not part of the overall Bill 125, we don't know, Mr. Speaker. We need to find out why the government ignored that particular aspect, why they didn't put that particular aspect or that particular rule in place.

Obviously there's been a number of organizations that made some very compelling presentation and some very compelling and more than likely heart-wrenching stories. I wasn't privy to some of the presentations, but I can only imagine some of the presentations that families that lost loved ones or an organization like MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving], whether they come forward and they give us the compelling advice and information. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important. It's important that we, you know, we all learn that if there's issues out there that could save lives, then we have to pay attention to it. Because obviously there's a lot of experience when the families come forward and give some of this advice.

And that's exactly what our leader indicates to us, as an opposition. Where things make common sense, where there's been good consultation — and there's been some good



organizations that have been at these meetings — and they agree with some of the recommendations, then we in the opposition would support some of those changes, some of the recommendations that the minister alluded to in her bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, a couple of our members on our behalf attended some of these hearings. I believe they went to seven or eight communities, and it took them a period of six to seven weeks of travel to hear what these evidence . . . what some of the compelling issues were. And they heard. And they heard, and they listened first-hand. And certainly they also were able to gather from some of the presentations an unfiltered lens, so to speak, as to what many of our people in Saskatchewan believe are the solutions to reducing traffic deaths attached to the driving while impaired challenge that we all have.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we pay attention. And it has been something that the people of Saskatchewan would assume is a common sense thing, that if BC and Alberta brought forward some compelling statistical information and some very solid points indicating to us as a province that if you, if you put these and this measure in place you could reduce your deaths by 50 per cent, our only point on this side of the Assembly is why ignore and why not put that particular recommendation in the Traffic Safety Committee report?

That is the fundamental question that we ask of the Sask Party on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker. A lot of the changes that the minister alluded to . . . And we'll certainly go through the changes that she presented. And I think our members having the experience of going to these hearings and sharing some of the stories, I'm sure they will, when they have their opportunities on this particular bill, that they'll be able to present what they heard. And they'll be able to corroborate what the minister is saying today, that some of the safety measures that she's indicated today would be very valuable to support as the official opposition.

And as our leader has instructed all of us, if it makes sense and the good consultation was there and the corroboration is affirmed by our members, then why would we stand in the way of something that's important? We would simply support those measures and ensure that Saskatchewan people are indeed kept safe.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the reasons why I think when we look at the bill and its rules and regulations that the minister is trying to move forward, some of the processes we would naturally automatically support, as I mentioned, if they make sense and they haven't been vetted through the process properly. But again the points that I would raise on behalf of the official opposition with corroboration from the two members on this committee is the whole notion of vehicle impoundment on the first offence for anybody above .05 for three days because it does save lives. So the question I would ask is, why wasn't that put as part of the recommendation? Because sometimes that happens, Mr. Speaker, and that's one of the things that's really, really important.

Now we look at some of the points that we would raise is that when you look at the overall safety numbers in the province . . . And I think the one stat that we lead the nation in terms of all the other provinces is in alcohol-related deaths when it comes to

traffic accidents. And certainly from our perspective, Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that if that was the initial mandate of the committee, that they implement, they implement that particular plan to the fullest. Because why would you put a committee in place and not deal with the issue totally? And that's one of the questions that our members have on our side of the Assembly is, why did you exclude that particular part?

I'm not sure as to who made the recommendation, whether it was an organization or whether it's a series of people at a number of these meetings. Or was it the police that made the presentation? Or was it a judge that made the presentation? Or was it all these groups that made this presentation that had you followed the BC and Alberta examples of a three-day impoundment, then it does save lives. And whoever presented this obviously had a lot of good information for the committee members to digest and to hear, and that's what's really important.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you look at some of the issues that are important, that the committee hearings themselves, some would say that they're perhaps too short, that they needed maybe another three or four months of more compelling information. Others would say that they only went to a certain number of places, that you should have had maybe twice the amount of hearings and twice the amount of communities and then you'd hear a lot more information. But I think the information that was received at the series of meetings that were held were probably pretty consistent in terms of the advice that people gave to the committee members. And I'm not sure of the format, and I'm sure my colleagues will explain the format as we speak more on this bill, but it'd be sure nice to be able to tell the people out there in Saskatchewan that as the opposition, of course we would want to see more information, more input, and more advice from some of the organizations involved with traffic safety overall.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that most recently when I travel home, we find that traffic safety is really important, that when you come across a bridge crew there's adequate lighting. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of times you're busy travelling, and you're flying down the highway at 60 miles an hour. And of course you come across these lights and the sign is saying obviously that there's a bridge construction crew in place, to reduce your speed by 60 kilometres. And then there's a sign that says, fines triple. And then there's a sign that says, being enforced by photo radar. And you see all these measures in place. And finally when you get to where the crew's working, you've got to be totally dismissive of all the warning signs and still drive through there at a higher speed than what is allowed.

So it's important to know that all the signage is there and that people still have a difficult time in paying attention to the signage and slowing down to under 60 kilometres, Mr. Speaker. There was a few times that just before I got to the 60 kilometres zone, where I had to put my brakes on to make sure that I was under 60. And these are some of the things that people have to get used to and that traffic safety is always a challenge. And it is always a serious, serious effort that everybody has to undertake on a continual basis.

So there's a lot of questions that we have on this bill. We want

to be able to give our participants in the Traffic Safety Committee the opportunity to speak about some of their involvement. And I'm sure we will hear, Mr. Speaker, some very compelling stories of why they wanted us go to the extra step, to do the complete work that was necessary. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that opportunity for them to be able to speak, we would hear some very good words of advice, some very good words of advice. And it's amazing, Mr. Speaker, it's amazing that you look at some of the challenges that we've had over the years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I speak from a bit of a background when we talk about vehicle safety itself. Mr. Speaker, I've had my share of tickets. And certainly from my perspective, I think what's important is that we've learned that speeding is something that you have to be always aware of. And so we obviously learn from that lesson.

But a lot of people don't realize that we have lost two brothers and a sister in vehicle accidents, which is a very difficult thing to go through. And over the years, you start thinking about, you know, what caused that. You try and find out what happened because the shock of it initially happening is very difficult. But you know, it's kind of important that you pay attention to that stuff. Because obviously we've had our share — too much at times — of some of the deaths that occurred in a tragic vehicle accident, and certainly one vehicle accident took the life of a six-year-old sister. So it was a tough time to go through at the time. But certainly that person was caught and was charged and certainly paid for his crime, but it would have been nice had we had a lot more measures in place to stop that from occurring.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is a tough round I'll tell you to, I'm sure, to hear some of the compelling stories of many other families that have gone through that. So it is a tough file. There's no question about that. And if we can make Saskatchewan a better and a safe community by doing a very thorough, comprehensive plan to deal with traffic safety, certainly I think we need to undertake as many of the measures as possible.

And as my colleagues have indicated, it's important that we take the full step forward. And that's why I think the three-day vehicle impoundment is something that's important to them, and that's one of the reasons why they issued a second report on their own to ensure that that particular aspect was highlighted and that the government did not choose to implement as part of the bill that is being presented today. So, Mr. Speaker, they'll have a lot more to say on this particular bill. As I said I'm looking forward to their presentations to hear what they have to say.

And it's important to note, it's important to note that evidence, not just from the presenters themselves but from jurisdictions of BC and Alberta, you know, they've got a lot of forward-thinking folks out there that have a lot of experience. And when they give you advice — and I often tell people this — when you get advice from anybody, you don't have to take it all, but you should listen to it because maybe somewhere along the line that could serve you.

So I think again I would point out that the bill itself got some good work to it. We'll support certain aspects of the bill. But does it go far enough? My colleagues say no, it doesn't. And I

certainly am going to pay attention to what the member from Cumberland and the member from Riversdale may indicate as to what their reasons for asking for the extra step because I'm sure they have been subjected to some very heart-wrenching stories and some very difficult presentations.

So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 125, *The Traffic Safety Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 125, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Athabasca not Cumberland.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Oh the member from Athabasca — sorry — has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 125, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

## 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 Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013*. Mr. Speaker, this is a relatively short bill, but it affects many people in the province and many businesses in the province. And I note that the minister's speech explaining this bill was quite simple. It didn't have a lot to it. So I'm going to try to fill in what I think is happening here so that on the record we'll have something to look at later if it's ever a question about what's happening.

[16:00]

Now right off the top, this whole area or this type of legislation, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act* relates to having Saskatchewan people invest their money in Saskatchewan businesses, especially some of the businesses that might be a little bit riskier or a little bit not as developed as some of our really large businesses in Saskatchewan. And for many, many years, entrepreneurs had a hard time getting the capital that they needed when it was basically in a smaller category.

And I guess when I say that, I'll reflect back say 15 years ago. If you had to borrow money for a business that was under 5 million, maybe up to \$10 million, it was quite hard to get that

money because . . . It wasn't just for borrowing, but you also would be interested in having people invest in shares in your company. It was very hard to get that. And as the government of that day, we looked at many different things to put in place that would encourage people to invest.

What we knew was that if people were interested in amassing relatively large sums of money through a share offering, they could do it with the assistance of the bankers and primarily go through the Toronto Stock Exchange but also I suppose sometimes through some of the other stock exchanges in Canada. But there was a whole gap of ability to invest. This legislation, and developed in conjunction with federal legislation, gives a tax credit or deduction for people who invest this money in some of the smaller operations that are available.

Now we have quite a few years of experience with this type of legislation, and there are a couple of triggers to bringing in this amendment legislation today. I would say the first trigger is that the federal government has taken steps to change the national program. And I'll quote directly from the SaskWorks 2013 annual report, and I want to put some of the information from this report on the record because this kind of information was not provided by the minister as he brought forward his legislation. And so what is stated on page 8 of the SaskWorks 2013 annual report is this:

As an aspect of its 2013 Federal budget, the Government of Canada announced a draft legislative proposal that would phase out the 15% Federal tax credit beginning in the 2015 tax year by decreasing the Federal tax credit from 15% to 10%, followed by a decrease from 10% to 5% for the 2016 tax year and 0% for the 2017 tax year and beyond. The draft proposal is currently the subject of public consultation being undertaken by the Government of Canada. The announced proposed phase out of the Federal tax credit does not affect the Saskatchewan tax credit of 20%, which was reconfirmed in the 2013 Provincial budget.

Now what happened is a fair bit of discussion was started by the fact that the federal government was going to make these changes as it related to labour-sponsored venture capital corporations. And so what we have then now is this amendment legislation before the House. And unfortunately the rules are being changed. There's no question about that. But it's not clear in the legislation how they're going to be changed, or it's not clear in the minister's speech how they're going to be changed. But effectively all of those changes will be done by regulation after this legislation is passed.

And it's for that reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'm going to read in the next part of the report from SaskWorks because this sets out the understanding of one of the labour-sponsored venture capital corporations in Saskatchewan as to what's intended to happen with this legislation that doesn't have the detail that we need. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to now quote from page 9 of the SaskWorks 2013 annual report.

In the 2013 Provincial budget, the Government of Saskatchewan implemented additional investment criteria for labour-sponsored venture capital funds. Commencing with the 2014-2015 investment period and all subsequent

investment periods, of the Fund's annual net capitalization (annual capital raised less annual capital redeemed, multiplied by the Fund's standard pacing requirements), a portion is to be invested in the innovation sector as follows:

15% in 2014/2015;  
20% in 2015/2016; and,  
25% in 2016/17 and subsequent years.

The innovation sector has been defined as companies operating within the clean/environmental technology, health and life sciences, crop sciences, industrial biotechnology, information and communication technology, alternative energy industries; or, companies developing and/or employing value-added processes or technologies in Saskatchewan's traditional sectors (i.e. energy, agriculture, and manufacturing).

Based on the nature and amount of the Fund's deal flow and its applicability to the innovation criteria, as well as the required annual innovation placement amount, the Manager is confident that it will not be required to alter its investment strategy or processes in order to remain in compliance with the newly introduced criteria.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are these changes that must be somewhere and that are going to show up in the regulations based on the Act that we have here before us that will set out that policy. And I think it's important we put on the record what the understanding of that policy is because the government has not done that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to quote a little bit more from this report that also talks about changes that are I think included in this legislation, but it's only included by reference to the fact that the minister and the Lieutenant Governor in Council can make regulatory changes. And so quoting again from page 9 of the 2013 annual report of SaskWorks:

Further changes introduced by the Government of Saskatchewan include changes to the definition of an eligible business investment under the Saskatchewan Act:

Investments in public companies with a market capitalization of \$500 million or more are prohibited and any investments in public companies with a market capitalization of \$500 million or more must be divested by the labour-sponsored venture capital corporation prior to December 31, 2014. If an investment is acquired through acquisitions or mergers and the resulting investment has over \$500 million in capitalization, such investment must be disposed of within two years of such acquisition or merger, and,

New investment in agricultural land acquired primarily for rental or leasing purposes will be prohibited.

None of the above changes are expected to have an adverse effect on the performance of the Fund.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've read that section in as well because it appears to confirm what the intention of the government is, at

least as understood by one of the major labour-sponsored venture capital corporations. Ideally that kind of information would have been presented by the minister so we would all understand in the legislature what's intended with this legislation.

Now I think that practically there appears to be an understanding of what the government intends to do with the legislation, which does not have an adverse effect on the labour-sponsored venture capital corporations in Saskatchewan at this time. Part of our job as we look at this legislation will be to make sure that the intent as understood by the major players in the industry is followed. And also I think that we will be interested to follow what's happening on the federal level with the changes that are proposed there to see how they mesh with what's happening in Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, with that information provided for the record, I move that we adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn 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 Deputy 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 Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the discussion today on Bill No. 112, *An Act respecting the Accounting Profession and the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan*, or as it's known or easier to say, *The Accounting Profession Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is part of a much larger initiative that's been under way not just here in Saskatchewan but in Canada and internationally as well. What it will do, what this bill proposes doing is merging three main professional designations — the chartered accountants, the certified management accountants, and the certified general accountants — into one body which will now be called the Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan. Right now here in Saskatchewan there are currently 4,400 members of all three groups who this will currently impact. As well there are about 970 students in the three respective accounting bodies, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . oh, Mr. Speaker now. You go and change things up on me, Mr. Speaker.

And what this will do is . . . Apparently worldwide or internationally, the chartered professional accountants is a designation that is internationally recognized, and there is a certification process actually in fact for chartered professional accountants. And what this will do is . . . Well this certification

program internationally has combined and taken the best of all the designations and rolled it into one, Mr. Speaker. So this bill also will be streamlining and modernizing the regulatory regime.

The opposition, our Finance critic actually, has met with all three designations here in Saskatchewan, and they do collectively support it and have asked for these changes.

It's interesting in other parts of Canada what's going on now. Actually Manitoba is in a slightly earlier stage. They actually, at the end of November, just announced a memorandum of understanding between the three groups and will be taking the vote to the members of their three groups come January for approval and hope to have legislation at some point in the near future. Ontario is in the process of doing the very same thing, and apparently one of the bodies had backed away from the negotiations but is back at the table, and so Ontario is working on this chartered professional accountant designation as well.

Again there are a large number of members in all three groups here in Saskatchewan, more than 4,000 that are impacted by this, and it's interesting. So we've heard from the three bodies who believe that this is a very good idea, but I think one of the goals going forward when a bill comes before us is we have to make sure that the bill reflects what the three bodies have asked for. It seems to on the surface, but I also know it'll be interesting. I have spoken to one chartered accountant who actually, in her own body, did not support this, and I haven't had an opportunity to follow up. But it's good to see . . . It'll be good or interesting to find out what her perspective is and why she didn't support the change. And perhaps there's an opportunity to strengthen this piece of legislation before it's passed. So in the upcoming months this is what we will be doing.

[16:15]

I have a few other things here, Mr. Speaker. I know that the day when the legislation was introduced, the professional accountants, the chartered professional accountants, again which is the new designation, the chartered professional accountants Saskatchewan joint venture, which was the body charged with ensuring that this merger goes forward, they put out a letter on November 7th in support of this. And they believe, actually Ms. Keri Ziegler who is a CA [chartered accountant] and was the CEO of this joint venture, believes that this will benefit the public by eliminating the confusion over the qualifications of the three different designations for accountants and by improving the standards of the profession. She said, "Through this unification initiative, we have brought together the best qualities of each of the different predecessor organizations. Our members will benefit from the best of all three worlds." And that was again Ms. Keri Ziegler who is the CEO of the CPA [Chartered Professional Accountant] Saskatchewan Joint Venture.

One of the things that's important to note in this legislation is that there will be a transition measure called tagging. So when new graduates finish the new CPA certification program, they will simply use the designation CPA, or chartered professional accountant, after their name. But current members of any of the three organizations, the predecessor associations, will

distinguish their different qualifications by using CPA, CA; CPA, CMA [chartered management accountant]; or CPA, CGA. And this tagging will be mandatory for 10 years, and after that 10 years, the use of the legacy designations will be optional.

And I think one thing to note when we talk about the chartered professional accountants, I know in some of the things . . . One of the arguments for this again is the opportunity for accountants here in Saskatchewan to be able to better interact on the international stage. I know some of the arguments have said that the members would retain their current designation and add the Canadian chartered professional accountant designation, which would become the pre-eminent designation and business credential for professional accountants who work in every sector of the economy.

And the Canadian CPA designation would represent a unique combination of expertise in all areas of accounting, including financial and management accounting, assurance and taxation, would evolve into a globally recognized business credential in the areas of financial and strategic management, business leadership and auditing, and assurance competencies. And there will be steps taken so that members would have access to post-designation specialty programs.

So I know again that the government seems to have consulted, and I know my colleague from Regina Rosemont has had an opportunity to talk to all three organizations who by and large support this. But again it's important, Mr. Speaker, that now that the legislation is on the table that we check back with stakeholders and make sure that the legislation does in fact reflect what they've been asking for or if there's any way to improve it in any way. So we will be doing that in the coming months.

But I do know that I have colleagues who will be interested in weighing in on this discussion over the next . . . as we continue to sit here, Mr. Speaker. So with that I would like to move to adjourn debate.

**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 Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter debate and discussion as it relates to Bill 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*. Just, you know, there's a couple of notes before I get into some of the contents of the bill. Certainly the public employees pension plan is a very important pension plan to the people of

this province. It's important to so many families who have provided service and work to their province, to their communities, who have worked as public servants and in many, many roles.

In fact there's 79 different employers that utilize the public employees pension plan. This is a plan that has over 53,000 members, which just tells you how important this plan is to the lives of so many families as it relates to the real important challenge of ensuring income security, ensuring adequate retirement security, ensuring retirement for those that have worked, those that have contributed, and ensuring they have the ability to have a dignified retirement and the adequate funds to support that.

Certainly the fund itself is well run. It's had good governance, and it's been efficient and has had quite strong returns, Mr. Speaker. It's a defined contribution pension plan and it's managed by the . . . or administered by the Public Employees Pension Board. And right now I believe the current assets are in excess of \$5.6 billion. Certainly it's a plan that's important to many families in this province, and of course those are important investments that have been made as well.

As it relates to the changes that have been made here today in opening up this Act, what we do want to fully understand and what we'll be seeking some clarity on is, where exactly have these recommendations come from? Who's made these, who's requested these changes? And in opening up the bill and in expanding the bill, what was the scope of considerations for changes? And were there other recommendations that were brought forward that would be in the best interests of retirees or of workers here today that could have been addressed through the bill? Those are the kinds of questions we'll be putting to the minister.

I know some of the changes that have been brought forward, I'll address some of them here. The minister states, and I quote the minister, that the Act will do the following:

. . . clarify that a simple majority of board members is required for all decisions made by board; allow the board to undertake short-term borrowing for the purposes of the administration of *The Public Employees Pension Plan Act*; allow the Lieutenant Governor, by order in council, to designate the default fund into which all member contributions shall be deposited unless otherwise directed by the member; provide that the Lieutenant Governor may order that members who have never chosen a fund for their PEPP funds be moved into a default fund; and authorize the Lieutenant Governor by regulation to permit the plan to receive members and funds from a registered pension plan wanting to become part of the PEPP . . . [to start] which specialty funds transferring into PEPP are eligible for.

So I see a couple of changes there. We'll be certainly following up with the minister on it. But decisions made by board, there's some changes to those processes, some changes around responsibility for short-term borrowing and some greater authority on those fronts, and then as well the ability to designate, or of government's ability to designate someone who maybe hasn't chosen, if I understand this properly, the fund that they would like their dollars to be placed within, then there'll be

a default fund that government can choose on that front.

I believe right now there's about six different asset allocations that members can choose on that front. I believe there's a range in risk and potential return on those fronts. And so I believe what this is probably addressing, there must be a host of individuals, many workers possibly, that haven't indicated which fund they'd like to see their funds being placed in, and this maybe gives legal authority for government to act on their behalf. So we'll make sure we understand the full consequences of that. Certainly it seems that maybe it's addressing a practical challenge that fund administrators are dealing with right now.

Also I'm looking forward to learning a little bit more about the provisions in this Act to allow for other funds, other investments or for those, I should say, that have funds elsewhere to be able to move those funds into PEPP [public employees pension plan]. So I want to understand I guess the constraints on that or what that means specifically, and we'll be fleshing that out in committee.

I guess just in closing, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important pension plan to the people of this province. It's a fund that's contributed into by both employer and employee. It's something that ensures those that are working hard and spending their life in public service or providing work to their community, ensuring that they have some adequacy to their retirement savings. So certainly we want to make sure that any changes are in the best interests of those 53,000-plus members across this province.

Retirement security is a significant challenge for many. It's an important place for public discourse. It's an important place that we need to move the yardsticks in a positive direction for Saskatchewan families because it's an area of stress for many, many Saskatchewan families, those that are young and working right now and looking down the road, those that are close to retirement, Mr. Speaker. And I do think it's important while on this record to just reiterate the opposition's support for the expansion of the CPP, the Canada Pension Plan, the efficient, effective pan-Canadian solution that it is, providing a base level of income security for all Canadians, all Saskatchewan people.

Other provinces have taken leadership roles on this front. Our government has been less supportive, noncommittal, less than clear as to what sort of advocacy they'll provide on that front.

But it's very important that we recognize the challenge of income security, the importance of a dignified retirement, the importance of retirement security to thousands of families right across our province, right across our country. And certainly that pan-Canadian solution, the expansion of the Canada Pension Plan is something that we're going to continue to push as the official opposition New Democrats. It's important to the families here in Saskatchewan.

These changes come on the heels of some monkeying around that we saw in the spring as it related to labour-sponsored venture funds. We saw the changes federally where the federal government is abandoning labour-sponsored venture funds, and we see the provincial government that imposed, with a real heavy hand, direction to those investment holdings which would have had a direct impact on the return that Saskatchewan

families would have received. We saw that as wrong-headed at that time. We called on government to resolve that. They've been working, I understand, to address the challenge that they created. They still haven't lifted the cap that they've imposed that will cut investment in our province and that will prevent many, many families from being able to invest into the labour-sponsored venture funds.

But when we look at those funds, they're certainly an important piece of the retirement puzzle for many Saskatchewan families. As well, I believe, their members are in excess of 55,000. And certainly we'll continue to track government's decisions on this front. Certainly we're pleased and welcome, as we encourage government to reconsider some of the decisions that it had made — reckless decisions, decisions that were not in the best interest of those members, those families across Saskatchewan that have invested in those funds, those funds that have been well managed and have provided good returns to Saskatchewan families but that have also capitalized our province and provided a really strong economic boost and succession in business in many regions and right across our province.

So we'll continue to track progress on that front. We certainly continue to call for government to rescind the cap that they've placed on those funds and allow more investment in our province and allow investments by Saskatchewan people within their province.

But with all that being said, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the public employees pension plan, this is a very important pension plan to the people of this province, impacting thousands of families on an issue that's critical to many — retirement security, income security — and an area that we need quite frankly to ensure that governments are more involved in stepping up to the plate to ensure better protection for Saskatchewan families.

With that being said, I certainly look forward to discussion at the committee, moving forward with the minister, and gaining some clarity as to the specific changes. And I don't have anything else to say at this time as it relates to Bill 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*, and I do look forward to following up with more detailed questions in committee.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this bill be

referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

[16:30]

### 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 member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to wade into discussion about Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act*. What this bill does, it's pretty straightforward, Mr. Speaker. It's repealing the previous bill and replacing it with a bilingual bill. So now we have the legislation and regulations in both English and French.

And this came directly from a request from, well, several organizations actually — the Conseil des écoles francsaskoises, or CÉF, and the Association des parents francsaskois, or APF — who wanted the legislation in French because there are many francophone providers of child care currently now in this province. And it continues to grow, Mr. Speaker, the demand for francophone child care continues to grow.

We've had many newcomers come from places like Africa, just to name one, Mr. Speaker. And my daughter actually attended l'École canadienne-française and had the opportunity to go to school with many of these children whose first language, or one of many languages that they already speak, happens to be French, and English was an additional language for them.

So the child care providers wanted to ensure that the requirements outlined in the Act could be understood and interpreted correctly by French-language child care providers and their professional organizations, so making sure that they are meeting the rules for providing safe, quality child care in Saskatchewan were very important to these providers.

The bill also has some minor changes. And actually the minister pointed out what some of these minor changes are, aside from the very big translation piece which was the large change, Mr. Speaker. But some of the minor changes, the minister says or refers to them as housekeeping in nature: first, there was the removal of alphabetical listing from interpretation; secondly, there was the removal of previously repealed sections; third, the minister says there's legal modernization of language; four, there's the reorganization of sections for clarity; five, references to department change to ministry; and six, section on inspections and investigations split to provide legal clarity and in addition allows the investigation section to include search of vehicles.

So those are generally the changes in the bill, in Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act*. But I think the thing that . . . I'm very pleased to see it translated. Again as I've said, I've had an opportunity to meet many of these child care providers who are working in French, Mr. Speaker. But I think this was a key opportunity missed for us here in this legislature. Child care is an absolutely critical part of ensuring that our children in Saskatchewan start off with a bright future. It's about early learning and education, but it's also an economic development strategy, Mr. Speaker.

Here in Saskatchewan there are about 70 per cent of women with children under 5 who are in the paid labour force. So that is a huge number of people who need to rely on child care, some kind of child care and, more often than not, these individuals are not relying on licensed child care because it's not available. We have fewer than 13,000 spaces, active spaces, at the moment. I know the government likes to talk about working on getting to that number and they've committed to spaces, but all those spaces aren't open.

So I think again I need to emphasize that we have a piece of legislation before us and a key opportunity to do some really great things here in ensuring that families have support to go to school and to earn money, Mr. Speaker. We hear all the time from employers across the spectrum, from skilled labour force shortages to labour force shortages in some of our fast food outlets. And we've had to rely on temporary foreign workers, Mr. Speaker, because by and large we don't have people to fill these spaces. Well, ensuring that people have child care is one way to ensure that you help address the labour force shortage.

I think it's important to talk about the turning point. And so for anybody who is interested, the turning point is the point at which you no longer are eligible for the maximum child care subsidy, which isn't incredibly high to begin with, Mr. Speaker. But if you earn \$1,640 and have one child, any amount over that, you will start to lose the maximum subsidy. So \$1,640 in a month is not too far off minimum wage, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it's important to point out that that number hasn't changed; that turning point has not changed since the early 1980s, Mr. Speaker. So this is a key opportunity, would have been a great opportunity to change that turning point to ensure that more families have the support that they need to provide, to ensure that their children are in good care, that they're not using all their family budget on child care and have a little bit of money left over at the end of the day.

I think it's important to talk about what some other provinces are doing. I know in estimates last spring I had the opportunity to ask the then minister about how they came up with the target of 500 child care spaces in the last budget. And the minister told me, well, that's an aggressive number that we're pursuing. And I said, well what is the demand for child care here in Saskatchewan? And he said they didn't know the demand and there was no way of knowing the demand. And then later this summer with respect to standardized testing, that same minister with respect to standardized testing said something, and I don't have the quote in front of me so I'm paraphrasing. But he said, well you can't improve what you don't measure. Well I would argue with child care, if you have no idea what the demand is, how can you improve it and how can you ensure that families have what they need?

So I can point to four years. I believe in my Throne Speech response I said five years, but it's four years; 2009, '10, '11, and '12, there were 60,000 live births here in Saskatchewan. In '09, '10, '11, and '12, 60,000 babies born here in Saskatchewan in those four years. And adding 500 child care spaces a year is simply a drop in the bucket and does nothing to solve the very real crisis, the very real crisis that families face, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to finding care for your children.

I can tell you as a parent of young kids myself, there is nothing worse than leaving kids at the best of times, even in care that you trust. I mean that parental guilt, we all want to be there for our children. But there is nothing even more stressful than having to leave your children in care that you're not convinced is totally reliable. And this is why the onus should be on the government here to ensure that we're creating high quality, affordable, accessible, licensed child care spaces that actually meet families' needs, Mr. Speaker.

I have spoken to so many directors and people who work in child care and they tell me about staff retention, how difficult it is to keep people employed, partly because child care workers are paid not much more above minimum wage. The people we are charging with the care of our children, we don't value them enough to pay them, in some cases, much more than minimum wage. I know directors of child care centres who've been in child care for more than two decades have said to me that no one is following behind us, Danielle. There is no one to take our spaces and continue to provide care. Because what ends up happening, people do the training and then get scooped up. Instead of working in child care centres, they end up working in other places as educational assistants in less stressful environments where it is greater pay.

I know I've talked to directors who worry about staff retention. Again, what ends up happening is they don't get to do professional development. So there is some professional development that is mandated, but because they are often short staffed and have trouble finding replacements, that the people working in child care don't have the opportunity to constantly improve themselves, or it can be incredibly difficult to take the time to do that professional development.

So we have great difficulties with the cost of child care. We have great . . . for families. And again I spoke to the turning point. We have difficulty with staff retention and being able to recruit the best possible people who will stay in those roles. There are many wonderful people who work in child care and are completely undervalued.

Again I think I didn't finish my comments around being able to measure the demand here in Saskatchewan. Manitoba and Prince Edward Island have online child care registries. One of the goals there is to simplify it for families. So they've got one-stop shopping, so they don't have to put their name on 10 different child care lists. So it's a central point, Mr. Speaker. So that helps families.

But secondarily, and this is . . . I have spoken to someone in Manitoba about this. I haven't in PEI [Prince Edward Island] but I'm assuming it's the same thing. They're able to track what the demand is for child care through this online child care registry. Can you believe, Mr. Speaker, they actually have a

sense of what their demand for licensed child care is? What a novel concept. It would be great to have seen the government in this bill . . . or we've got a piece of legislation before us. This could have been a really great opportunity to include some of these things in this legislation and in regulations. And I'm incredibly disappointed to see that.

I know families deserve more than . . . Enhancing child care is in fact a smart growth plan. It's ensuring that families have the opportunity to have great early learning and care for their kids, but also have the opportunity to work or earn a living — two things that we want people, adults to do here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So again, I am disappointed that there wasn't more. I'm glad that the bill has been translated into French — very important — but disappointed that this government has not done more on child care. There are so many places of improvement that could happen, Mr. Speaker, so many places of improvement. And it's 2013, Mr. Speaker. Now is the time to act. And I look forward to having further conversations about this in committee, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question? The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act, 2013* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

### 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 Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter discussion as it related to Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*. Certainly this is a very important agency to the people of our province. It's important, ensuring proper and adequate taxation and revenues for municipalities for our education system.

And certainly some of the changes that have been put forward seem to be quite practical in nature in allowing the SAMA



[Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency], the Saskatchewan assessment agency, management agency, to be able to be flexible in meeting the needs of our communities and meeting the realities of our taxation system. I believe it also responds to some of the changes that were made to taxation by that government as it related to funding of education. So there's a few of those that are probably consequences of some of those changes.

The piece of this that I want to have a better sense of is just ensuring the full consultations that would have occurred or should have occurred with partners. So certainly we want to make sure we fully understand what some of the recommendations from SAMA were as it related to these changes. We also want to make sure that the urban municipalities, the rural municipalities, SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] were fully engaged in developing this piece of legislation and that they fully support the changes that have been put forward. I believe that's been referenced here by the minister that there's full support, I believe he says, or there's no objections, he says, by way of SARM or SUMA, the municipal partners across the province or the municipalities across the province. But certainly we want to be certain of that.

It is interesting they're changing the threshold or the revenue agreement for funding SAMA, and it seems to me that that could have the consequence of calling upon municipalities and property tax payers to pay more for this agency. Certainly this is an important agency, and we need to make sure it has the adequate resources to respond to our growing communities and changes in taxation and making sure that assessments are able to be completed in a timely and efficient way, in an accurate way, to make sure that tax revenues are collected properly that exist within the province.

But we also want to make sure that there's not a heavier burden placed upon property tax payers in this province. And when I look at the pressures our municipalities are facing, it seems to me poor timing to be potentially offloading the revenues required on this front onto property tax payers. We hear about the big increases across cities and municipalities in our province. We know that the current government is failing to properly fund the growth within municipalities, failing to properly fund the infrastructure demands within our municipalities, and so we just want to make sure that this isn't something that's going to further exacerbate that downloading or the property taxes of ratepayers across the province.

[16:45]

That being said, we know that many of these changes are quite practical in nature, allowing SAMA to make sure they meet the needs of communities and of our province and making sure that revenues are collected in a fair and appropriate way. That all sounds reasonable. There's some reference that SAMA's been quite involved in these consultations. We look forward to that discussion. We also want to understand what the scope of considerations were when this bill was opened up.

But as I say, where probably my concern is right now and where we'll, you know, certainly extend some discussions with

municipal partners is that this is a change that will certainly, it seems, cause municipalities to be larger funding partners of SAMA. And again, this is the wrong time for that government to be doing further offloading onto the municipalities of this province. In fact, this is the time where they need to be stepping up and supporting our growing communities and the infrastructure needs that are there.

And really it's, you know, it speaks to the importance as well of establishing dedicated capital funding for municipalities across our province, something that isn't in place for infrastructure right now. And certainly the consequence of not having that in place is higher, significantly higher property taxes for homeowners and businesses across this province, high levels of debt that are being forced upon municipalities by this government.

And we believe, in a full smart growth agenda, there'd be understanding of the need for infrastructure investments back into our municipalities, an understanding that municipalities are under significant strain with very limited revenues to bring to bear to address the challenges and the opportunities that they're presented.

We'll engage with the minister at committee to follow up with further detail, further questions on this bill, understanding some of the direct perspectives of SARM and SUMA as well, both those that have been shared with the minister but those that are also shared with us. And I invite all municipalities to engage directly with any concerns that they might have or any thoughts they might have on this piece of legislation.

With all that said, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to committee with the minister. Certainly we need to make sure SAMA is in a strong position, moving forward. As I say, the concerns simply are of financial off-loading onto municipalities that we see once again from this government onto municipalities and a failure to step up with the proper recognition of the infrastructure needs our communities, our growing municipalities are facing, Mr. Speaker.

But we'll follow up in committee. At this point in time as it relates to Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*, I have nothing else to say in this Assembly and look forward to discussions in committee.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — I designate that Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands referred to the committee on intergovernmental relations.

### 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 Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Glad to join the debate today on *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*, Bill No. 101. Again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of different aspects of the legislative agenda of this government that are brought forward, some, you know, some bills are fairly substantial, some bills not as much. It doesn't make them any less important, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the legislation that governs this province.

But in terms of *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*, the Act to amend it, Bill No. 101, this is a piece of legislation that in one respect it's about working responsibly with the sector, working responsibly with the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, which is as it should be. The legislation itself is largely housekeeping in nature, which again is fair enough. There are different kinds of legislation brought forward by government, Mr. Speaker, but this one most definitely would be of the housekeeping variety.

In terms of, you know, the particular questions that we will have for the bill, we look forward to having the discussion about this legislation in committee, Mr. Speaker. But of the various items, the provisions brought forward in this particular piece of legislation, I'll just provide a general survey of those at this time, Mr. Speaker. You know, existing provision no. III (11) where:

The convocation may:

- (a) confer degrees and certificates approved by the council;
- (b) confer honorary degrees approved by the senate; and
- (c) admit graduands to the . . . [convention].

The subsection 5(c) is clarified so that the University of Saskatchewan may also award diplomas. Close the quote, Mr. Speaker. Again, clarifying to ensure that the power to award diplomas is known. That that is brought forward is something that is necessary for the university to change their legislation. Again, fair enough, Mr. Speaker, but hardly earth-shattering in nature and quite honestly a bit of a surprise that that wasn't already sufficiently entailed in the Act.

Next up in terms of the composition of the senate, again the University of Saskatchewan senate, Mr. Speaker — no need to get excited; we're not talking about the Senate in Ottawa — but in terms of changes that are made to that particular provision and again refining who's the composition of the senate, who's all before the senate, the powers of the senate. In the context of *The University of Saskatchewan Act*, again nothing seemingly of particularly earth-shattering significance here, Mr. Speaker, but again all seemingly positive, positive changes being brought forward and necessary given that this is the legislation governing the university, and they're looking to get these changes. So fair enough.

Next up, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the amendments that will “. . . clarify the process by which student members of the senate are elected . . .” and the action in sections 29 and 32. Again to quote from the minister's second reading speech in this regard, Mr. Speaker: “As well, the amendments will amend the term of office for the senate's nominees to the board to allow them to serve a three-year, a third three-year term . . . [in] section 45.” Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a needful thing, certainly a necessary thing. But again the university sees this as necessary to better refine their governance process, so we're glad to see this coming forward today.

Next up, again referring to the minister's second reading speech, Mr. Speaker: “. . . they will amend the powers of the council to facilitate the appointment of student members on hearing boards. This is section 61. And they'll address the requirements of the corporate seal. That is section 98.” Again the students being lumped in with the corporate seal, but again when you're whipping your way through the legislation, Mr. Speaker, these things happen. But again in terms of enabling the appointment of student members on hearing boards, you know, great. That's as it should be. And in terms of the requirements of the corporate seal, well to those of us that follow the keeping of the Great Seal here in the Assembly, always an interesting pursuit.

I guess the main point I'd like to make here, Mr. Speaker, there are questions that we can raise pursuant to this Act here, gain greater clarity from the minister. But we take some assurance from the statements of the minister around the consultation that has taken place to date in terms of the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina on the proposed amendments. We look forward to having those letters of support that were referenced by the minister in the second reading speech. We are appreciative that there have been consultations take place with the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association, and again we look forward to those letters of support being tabled in committee.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that the time has come in terms of our consideration at this stage of the piece of legislation. And I will conclude my comments and await the discussion in committee.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the

motion by the Minister of Advanced Education that Bill No. 101, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — To which committee shall this bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees this evening, I move that this House be now adjourned.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]

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