



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

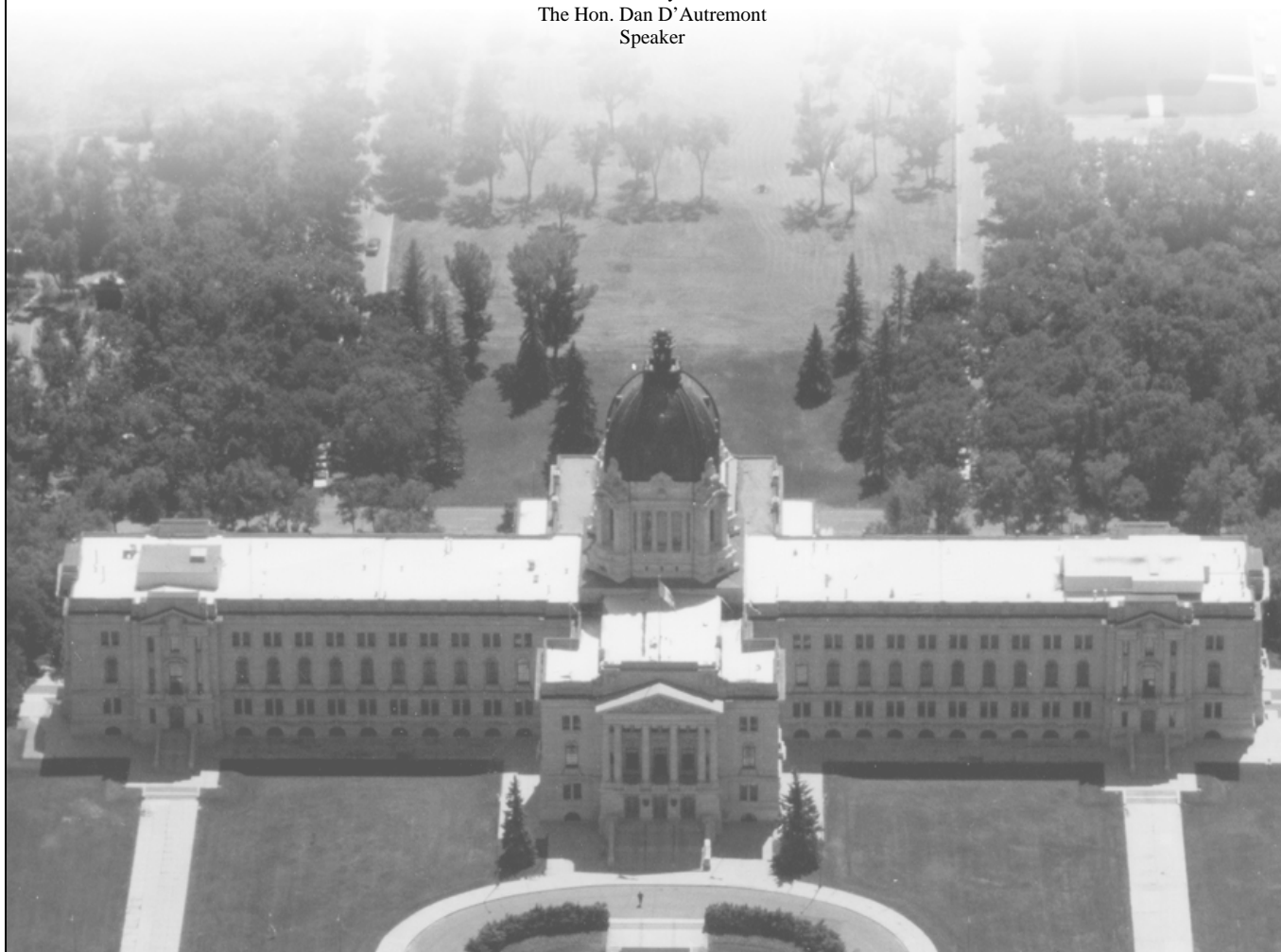
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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, Hon. 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, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, 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
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. 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, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave to make an extended introduction please.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to colleagues for the leave. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce a group of people who are seated in your gallery today, in the Speaker's gallery. They are representatives of several financial institutions that are supporting SAGES, the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings, along with a parent who is participating in the program.

They are — and I'll just ask them to give a wave — Dawn Bell of Saskatoon, vice-president of corporate trust and registered plans for Concentra Trust; Pamela Bryden of Regina, manager, financial planning, Regina and Parkland region for RBC Royal Bank; Bob Taylor of Regina, district vice-president, Scotiabank; and Brian Baker of Saskatoon representing the Canadian Scholarship Trust plan. As well, Mr. Speaker, joining them is Melissa Klapak of Regina, a mother of two children who has contributed to a registered education savings plan that has attracted the SAGES financial incentive.

The Saskatchewan advantage grant for savings, Mr. Speaker, will help Saskatchewan families save for their children's post-secondary education. And over 10,000 children so far, Mr. Speaker, from Saskatchewan families have received more than \$2 million from the SAGES program since it was officially launched earlier this year. A total of 10 financial institutions are now offering SAGES, with another nine committed to offering the program in the very near future.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank these individuals for their support of the SAGES program which is helping families across Saskatchewan save for their children's education, and I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister in welcoming these leaders from the financial sector and Ms. Klapak here today to mark the 10,000 editions of SAGES that have gone forth. Certainly any instruments that can be put in the hands of students and families

to make post-secondary education more accessible, more affordable is welcome and good to see.

So we're glad to see the partners here today in terms of marking this day, and we're glad to see what seems to be a very successful and popular tool for students to take some control over their own destiny and to get that critical post-secondary education under their belt. With that I'd join with the minister in welcoming these individuals to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today we announced the community safety officer program, an alternative enforcement option for Saskatchewan communities. Seated in your gallery today are a number of people who made this announcement possible. From North Battleford, we have Community Safety Officer Jerry Koliniak — give us a wave; thank you — Mayor Ian Hamilton, and Chief Albert Headrick from the North Battleford Fire Department, who was key in the development of their program. As well, some of our other court partners in the program are Ray Orb, acting president; and Doug Steele, vice-president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities; and correction and policing officials Louis Lauziere, senior policy advisor; and Hugh McLaughlan, program manager for policy and governance.

Also joining us today is Constance Hourie, assistant deputy minister of Social Services who also played a role in this program when she was with policing and corrections.

I would like to thank all of you for your collaboration on this program and ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their legislature today.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister in welcoming the officials to the legislature today. It's good to see another program moving forward that is a co-operative program, and you can tell that just by the introduction today. It's when police can work together with the local communities, with Social Services, with Health, then we know that there can be some solutions that are good for all of us. So thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery there's 21 students from Vanier Collegiate in

Moose Jaw. And we'd like to welcome them, along with their teacher, Mr. Doug Panko, and the chaperone James Kleisinger. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Panko is no stranger to this gallery. He brings his students just about every year, but it's always special to see the young people come in. They met with the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow and I before, and there was really no hard questions. Just shows to be a testament of the teaching staff there to fill them up, and I am sure that they'll all get good passing marks. So we'd like to welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce nine very special young people up in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are the nine students from Mrs. Robertson's kindergarten class at the Regina Christian Academy. Give us a wave, boys and girls.

Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by Mrs. Robertson of course and three parent chaperones: Connie Taylor, Alexandria Albert, and Lorena Melnychuk. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these very special young people. Not that the people from Moose Jaw aren't important, but these are first-timers to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce Ed Mantler. Ed has travelled with me several times out recruiting. Ed works for Saskdocs, Mr. Speaker, and has recruited throughout Ireland, Belfast, Dublin, as well as Manchester, and throughout the world. Very skilled at what he does, travelling everywhere to be able to recruit for rural Saskatchewan as well as urban Saskatchewan. So I just wanted to welcome him to his to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'm pleased to introduce a number of guests that have joined us, seated in your gallery, after a historic announcement earlier today, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier today we released the mental health and addictions action plan, a 10-year inter-ministerial action plan to address the complex and often connected nature of mental health and addictions issues in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, joining us today — and I'll maybe ask if they give us a wave when I introduce them — Anita Hopfauf who's the executive director of the Schizophrenia Society of Saskatchewan; Ed Mantler, who members will know and have just heard, I think members know Ed from his time as head of Saskdocs in the province, but he's actually moved on to a new position as vice-president of the Mental Health Commission of Canada; as well as Terry Gudmundson who's a project lead at

the Ministry of Health on the mental health and addictions action plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're also joined in the gallery by our commissioner, Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder and her husband, Kelly Winder. Mr. Speaker, thank you only goes so far but, Mr. Speaker, to these individuals and to all those that provided their voice in the commissioner's work, to the over 4,000 people that submitted to the commissioner in her work, but most especially to Fern for the time that she took away from her own clinical practice and most especially from her own family, Mr. Speaker, I want to, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, thank her for her work as our commissioner. And I'll be introducing a ministerial statement later in the proceedings, but I would ask all members to help me in welcoming these guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister on behalf of the opposition in welcoming these guests. We've got Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder, Ed Mantler, Terry Gudmundson, and Anita Hopfauf here at the legislature today because of this 10-year action plan.

Thank you for all that you do when it comes to advocating for raising awareness, reducing stigma of, and ensuring that governments do what they need to do to ensure families and those who are suffering with mental health issues have what they need to lead the most productive and fulfilling lives. So thank you for all that you do. And Dr. Stockdale Winder, thank you so much for all of the work that you've done in leading this project. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests to their legislature.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition that calls for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers who default on fixed-price contracts with the Saskatchewan government.

And we know that in September this year this government walked away from a new 48-unit, low-income affordable housing project here in Regina, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and then rent the units at full market price. When asked to explain how the government could allow the developer to back out of a fixed-price contract without any penalties, the Minister of Social Services said, and I quote, "You're assuming that there's these desperate homeless people," showing how disconnected this government is from the realities within our communities.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to recognize that there are indeed desperate homeless people in our province and to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing

private developers with whom the government has close relationships to default on fixed-price contracts for affordable housing projects.

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

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents here in Regina and across the province as it relates to the dangerous conditions created by that government on Dewdney Avenue with the heavy-haul truck traffic. Certainly it's important to see a timely completion of the west bypass and, in the interim, there's a requirement for urgent actions to protect community property and people. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned constituents of mine as well as someone from Indian Head. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm proud to stand in my place and present a petition on a second bridge for Prince Albert. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to guarantee that a second bridge that serves central and northern Saskatchewan, and as well as the city of Prince Albert, will receive a commitment from senior governments.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from Estevan, from Saskatoon. And 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 condemning this government's dangerous smart meter program. In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly take the following action: to cause the provincial government to take responsibility for its failure to act on readily available information about safety concerns with its smart meter

program, including through the immediate resignation of the Minister Responsible for SaskPower and a fully independent inquiry into the concerning chain of events that severely compromised the safety of Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Yorkton, Moose Jaw, and Meath Park. I so present.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, I present a petition of people who are opposed to service job privatization in the correctional service, and they're people from across the province. They're concerned that the government wants to privatize the food services in corrections and young offender facilities and that they haven't properly thought through all of the consequences of that. So:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan may be pleased to cause the government to cancel its privatization in the corrections and young offender facilities in Saskatchewan.

And these are signed by people from Saskatoon and Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition for real action on climate change. And the individuals who have signed this petition are concerned that Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in all of Canada, and Saskatchewan's emissions have continued to grow to 74 million megatonnes as reported by Environment Canada in October 2013. Slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses energy efficiency program has set this province on a backwards course. So in the prayer that reads as follows, these individuals are requesting:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact a real plan and allocate appropriate funding in the provincial budget to tackle climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, helping families transition to energy-efficient homes, and encouraging everyone in the province to take real action to protect the environment.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by a number of individuals from Moose Jaw. I so submit.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Member Elected to Canadian Football Hall of Fame

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. In the 100-plus years of Canadian professional football, there have

only ever been 16 players, professional players, who have made it into the CFL [Canadian Football League] Hall of Fame in their first year of eligibility, and none of them were offensive linemen. That all changed on Friday, Mr. Speaker, when the member for Regina Dewdney, on his first year of eligibility, was elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, now his jersey number, number 60, joins 23 and 34 because only Lancaster and Reed have ever been selected to the Hall of Fame, as Riders certainly, in their first year of eligibility.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina Dewdney we know played great football at the university level for the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Huskies before being drafted by the Riders in the '95 CFL draft. He spent 17 years playing for what can objectively be called the best team in the CFL, I think. During this time he won the CFL all-star honours five times. He received the west division laurels on seven occasions. He was named the league's top offensive lineman in '04 and '05 and then in '08, closer to the end of his career, he was the runner-up for that particular recognition.

Mr. Speaker, if you talk to the member for Dewdney, you'd never know about all of this because he's also a humble man. He's a hard-working man. He's a great community leader. Never mind politics — he's a source of pride, not just for Rider nation but for the province of Saskatchewan. We heartily congratulate him on being elected to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame.

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

### World AIDS Day

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly to recognize that today is World AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] Day. Twenty-six years after the first World AIDS Day, there's still much to be done to fight the stigma and exclusion that many people living with HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] face. People who are HIV positive continue to face many barriers in the workforce, in schools, and when finding a place to live.

World AIDS Day is a time for us to commit to face and confront the marginalization of those who are living with HIV and AIDS. Another important part of World AIDS Day involves awareness about prevention. We know that infection rates are declining but there's certainly room for improvement here in Saskatchewan.

One person is infected with HIV every three hours in Canada, but the infection rate in Saskatchewan is three times the national average, and Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS. More needs to be done to ensure that marginalized people have the tools and resources they need to stay healthy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in recognizing World AIDS Day, and I hope that all members will work together to help build a province, a country, and a world free from HIV and AIDS. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Mr. Speaker, today is World AIDS Day. HIV/AIDS touches the lives of many people across the world, and it does remain an issue here in Saskatchewan. Today I want to reinforce our government's commitment to reduce HIV rates in our province and support people living with this illness.

Mr. Speaker, our \$10 million HIV strategy has made a difference in reducing the number of Saskatchewan residents living with HIV and AIDS. The latest statistical report shows a 35 per cent decrease in newly diagnosed cases from 2009 to 2013, even though testing has been increasing. And there have been no cases of mother to child transmission of HIV in the province since 2010.

Mr. Speaker, there is now increased access to testing, treatment, and care. This includes areas of the province where these services were previously not available. Some locations even offer rapid testing that gives preliminary results within minutes. Early detection is vital to living a long and healthy life. If you or someone you love could have contracted HIV, please make sure to get tested.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to thank all partners — health care professionals, front-line service providers, community-based organizations, and others — for their great work to prevent and treat HIV. We will continue working with them to make further progress in addressing HIV. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### SaskBooks Celebrates 25th Anniversary

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, on November 20th I had the honour to attend the 25th anniversary of an important organization for writers and readers in our province, the Saskatchewan Publishers Group or SaskBooks. Authors, publishers, and book lovers came to the Artesian in Regina for a celebration of literature and to hear a keynote address from Regina native Jack David, the president, publisher, and co-founder of ECW publishing in Toronto, one of the most successful publishing houses in Canada.

Members of SaskBooks include Benchmark Press, Coteau Books, DriverWorks Ink, Dunlop Art Gallery, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Gopher Books, Hagios Press, Hear My Heart Books, Indie Ink Publishing, JackPine Press, Les Éditions de la nouvelle plume, the Native Law Centre of U of S, Nature Saskatchewan, Parkland Publishing, Pio-Seelos Books, Purich Publishing, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, Thistledown Press, the U of R [University of Regina] Press, Wild Sage Press, and Your Nickel's Worth Publishing. These publishers print more than 100 books a year for readers in Saskatchewan and around the world.

Thanks go to Heather Nickel, the president of SaskBooks, and the co-executive directors, Jillian Bell and Brenda Niskala, for organizing the event. I hope that all members will join me in congratulating SaskBooks on their 25th anniversary and thank them for all the work they do to tell our province's stories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### 2014 Movember Challenge

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After a month of growing moustaches that I'm sure our respective wives could only describe as awesome, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Agriculture, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, the member from The Battlefords, the member from Saskatoon Greystone, and myself finally get to shave. Or in my case, I need to shave before Danielle lets me in the house on Thursday night.

Mr. Speaker, it was worth it. I'm extremely proud to say that for the 2014 Movember challenge, Team Stewart raised over \$11,000 to go towards research and support for prostate and testicular cancer. Mr. Speaker, we are very thankful to everyone who took part in our campaign and that donated. We could not have raised this money without the support and contributions from the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also take the time to remind everyone that Movember is an awareness campaign as well as a fundraiser. This year an estimated 670 Saskatchewan men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and over 1,000 Canadian men will be diagnosed with testicular cancer. Early detection is vital, and we encourage all men to schedule regular checkups with their doctor. The more awareness we can raise, the more lives we can save.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join in me in thanking the people of Saskatchewan for donating \$11,000 to Team Stewart for this year's Movember challenge. Thank you.

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

### Community Safety Officer Program

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Minister Responsible for Corrections and Policing announced the rollout of the community safety officer program that provides an alternative enforcement option to communities in this province. Going forward, every municipality can apply to the ministry for the ability to employ a special constable in their community. CSOs [community safety officer] will work in collaboration with local police addressing low risk to harm, high priority policing needs. This includes patrolling streets with speed limits no greater than 90 kilometres, enforcing liquor laws and bylaws, and serving as a crime prevention community liaison.

North Battleford piloted the new program and has become the model for other interested communities. CSOs will free up the police in participating communities which will allow them to focus on cases that are more complex and higher risk.

Mr. Speaker, our government has not worked alone to develop this program. SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] identified the need for this kind of police coverage. They provided value input throughout the

entire process. Saskatchewan Polytechnic is also working with us on finalizing a six-week core curriculum. Graduates are expected to be working by mid-2015. Our government is committed to working with communities and our policing partners to find new approaches to reduce crime in Saskatchewan. This new program provides another option to keep our communities safe.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly join with me in thanking those who helped develop this important program. Your fine work will serve as a model for other jurisdictions going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Government Programs Support Education

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Education Savings Week and to remind families of the benefits of saving for their children's post-secondary education. Earlier this year our government officially launched the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings program.

Mr. Speaker, SAGES provides financial incentives for families to save for their children's education. Under the program, the Government of Saskatchewan provides a grant of 10 per cent on contributions made since January 1st, 2013. This funding is put into a registered education savings program to a maximum of \$250 per child per year. I am pleased to report to date over 10,000 Saskatchewan children have received just over \$2 million under the program. We also expect the increase of the number of families signing up for SAGES as more financial institutions participate in the program.

In addition to SAGES, we have also introduced the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship to encourage high school graduates to pursue post-secondary education. This scholarship has been given to over 10,000 students. And after post-secondary students graduate, they become eligible for even further financial support through the graduate retention program. To date more than 50,000 post-secondary graduates have benefited from the graduate retention program.

Mr. Speaker, our government has made a strong commitment to post-secondary education. I would ask all members of this Assembly and encourage their constituents to look into these programs that are designated to ensure that post-secondary education is affordable for all Saskatchewan families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Monitoring of Long-Term Care Patients

**Mr. Broten:** — Art Healey lives in the Rose Villa long-term care facility. He has Alzheimer's disease. He recently wandered out of the facility in freezing-cold weather without proper clothing. His wander-band bracelet was working, but he was still outside in the cold for more than half an hour before he was

discovered. Art's family is very worried that their father or another senior in care will end up freezing to death before this government finally starts paying attention to the problem.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier. Art's family wrote to the Premier and the Rural Health minister; what has the government done about it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, in a general sense when we get these inquiries as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] or members of Executive Council, we want to find out answers on behalf of the family to inquire as to these events, Mr. Speaker. That would be, I would hope, I would hope that was the case with Art's family.

I would say that in a more, a much more broader sense, a more general sense, the government has responded with respect to the increased needs in long-term care with investments both in the re-opening of new beds, Mr. Speaker, capital renovations of some existing facilities and, perhaps even more importantly, investing in human resources. I think now 750 more people working on the frontlines providing long-term care for roughly the same complement of patients.

I think we've heard over the last number of weeks, by questions raised by the opposition and frankly input that we are receiving from our MLAs, that more is needed. Mr. Speaker, we've responded with some emergency funding in respect of that. The budget process is under way currently, and though we expect this next budget to be a tight one, long-term care needs to be a priority.

Mr. Speaker, that's the message to the government. It's one that we've heard loud and clear.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we saw a Throne Speech that devoted no new resources for seniors' care. And families are concerned, families like Art's. This is not the first time that Art has been found wandering outside of this facility or the one that he was in prior to this. So it's understandable, Mr. Speaker, that his family is tremendously concerned. In the letter that Art's daughter sent to the Premier and the Rural Health minister she said this: "The problem is the lack of adequate staffing at these two facilities which allows for exits to not be monitored for patients and residents with this condition."

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Does he dispute what Art's family is saying, or does he recognize that short-staffing is putting the lives of people with dementia at risk this winter?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to note that officials have looked into this very specific case at the brand-new, relatively brand-new long-term care facility that our government has funded at Rosetown. Mr. Speaker, I can

inform members of the House that officials of the region have informed a Ministry of Health official that the region has contacted the security company, and a representative is coming to the facility to have a look at this particular . . . at the door, at the system, at the entry and exit systems and the WanderGuard alarm system. So clearly there's a challenge here that needs to be looked at.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's also been noted by the staff that work at the facility, at least what I'm given to understand, that this particular door isn't always latching closed. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think appropriate signage is put in place and greater vigilance from the staff to ensure that that's closed, Mr. Speaker, and securely so. Between these two things, Mr. Speaker, we'd hope that the situation would be relieved in what is a brand-new facility, Mr. Speaker. But obviously this would be a real concern to the family, not just of Art, but others that are in care at this particular home.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the issue that the family identifies is the short-staffing that would allow someone with dementia to exit the building. The family is clear. They state that Art's wander band was on and that it was working. The problem was the lack of workers to notice, Mr. Speaker.

Here's what the family says, Mr. Speaker, and the Premier and Rural Health minister received this letter, so it shouldn't be a surprise. "Talking with other family members of current residents, this escaping is not just isolated incidents. My father is not the only person that is getting out due to the lack of staff monitoring these exits."

Mr. Speaker, my specific question to the Premier: does the government track these incidents? How many seniors with dementia have been found wandering outside of their care facilities in freezing cold temperatures?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I do want to state for the record, with respect to the member's preamble that associates the entire accountability or responsibility for this particular issue with the staffing there, that that's not the information that the region is reporting, that the facility is reporting. Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear about that here in the House. The WanderGuard alarm is only triggered, is only triggered if the door is closed when a resident with a WanderGuard bracelet attempts to leave. There has been a problem with this particular door.

And so, Mr. Speaker, both by having it more readily staffed but also voluntarily staffed and also better signage and perhaps some work on the door itself, I think there's hope that the matter can be resolved. But we have . . . The member is right. The WanderGuard bracelet is working. The challenge is it's not set off if the door is not securely locked. And that is the challenge with this particular, very specific incident, Mr. Speaker.

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



**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, there needs to be enough staff in place in order to ensure that doors are closed, in order to ensure that the right information, Mr. Speaker, is acted upon when there is a problem. And, Mr. Speaker, this isn't an isolated incident. In speaking with Art's family, Mr. Speaker, this happened in the summer, and they know of other residents, Mr. Speaker, that this has happened to.

Art's daughter, Millicent, has many concerns about the quality of care in Rose Villa and about serious flaws with the new facility. But her biggest concern, Mr. Speaker, is that a resident with dementia is going to freeze to death because there aren't enough workers to notice when a resident leaves the facility and is wandering around outside.

And she goes on to say in her letter, Mr. Speaker, "I implore you to please address and correct this serious issue before someone simply walks out this winter and freezes to death." Mr. Speaker, but the family did not receive a reply from the Premier. The Rural Health minister's staff simply informed her that they would pass the concerns on to the facility administrator. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: how is this acceptable? What will it take for this government to take this seriously?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly we take this type of situation seriously in long-term care. Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated, the region has identified that there is an issue with the WanderGuard system. What happens, Mr. Speaker, if the door is not properly latched, even if the WanderGuard bracelet is working, if the door hasn't been latched and somebody does leave the facility that has the bracelet on, it will not trigger it.

So the officials with the region are bringing out officials from the company to see if there's any way to modify the system. But they're also ensuring that there's signage up so that staff, that family members coming to visit, and volunteers of the facility know that those doors need to be secured when they do leave so that we don't have the situation such as this where a resident gets out without it setting off their WanderGuard system. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, we do take this serious.

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

#### Staff Levels in Health Care

**Ms. Chartier:** — Those on the front lines of health care and seniors' care tell us that a big part of the short-staffing problem is that this government routinely doesn't replace workers who call in sick and workers who are on maternity leave and disability leave. Internal government documents show that this is a deliberate strategy. Professionals like hospital pharmacists say this approach is threatening patient safety, and nurses and care aids say this approach is severely undermining the quality of care they are able to provide.

To the minister: will he admit that this government has deliberately created much of the short-staffing challenge in health care, and does he recognize that it's hurting patient safety

and quality of care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will admit that this government has substantially funded health regions to a level never seen before in this province, Mr. Speaker, so that they can do the good work of hiring over 400 more doctors in this province, Mr. Speaker, of 2,400 nursing positions, Mr. Speaker, be it the RNs [registered nurse], LPNs [licensed practical nurse], RPNs [registered psychiatric nurse], Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the story that I think the member opposite is referencing, Mr. Speaker, I can say that regions believe that attracting and keeping qualified health providers in all categories, Mr. Speaker, is a priority. It certainly is a priority to this government. As it relates directly to pharmacists, RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] had approximately 50 pharmacists. There are, I believe, three to four positions that they are trying to fill, haven't yet been able to fill, Mr. Speaker, but as the RQHR official said, "The thought that we would actually not hire somebody if there was somebody available is just wrong."

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Internal government documents show that the senior health administrators get bonuses if they preside over short-staffing. They actually get more money if they don't fill vacancies and if they don't replace sick workers. And health care professionals and front-line workers tell us this is putting patient safety at risk, and it's undermining the quality of care. To the minister: how can he justify paying bonuses for that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the case. Senior officials, CEOs [chief executive officer] are not paid bonuses for not filling vacancies, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, CEOs are tasked with providing the day-to-day management of the health regions and fortunately, Mr. Speaker, under this government, they're doing so with an average of 52 per cent more dollars to fill those vacancies, Mr. Speaker.

For example, Saskatoon Health Region under the former government, their last year in office, \$640 million, Mr. Speaker, was their budget. This year, Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion in funding, a 57 per cent increase. Mr. Speaker, this has allowed the health regions and our Cancer Agency . . . which by the way, the Cancer Agency has an increase in their budget 98 per cent from when the members opposite were in the government. This is what has allowed health regions to fill those positions, Mr. Speaker, whether they be nursing, whether they be physicians, whether they be the allied professions. Mr. Speaker, that's a record on this side of the House, as opposed to the members opposite.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — The Santa Maria care aids who spoke out last

Monday were clear that they're increasingly working short-staffed. They blame this deliberate short-staffing strategy. And contrary to this government's spin, the care aids say that the only increase in workers they have seen are what they call overseers and paper-pushers. More money for bloated administration, but the front lines are starved.

To the minister: will he commit today to review this policy of deliberately short-staffing our health care facilities, and will he stop giving bonuses to senior administrators who make the problem worse?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know, the member opposite will know that in long-term care we have about 8,700 residents, not unlike what the members opposite faced — not earlier in their government because we know that 1,200 beds were closed, Mr. Speaker — but towards the end of their government, about 8,700 residents in this province. But, Mr. Speaker, in long-term care alone on the front lines, special care aids are up 9.7 per cent. LPNs are up 37 per cent. RNs in long-term care is up 9.3 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that brings us to nearly 750 more front line, full-time equivalents from when the members opposite were the government.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that we take very seriously. That's why we have added to the front lines in health care and in long-term care, unlike the members opposite that closed beds and laid off staff, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Contracting Process for Lean Consultants

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, last week we learned that this government paid John Black to develop its lean pet project. And it paid John Black himself to pitch himself to be the consultant for that project and then, not surprisingly, it handed over the \$40-million project to John Black.

To the minister: is he still pretending that this was a competitive process? And if so, which other consultants did the government pay to pitch themselves and to develop their very own projects?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we did look at a number of different companies during the competitive process... [inaudible interjection]... Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition only has to go to Public Accounts. He will see that Kaizen Institute Lean Advisors was paid \$200,000 in 2010-2011 fiscal year. Lean Advisors, Mr. Speaker, in 2011-2012 was paid \$95,000, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite don't have to believe me in the fact that we did go out and in fact contract with other consulting organizations in developing this plan, Mr. Speaker. They only have to look at the public accounts of the province.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, we've received the original RFP [request for proposal] that that government put out, and get this: it had a note meant for John Black written right into it. No wonder local lean consultants didn't even bother to bid on the contract because they knew exactly what this government was up to.

To the minister: how can he possibly pretend that this was truly a competitive process when there was a note to John Black written right into the request for proposal?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I would appreciate the member opposite tabling what he's referencing to, because you how it works in this House, Mr. Speaker, when members opposite bring to light, Mr. Speaker, issues. We always have to do a little bit of fact checking on this side of the House just to see exactly what in fact the note said.

But, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of groups that were hired... that were looked at all through this process, Mr. Speaker. We looked at organizations that ThedaCare, for example, had used which was not JBA [John Black and Associates], Mr. Speaker. There was a competitive process. That's how it was allocated.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to paving the way for JBA to get a fat cash cow contract, this government did just about everything except put out the RFP on February 14th with a sweetheart note to John Black saying, be mine, valentine. Other potential lean consultants asked about the note to John Black that was contained in the RFP, and here's what the government said back: "They are irrelevant and should have been removed. Please disregard."

So this government paid John Black to develop its lean pet project. It paid him to pitch himself to be the contract for that project, and it left notes to him right in the RFP. We are supposed to believe that the process which led to the hiring of this \$40 million American lean consultant was all above board and fully competitive. To the minister: how can he possibly expect us to believe that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, considering the fact that there were multiple bidders in the RFP that actually would have looked at the RFP and then decided to put forward their bid, Mr. Speaker, that's how I know that it was a competitive process. It was a competitive process. We looked at a number of different organizations prior to the four-year contract, Mr. Speaker, but as well during that RFP process, and did make the decision to go with JBA.

[14:15]

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

### Costs and Benefits of Carbon Capture and Storage Project

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The SaskPower minister has sent his head of carbon capture and storage on so many out-of-province trips that the travel bill now adds up to a whopping \$388,000. To the SaskPower minister: why?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, the Boundary dam 3 project is one that has been advanced by this government, given the fact that Saskatchewan has some 300 years of coal supply down in the southeast part of our province. It is with respect to the fact that the federal government has implemented tougher emissions regulations around coal-fired power plants. And Boundary dam is now up and running and operating just fine.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of all of that, we have indeed promoted the project around the world. There were some 250 guests at the opening of the project down in Estevan here recently, Mr. Speaker. They are there because they believe it is one of the leading projects in the entire world around carbon capture and storage. We have promoted it and yes, we will continue to promote it.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, over the last five years, the SaskPower minister has sent his head of carbon capture and storage on more and more out-of-province trips, so much so that the annual travel bills have increased by 266 per cent. Last year alone, the out-of-province travel tab was over \$122,000. My question is for the SaskPower minister. Where exactly did the minister send his official, and will he table detailed itineraries for those trips today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, SaskPower has received invitations from the world over for people representing SaskPower to attend functions, to speak about the carbon capture project in China, in the United States, in Germany and Brazil and in India — literally the world over they have received invitations to — because around the world they recognize that SaskPower is the leading company in terms of carbon capture and storage. And they want to know from the experts at SaskPower about how to build these facilities.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the minister is not willing to table that information. It's a simple question, and he didn't provide an answer.

Recently in the *Financial Times* of London, SaskPower's head of carbon capture and storage says that carbon capture has major viability challenges and that SaskPower couldn't even give a rough estimate for how much it costs to generate electricity out of Boundary dam.

So to the SaskPower minister: is it really worth hundreds of

thousands of dollars of public money to send a senior official around the world saying that carbon capture has major viability challenges and that the government doesn't even know the basic costs associated with it yet?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Just as the Minister of Health indicated earlier, I think we'll want to fact check about what was actually said. That member has a tendency of wanting to put words in people's mouths that were never said, and there's evidence of that on the floor of the legislature for all of us to see from before, Mr. Speaker.

This is a great project. It's recognized around the world. People from around the world have come and viewed the facility. Literally company after company after company are interested in the technology that is proven out by SaskPower with respect to this project. It's a fantastic project, and we would invite the members opposite to get on board.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the SaskPower minister spent nearly \$45,000 on an international trip focused on carbon capture. These travel bills just keep piling up, but what's not piling up is any transparency or accountability. This government is still refusing to table its 30-year analysis of the viability of its Boundary dam carbon capture project.

So to the SaskPower minister: has the government not done that analysis, or is it just trying to keep that analysis hidden from Saskatchewan people?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, the travel related to this project that is done by myself or by our ministry is publicly released. It's not hidden in any way, shape, or form. As a result of the changes that have been made in travel disclosure in this legislature, all of that information is available so anyone can take a look at it, Mr. Speaker, and that is the appropriate thing that has been done.

And that is in sharp contrast, sharp contrast to the way members opposite used to travel around the world. And I would just invite the members to take a look at the travel related to the member from Lakeview back over there if you want to talk about misuse of travel dollars in this legislature.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, in a letter dated November 12th from SaskPower's vice-president of resource planning, it says that any analysis of the Boundary dam project must be done over a 30-year period. And with a project of this size — 1.4 or \$1.6 billion, depending on who you're talking to — surely the government has done that analysis. It must at least have projections. Even if it's a preliminary analysis, the Saskatchewan people deserve to see it. So to the SaskPower minister: why won't he table that analysis today? What is it he

doesn't want Saskatchewan people to see?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, the project opened a few short weeks ago here in Saskatchewan. Now we're in the testing phase of the facility. They will be doing a complete analysis in terms of the whole project, the costs related to it and all of those kinds of things. And at an appropriate time in the future when that analysis is ready, we'll be happy to present it to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I would just ask, when we're on the topic of travel, if the member opposite would care to lean across and ask the member from Lakeview about travel. Perhaps he would want to talk about the Conference of Western Attorneys General when he wasn't the attorney general at all, Mr. Speaker. Billed seven nights of hotels to the people of Saskatchewan, had three guests stay in the hotel room — a bill of a total \$2,399 was billed to the taxpayers of this province. And at that time, Chris Axworthy was the minister responsible at the time and not that member. So when you're asking about travel in this legislature, perhaps you should lean across the aisle and ask him about his travel.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — No answers from the minister, Mr. Speaker. We're asking about the financial analysis for a \$1.6 billion project that affects the ratepayers of Saskatchewan. There's no answer coming from this minister.

The government is sending its head of carbon capture around the world at a cost of \$338,000. The minister's taking \$45,000 trips halfway around the world, all supposedly to tell the Saskatchewan story, a story that according to the *Financial Times* of London isn't nearly as compelling as this government likes to claim.

There are major viability challenges, and the government won't even be upfront with the basic costs associated with the project. So no wonder more and more people are starting to question this project. This government needs to release the full 30-year economic analysis so Saskatchewan people can judge the true merits of this project. To the minister: why won't he do that?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, companies from around the world, governments from around the world have looked at this project, and all have been in agreement that this is a leading-edge project for the entire world. This project has the equivalent of taking 250,000 cars off the highways here in Saskatchewan. It is a great project and certainly something that this government is very proud of.

Now something that the members opposite maybe aren't quite as proud of, I suspect, Mr. Speaker, and that's when they were in government opposite, they lost money hand over fist when it came to projects. If you just . . . A fibre optics company in Chicago, \$16 million down the drain. And then there's the old granddaddy of them all which was SPUDCO [Saskatchewan

Potato Utility Development Company]. Who in the world . . . As a kid, every kid in the country put potatoes in the ground and then harvested those potatoes. But it was only the special hand of the NDP [New Democratic Party] that could lose money hand over fist doing that.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

### Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan Report

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today our government took a step forward on our journey to improve our response to people struggling with mental health and addictions issues. Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder, the commissioner of the mental health and addictions action plan formally submitted her report to government.

In preparing the report, Dr. Stockdale Winder and her team conducted extensive public consultations across the province. The commissioner and her team heard from over 4,000 individuals on how to improve mental health and addictions services.

The response is a reminder of just how important this work is to Saskatchewan families. Mr. Speaker, mental health and addictions issues directly affect one out of every five Saskatchewan residents. Indirectly we know that they affect many more, as parents, family members, and caregivers feel the impact of mental health or addictions issues on their loved ones.

The mental health and addictions action plan calls for a more coordinated and timely response to people who are struggling with mental health and addictions issues. Mr. Speaker, our government endorses this report, and the recommendations will guide our efforts to improve mental health and addictions services over the next 10 years.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're already making improvements across the system, and the recommendations affirm that direction. For example, the police and crisis team in Saskatoon teams up a mental health professional with a police officer on calls where individuals are experiencing a mental health crisis.

The action plan to address bullying and cyberbullying is supporting Saskatchewan children and youth to feel safe and accepted at schools, in their community, and online. And when the new Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford integrated correctional facility opens in 2018, it will better meet the mental health needs of patients who require in-patient rehabilitation. It will also enhance the province's ability to provide programming to offenders with mental health issues. And the community mobilization model, or Hub and COR [centre of responsibility], provides coordinated and integrated responses to support individuals and families.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, I want to thank Dr. Stockdale Winder for her dedication and leadership as commissioner of the mental health and addictions action plan. Addressing and improving services across many sectors is complex work, and it will take the efforts of many ministries and organizations collaboratively working together. By working

together, I believe that we can make a difference in the lives of people of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say thank you to the minister for sending his comments over a little bit earlier. But I think the big thank you needs to go to Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder who's put a great deal of work into this effort. A big thank you needs to go to all the organizations, some of them are represented here today, all the organizations who provided their input into this, developing the strategy, and last but not least, all those individuals and families who shared their stories. Those individuals who have mental health challenges, it's not always easy, Mr. Speaker, to come forward and talk about what your own experience has been and what could be different, and to those families who in times were sharing stories of loved ones who they've lost to mental health and addictions.

This plan, I've had a brief opportunity to review it, Mr. Speaker. It is a fulsome plan, Mr. Speaker. I think some of the things that jumped out at me at first read are the piece around housing, the piece around seniors' action, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we don't have . . . We will have an increasing number of seniors who are in long-term care who have very little or no mental health support, Mr. Speaker, the issue that we struggle with, that we've raised in this legislature and this committee, the issue of people living in acute mental health facilities, Mr. Speaker, sometimes for years at a time in a hospital setting. People are living in hospital settings because there aren't the resources in the community for them to have a proper house, Mr. Speaker.

A couple of other things that jumped out at me at first blush, Mr. Speaker, is the piece around emergency rooms and making emergency rooms better places, but access for those who are in crisis, better access for those who are in crisis. Anybody who is experiencing suicidal ideation or is in psychosis, going into an emergency room is an awful experience, Mr. Speaker.

Australia . . . I know Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder mentioned this in her report, but there's a really great option, a third-door option for mental health, Mr. Speaker. So I appreciate all the work that this commission has put, that Dr. Stockdale Winder and others have put into this. I'd like to see, I'm eager and hopeful that this government . . .

**The Speaker:** — Time has elapsed.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 170 — *The Fire Safety Act*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Intergovernmental Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved first reading of Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly

to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Principal Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

[14:30]

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Next sitting of the House.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to put forward a motion regarding changes to standing committees.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to make changes to committees. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## MOTIONS

### Committee Membership

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Colleen Young be substituted for that of Darryl Hickie on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved:

That the name of Colleen Young be substituted for that of Darryl Hickie on the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Darryl Hickie be substituted for that of Bob Bjornerud on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved:

That the name of Darryl Hickie be substituted for that of Bob Bjornerud on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 164** — *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and move second reading of *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*.

Mr. Speaker, the government takes seriously the responsibility to protect the privacy of people's personal health information. These amendments to *The Health Information Protection Act*, or HIPA, will help strengthen the protection of personal health records and they will increase the accountability of trustees and employees in protecting those records.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments result from our support of the recommendations of the health records protection working group. This past spring, the group made 11 recommendations. Four of these recommendations require legislative changes.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments to HIPA include a strict liability offence. Mr. Speaker, if records are found abandoned or unsecured, the trustee responsible for the records will need to show that they took all reasonable steps to prevent their abandonment. This change means there won't be a need to prove that the trustee intended to abandon the records.

The next amendment makes it an individual offence for wilful disclosure of personal information. This makes it clear that HIPA offences for intentional disclosure of personal health information apply not only to trustees but to the individuals who are in the employment of trustees, or employees of trustees.

The third amendment is a snooping offence. A specific offence will be established for inappropriate use of personal health information by employees who access information without a need for that information.

And the final amendment includes taking control of abandoned or unsecured records. A specific provision will be added to HIPA for a system to be put in place to quickly respond to a discovery of abandoned or unsecured records and to take control of those records.

In addition to these amendments, we will examine the other recommendations made by the group, including creating a single repository for abandoned records, making private record storage solutions available, and clarifying the definition of trustee for physician practice arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and acknowledge the health records protection working group for their many hours of work. I appreciate the recommendations that they put forward to ensure that patient records are kept secure and confidential. We share the working group's commitment to ensuring that patient records are kept secure and confidential.

Mr. Speaker, the government is providing leadership in making the changes needed to strengthen the privacy of personal health records of Saskatchewan residents, and this is another example of how we continue to put the patient first in all that we do. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 164, *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm once again pleased to stand in my place to give the opposition's perspective as the first opportunity to discuss this particular bill. Obviously Bill 164 is a sensitive spot or a sensitive issue for the provincial government, as we've seen evidence in the past of how the provincial government had not secured nor protected a lot of the personal health information of many Saskatchewan residents, Mr. Speaker.

This is obviously something that is a very serious matter. And the people of Saskatchewan should know that when you look at *The Health Information Protection Act* itself, while at the outset it seems that it's really something that the government has taken seriously, we have seen evidence over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, where people's private health information have been found in public places such as dumpsters, easily accessible to a number of people that may be wanting to snoop around and certainly people that might want to use that information for their own purposes, whatever those purposes might be.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we're not going to do is be critical of the committee themselves. I think the committee is trying to find the ways and means in which they are able to protect people's private information. Some of the issues I think are really important when we talk about people's private health information, Mr. Speaker, is to really begin to ask the government some very serious questions around *The Health Information Protection Act*.

For example, if you look at the number of clinics, Mr. Speaker, the number of private clinics, the number of different types of health clinics that are out there, whether it's a walk-in clinic or whether it's a specialty clinic or whether it's a public clinic, Mr. Speaker, whether it's a doctor's office, there's a wide variety of people in the province of Saskatchewan that have health information records from a number of patients and, Mr. Speaker, I would assume that many of these patients may have seen a doctor a number of times over their lives and may have gotten to a number of different organizations or different entities that provide health care, whether it be a public hospital or whether it be a private clinic.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's really important to begin to determine all

the medical information that is out there from the variety of sources, whether it's clinics or hospitals or doctors' offices, whatever the case might be, or labs. Mr. Speaker, it's important for us to try and find out how much information is out there, and by that I mean how many different groups or organizations or doctor's office or clinics, how many people do keep records. Is it 1,000 different entities? Is it 20,000? This is some of the information I think is really, really important for us to try and determine as to how many people out there are keeping record of different patients upon their visit.

And when I say are keeping records, Mr. Speaker, obviously I'm talking about all the entities, whether it be a doctor's office, whether it be a walk-in clinic, whether it be a specialty service or whether it be the cancer ward or whether it be a medical checkup, whatever the case may be. A lot of people in the province of Saskatchewan go to a number of sources for medical appointments and medical tests and so on and so forth, so we need to know how many organizations out there in Saskatchewanland really, truly, actually keep records of people's private health information. And that's a number I think is really important and really relevant to this particular Act, Mr. Speaker.

Had the minister come along and indicated that there's 20 or 30,000 different organizations out there, including doctors' offices, that do collect medical records, at least it would give the people of Saskatchewan, and certainly ourselves as opposition, an indication of what numbers are out there in terms of who's keeping private medical information of the patients that they're seeing.

Now I'm assuming, Mr. Speaker — and this is why it's important to ask these questions right at the outset — I'm assuming that some of the medical records could be as simple as an X-ray. It could be as significant as exploratory surgery. It could be a number of different ailments, whether it's arthritis or whether it's a cancer test, whatever the case may be, Mr. Speaker, which particular processes or which particular health services that people need are involved with this particular process. Are they all keeping these records, Mr. Speaker?

And that's one of the most important lessons that we want to implore the people out there, is to find out exactly all the information that you need to find out from legislation of this sort.

And the important first step is to determine who's keeping all the medical health records in the province of Saskatchewan. Which organizations are they, and how many different records have they got at their offices? And this is really, really important, Mr. Speaker, because if you're not familiar with the numbers, if you're not familiar with what information they're keeping, how could we begin to track all that information to *The Health Information Protection Act* if we don't know all the people that are providing these services to a number of Saskatchewan people?

Now, Mr. Speaker, as you know, if one were to go into . . . Some of the examples I would use is, we know a lot of people that travel to the city. Sometimes there's an emergency situation where they go to the hospital. Sometimes they'll go into a walk-in clinic. Sometimes it's for a number of different

procedures, whether it's a drug test or whether it's just a health test overall. There's just all these services out there, Mr. Speaker. And exactly what information are they entitled to keep, and how long is that information kept at that particular place?

And I understand from discussions with a number of different organizations out there that if you have a doctor that you can consistently and regularly see, then that doctor, does that particular doctor's office retain the rights to all your information, all the files that he has on you? Because I understand from, the way the system works is that if you're seeing a particular doctor and you're the patient, that all the files and all the information attached to your business to that particular doctor becomes his or her property. And I don't say it in a negative way, Mr. Speaker, but obviously those files and that record, information, is the property of the doctor in question. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to clarify that.

So in saying that, what discussions has the government had in terms of dealing with the Saskatchewan Medical Association to ensuring that they do have the intent of strengthening the protection of the health records of the province of Saskatchewan? And are these doctors engaged, Mr. Speaker? Are they engaged to the extent that they should be engaged? And these are some of the questions that we often ask in this particular process.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hear the minister speaking about strengthening the private health records information to ensure people aren't out there digging out a number of private, confidential health issues that a number of people don't want public. And rightfully so, Mr. Speaker. A lot of people don't want to share their health information with anybody because, quite frankly, it's nobody's business. It's between them and their doctor.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you see, when you see as we've seen in the last couple of years, when we see a lot of medical records found in dumpsters in back alleys, that's not the proper disposal method, Mr. Speaker. That's not the manner in which people's private, confidential health information should be taken care of. This is obviously a huge concern, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we've got to find out who has these records to begin with and making sure that they know that there are some serious penalties attached to disposing of records in an unsecure manner and an irresponsible manner, Mr. Speaker.

And again, that goes back to my earlier point. We have got to know who's keeping records and how many records are out there because, as we know, people use a wide variety of services and a number of doctors. And do they all have records of the patients that they see, and how long do they keep them?

So, Mr. Speaker, the first thing that we would ask in this particular process is, how many people are involved with the collection of health information, and what is their current disposal policy? That's really, really important. How long do they keep these records of different people that come to see them? And are the records all-encompassing in terms of any visits, whether it's to a specialist or whether it's for a dental checkup or whether it's for cancer screening, whatever the case may be? An individual could use a wide variety of services and

also see a number of doctors and specialists.

[14:45]

So all these people that you're engaged with, Mr. Speaker, who keeps those records, and how long do they keep those records? And that's one of the key things that we want to point out as information that we think would be very, very valuable in determining the effectiveness of Bill 164, which is *An Act to amend The Health Information Protection Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, once you begin to clear the picture in terms of who's collecting all this information and data on different people that use health care systems, the minister talked about three or four particular issues: one of them being around a liability offence, one being around wilful disclosure by a trustee or by employees. There's also provisions in the Act around the snooping offence and making sure that people aren't going into files that they're not allowed and authorized to do. And, Mr. Speaker, they also talk about taking control, taking control of abandoned or unsecured records. We think that's obviously something that should be done, and also looking at a single service in which you can turn all the medical information to be destroyed or to be taken care of appropriately so no information is left from that particular service. And, Mr. Speaker, the last bit of information that the minister spoke about was around the whole qualifications and role and responsibilities of the trustees.

So this committee that put forward some of these recommendations around HIPA, they've done some incredibly good work at the outset. I think they've gotten a lot of information in front of the public. We need more information, Mr. Speaker, and it would be really, obviously a great starting process for us in the opposition to have some of the questions answered that I asked previously.

So, Mr. Speaker, again on the liability offence, we need to find out, what are the parameters of prosecution in the event that somebody does not properly dispose of medical records, as we've seen evidence of a couple of years ago? We found just stacks and stacks of private health information of different people from different areas — not just the city but from all different areas — that were dumped into a dumpster, Mr. Speaker. And that's not responsible. That's not a responsible position to take. In fact it's really, really irresponsible in every way, shape, or form, and we need to find out exactly which organizations have done this on a continual basis and to pay extra close attention to those individuals that certainly do this in that particular fashion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is the provisions around the wilful disclosure. Obviously employees or trustees that may have access to all the medical records, we want to make sure that . . . What are the offences for that? Is there fines? Is there incarceration? Is there job loss? It'd be really, obviously important for us to know, from our perspective, those details, you know, of this Act. And it all goes as well to the snooping offence. Like who would be charged with that? What are the prosecution terms? And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we have to go back to the earlier point that I made. How many thousands of people have access to thousands of records of hundreds of visits by many, many people of Saskatchewan?

It is a complex bill. It is a complex problem. It's a complex situation because if you were to extrapolate the amount of people that use health services by the amount of doctors that are out there, by the amount of services that are out there, you can see that this involves millions of documentation and, Mr. Speaker, by a number of people. And you can see that this is certainly a major, major problem that needs to be addressed if you're going to really protect people's medical private health records.

And, Mr. Speaker, we need to see that detail. We need to see exactly how many documents we're dealing with, how many doctors we're dealing with, which specialists we're dealing with. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to know that in the event that there is irresponsible use or wilful negative use of this information by an employee or a trustee or anybody in a medical profession, what are the liabilities and what are the offences to be described in this Act? And that's going to be one of the most important things that we want to find out.

And how was the consultation done? And again going back to my earlier statement, Mr. Speaker, has there been engagement with the medical community organizations like the Saskatchewan Medical Association; the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses association; SUN, the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, Mr. Speaker; as well as the HSAS [Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan]? All the different organizations and groups that are involved with the health field, Mr. Speaker, have we consulted them and have we spoken to them?

So, Mr. Speaker, the HIPA bill itself talks about strengthening the protection of medical records of the province of Saskatchewan. The minister alluded to a number of recommendations they got from the committee, and we looked at the information that was presented. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more questions we have on this particular Act.

And that's why it's important to tell the people that are out there that may be listening, if you have any particular concerns, information, or processes that could help us along to ensure that we're not finding medical records in dumpsters anymore, that information would be valuable to us as the opposition, valuable to the government I think overall, but most valued by some of the patients whose information might be compromised. So we would encourage people that are listening to do their part, to come along, and to do what is necessary to do the best we can to protect people's private health records.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, a lot of areas that we're speaking of. We need more information, more consultation, more focus on finding the solution to this particular bill, and obviously we would do so over the next several months to make sure people have that opportunity to participate. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 164, which is *An Act to amend The Health Information Protection Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 164, *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*. Is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.



**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 165 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2014 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. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise and introduce the second reading of Bill No. 165, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*.

*The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997* established the foundation for the regulation and licensing of alcohol and gaming products in Saskatchewan.

The federal *Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act*, or IILA, governs the movement of beverages across . . . alcohol across provinces' borders. The IILA provides that most alcohol imported into a province must be imported by an agency of the government into which the alcohol is being imported; however, recent amendments to the IILA enables each province to allow direct-to-consumer alcohol shipments.

In August our Premier announced that our government would bring forward legislation to allow Saskatchewan residents to have some alcohol shipped directly to them. This move not only provides opportunities for consumers to seek out and purchase unique products; it also demonstrates Saskatchewan's continuing commitment to removing barriers to interprovincial trade within Canada.

The changes being proposed in the Act will allow for implementation of this policy direction. Specifically it will allow Saskatchewan to enter into agreements with Canada and other provinces regarding direct-to-consumer alcohol shipments; allows individuals to import alcohol for personal consumption from other provinces where such agreements exist; and create regulation-making authority regarding issues such as type and amount of alcohol, type of seller, and province from which the product originated.

With this bill, we are setting the framework to allow Saskatchewan consumers access to a much broader selection of Canadian wines and craft spirits than previously available. Implementation of these changes will also require amendments to *The Alcohol Control Regulations, 2013*. I am pleased to take the first step towards implementing by introducing this bill.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and move second reading of Bill 165, the Act to amend *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act*. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 165, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 2014 (No. 2)*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to stand in my place to present our initial

comments on Bill 165. And, Mr. Speaker, at the outset it looks as if the whole process of allowing people in Saskatchewan to have direct delivery of alcohol to their homes is something that has been pressing for the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And this is one of the things that's really important is that we have to begin to ask the questions of, how many different organizations and how many different people have asked this service to be extended to the province? It is something that is really important. This is important information overall that we would need to know, Mr. Speaker. Has there been a demand for it? Has there been a market for it?

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's really important is that we want to be able to talk to organizations that have traditionally been involved with the sale of liquor in the province of Saskatchewan, whether it is the Hotels Association of Saskatchewan or whether it's the local breweries, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] senior management as well that are involved with this particular process as well.

It's really, really important, Mr. Speaker, to know that every action that the government undertakes, there is always a reaction. So obviously we need to find out which organizations or which individuals and what was the demand for this particular service that compelled the province of Saskatchewan to put forward changes to SLGA in the sense of doing away with the requirement that IILA had in place previously when they noted that most alcohol imported to a region — in this case Saskatchewan — must have the required support of Saskatchewan.

Well that provision is gone, Mr. Speaker, and according to the minister, they're able to import spirits and alcohol from different provinces I'm assuming. There was no mention of different countries. Generally the comments were confined to Canada, so I'm assuming that many of the alcohol that's being shipped directly to people's homes here in the province of Saskatchewan is only impacted by the federal, or by the country of Canada. So we need to know if that's the case and to ascertain that and to determine that. Questions of that sort must be answered.

So, Mr. Speaker, one would certainly look at this, and there's two initial thoughts that I would have on this particular bill. When you look at the movement of alcohol between the different provinces, that now it is easier to do that as a result of the changes of this particular Act. And, Mr. Speaker, it'd be obviously a really nice, fresh change if the province of Saskatchewan now would use the same kind of focus and effort as they've done to be able to move alcohol from province to province without rules, if they were to apply the same effort and standards to moving grain, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the things that I initially think about when we talk about the incredible grain transportation . . . or the backlog of not being able to get the grain, you know, to the ports.

And, Mr. Speaker, all the producers that we hear on television and newspapers talk about the incredible loss that they suffered, and there was huge estimates of all the money lost as a result of the provincial government being unable to push and unable to

make the different parties that were in the business of moving grain being able to move that grain.

So one of the first things I would say is that it sure seems that there was focus on being able to move alcohol between the different jurisdictions, when they are a complete failure on being able to move grain as effectively as they should have.

The other thing that's really important, Mr. Speaker, is this obviously is going to impact the future of the government-owned stores. Obviously SLGA, the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, they receive great revenues from the people of Saskatchewan, in particular our government-owned liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. Does this impact their operation? One would assume that it does. And once again we have to ask the question, does this really debase and does this really devalue the government-owned liquor stores, Mr. Speaker? And this is a question that we've obviously got to ask many of the employees. And we also have to check, you know, from the public accounts as to how this affected different organizations and different provinces in the past.

[15:00]

And a good example of that is the province of Alberta. We obviously understand that they've gone to an unregulated process. In the past the Alberta government did own some of the liquor outlets. They got away from that. And the whole premise was that the cheaper liquor available and, Mr. Speaker, obviously from all the information that we have that this is not the case, that Alberta didn't really benefit all from the free market system that we see the Sask Party trying to establish here when it comes to the free-flowing ordering of alcohol from different provinces to our people here in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, a lot needs to be said about this particular bill. We want to get more information as to how this affects SLGA's bottom line overall. We know that between gaming revenues and the sale of liquor through liquor stores in the province of Saskatchewan that are owned by the people of Saskatchewan, they generate a great amount of revenue for the province. SLGA, much like the Information Services Corporation which the government privatized over there, they have generated hundreds of millions of dollars, a good benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, and now we see and we've always said that their plan was to privatize as many Crown corporations as possible. We're seeing evidence of that. The Information Services Corporation was the first one. And now we're seeing that the liquor stores are now in the Sask Party's sights in terms of trying to get rid of.

And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people in Saskatchewan don't realize the incredible amount of revenue that the province gets from the operations of SLGA. Now how does this affect the bottom line? Now one would assume that having liquor being able to be imported to your home community if you're a resident of Saskatchewan, one would assume that you wouldn't need to go to the liquor store to buy it anymore, any particular alcohol, that you'd be able to have this direct delivered to your home. So again, Mr. Speaker, you can see that this is not going to complement the liquor stores owned by the province of Saskatchewan.

And now is that a detriment to their operation? We need to know what the total loss might be. We need to know what the impact of all the import that's being allowed now of some of the alcohol and, Mr. Speaker, we need to know how many people are taking advantage of this particular service. And is this part of a larger picture? For example, is this part of the New West trading partnership? We don't know those details, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the reasons why we have to make sure that we ask the questions and we reach out to those that have good information.

So one of my key points I want to close on this particular bill with is that if people out there have information, we would encourage those employees that work at the Saskatchewan liquor stores now to come forward with information how this might affect the bottom line of many of the government-owned liquor stores in the province of Saskatchewan. Does this affect the private contractors, the small, local community agents that may be acting as agents for SLGA? Does this affect them as well, Mr. Speaker? So we need . . . I'm certain that this will.

And have they consulted with these organizations? I know this particular government will not consult with any of the union movement. They will simply stay away from it. They will do what they want arbitrarily, and that's it, Mr. Speaker. But have they spoken to their own local agents, the people that are selling alcohol on behalf of SLGA, you know, at the local community level, whether it's the smaller community or some of the larger centres? Has consultation occurred with them? Have the hotel association been consulted with this as well?

I can tell you that those organizations have a lot of good information. They're a great source of advice, and we need to know whether this issue and this change are going to affect their bottom line, Mr. Speaker. We don't know that information, and that's why it's important to reach out after we've heard the contents of the particular bill. And, Mr. Speaker, we would be reaching out over the next couple of months in talking to organizations out there. We know that there are some concerns. We realize that. But we want to be able to qualify those concerns by getting the right information, getting the right data, and getting the qualifiers to come to the Assembly to explain why this bill and this free-flowing option for liquor to be imported into the province of Saskatchewan directly to people's doors, we need to know whether the impact is positive or negative and who it's positive for and who it's negative for. We need to get all of that information and, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the purposes of us being able to speak to that bill today, to encourage people out there to participate and give us that advice and information.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more that my colleagues will be saying on this following the research of this particular bill. And it's important, as I mentioned, that we pay attention, close attention, to all the bills that are being presented. And on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 165, which is *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act*. I so move.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 166 — *The Local Government Election Act, 2014***

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*. *The Local Government Election Act* governs all local elections throughout the province including elections for mayor, reeve, and councillors in all types of municipalities including cities, urban, rural, and northern municipalities. It also governs school board elections, which are usually conducted by municipalities on behalf of school divisions. This Act is typically reviewed and amended between elections and is now being amended prior to the October 2016 general municipal elections.

Mr. Speaker, this bill marks a great improvement that was long overdue. First some background. In 2005 the brand new municipalities Act was passed, replacing *The Rural Municipality Act* and *The Urban Municipality Act*. At that time the provisions governing rural elections needed a new home and were tacked on to the end of *The Local Government Election Act* without any attempt at integration with those provisions governing urban elections. As a result there were many repetitive provisions, and slight variations existed between urban and rural provisions as a result of history rather than policy.

With these amendments the Act has been entirely rewritten and the language updated and simplified throughout. The urban and rural provisions are now housed in the same sections and combined whenever possible. Differences between urban and rural provisions are retained when it makes sense and is requested by the sector, such as for voter eligibility and determining in which division or ward a voter should vote. Staggered elections are also retained for rural municipalities so that elections for even-numbered RM [rural municipality] divisions are followed by elections for odd-numbered divisions, and reeve, two years later.

In many cases provisions that currently only apply to urban municipalities are extended to RMs for consistency and convenience. Many of the amendments to this Act since 2005 have had the objective of providing RMs the same options as urban municipalities when running elections. Now most provisions apply to all municipalities, providing more options for rural voters such as polls in hospitals and personal care facilities for residents or curbside voting for voters who cannot enter an inaccessible polling station.

Additionally in urban municipalities, candidates may now submit nomination papers by mail or fax, and the returning officer may directly authorize advance polls rather than the council, whereas before these options were only available to rural municipalities. These amendments will make the Act easier to use and reference, especially by those administrators and elections officials who serve both urban and rural municipalities.

A number of wording changes also ensure clarity where issues have been encountered in previous elections. In particular those

provisions for eligibility to vote and the division in which to vote for rural municipalities have been simplified and clarified. Other clarifications include a six-month deadline for councils to fill vacancies by holding a by-election unless the vacancy occurs in the same year as a general election.

Amendments also include some minor policy changes to improve the democracy and integrity of the electoral process. This bill clarifies procedures for determining the sufficiency of petitions for referenda and plebiscites. It also protects the neutrality of municipal employees during a referendum while allowing designated spokespersons to promote a particular position.

This bill will remove eligibility requirements for advanced polls. Voters will no longer need to meet certain requirements for voting ahead of election day, but may vote for reasons of personal preference and convenience.

This bill will introduce residency exceptions for students and members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Because students and members of the Armed Forces are likely to temporarily live in a place other than their usual place of residence, they may vote in the municipality in which they reside regardless of how long they have lived there. The residency exceptions and advanced voting are consistent with the election Act, 2014 which governs provincial elections.

Consultation on this bill started with a follow-up survey after the 2012 municipal elections, canvassing municipalities for any issues they may have encountered and identifying areas for clarification and possible amendments. Discussions followed with municipal associations and other stakeholders to determine which amendments to proceed with and to affirm our intention to move ahead with consolidating the urban and rural provisions.

Among others, we heard from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, or SARM; the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Associations, or SUMA; and the Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks. The New North and the school board associations were also consulted but they did not request any amendments. I would like to thank the many stakeholders who have provided valuable insight and feedback over the past year as we have moved through this process.

As a result of these amendments, this Act will be easier to use and understand by officials throughout the province that rely on it to run orderly, consistent, and secure municipal elections. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The Minister of Government Relations has moved second reading of Bill No. 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to point out that while the minister was standing and speaking about this particular bill, Bill 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*, and some of the language the minister used, Mr. Speaker, and it is a bit amusing. Because one

of the things that's really important, and I like when they use the words of democracy and integrity of the electoral cycle, this is the same government that have increased the number of MLAs by three, Mr. Speaker.

And this is one of the things that we said on this side of the Assembly. We begin to smile because obviously, Mr. Speaker, when they talk about democracy and integrity of the electoral cycle, what they're not talking about is themselves. Mr. Speaker. They are talking about the mayors, the reeves, and the school board election processes. They're also talking about the municipal elections, Mr. Speaker, whether it's urban or rural. And they've got all these rules, Mr. Speaker, that these folks have to follow to make sure that, as in their words, they protect the integrity of the electoral cycle and promote democracy, Mr. Speaker.

But when it comes to the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, they have arbitrarily increased the number of MLAs by three. Why, Mr. Speaker? They felt it might improve their chances of getting these three new seats and to begin to gerrymander the process of determining where these ridings would be, Mr. Speaker. So any time the minister gets up and talks about democracy and integrity in the same sentence, Mr. Speaker, we in the opposition begin to smile because we obviously know that is just absolutely not the intent, Mr. Speaker. And they may be putting provisions that are really difficult on a lot of the reeves or the mayors or some of the school board members that might want to run, Mr. Speaker, but they don't follow the same rules themselves.

They will do what they have to do to try and retain power, Mr. Speaker. And one of the biggest and most glaring examples that we've seen in this Assembly, of how they've arbitrarily increased the number of MLAs by three when there was no need to do so. Nobody asked for more MLAs and more politicians.

What they're asking for is more front-line workers to begin to address the whole notion around health care and the pressures that many senior citizens find themselves in when they're in care homes, Mr. Speaker. They've asked to deal with the housing shortage in many of these communities. They've helped them deal with the whole notion of infrastructure needs, whether it's major highways or water and sewer. This is what the government should do, Mr. Speaker. Instead of trying to hire more politicians, Mr. Speaker, they should be hiring more front-line workers to begin to deliver good services to the people of Saskatchewan.

So we looked at Bill 166, *The Local Government Election Act*, and the language that was used to promote a few changes, Mr. Speaker. We would encourage the government not to use that particular language because obviously they don't respect the language of democracy and integrity, Mr. Speaker, or of the electoral cycle.

[15:15]

But hold it. They're talking about municipal elections. They're talking about rural elections. They're talking about urban elections. So all the rules around these elections, there are provisions in place that they want to see happen, the

Saskatchewan Party government does want to see happen to ensure that the electoral process is straightforward and understood, and that they're going to get rid of any of the rules that are misunderstood. They're going to try and get rid of the processes that may be repetitive in nature, Mr. Speaker.

They talk about the eligibility to vote for many of the students and those that are in the Armed Forces. And these are things that we would certainly encourage as well, Mr. Speaker, especially around the whole notion of students that are out from their home communities and especially the Armed Forces, Mr. Speaker. I often speak about the importance of recognizing these two particular groups because they are, as was indicated, they are part of many communities, and they do have the opportunity and right to vote. Because they've moved elsewhere either for duty or for schooling, they should not be discouraged from voting. And we would respect that provision, Mr. Speaker.

So again, you look at the bill itself. If it's talking about giving students more opportunities to vote and those in the Armed Forces better opportunities to vote, then who in the province of Saskatchewan would argue against that? We in the opposition strongly encourage that, because after all democracy is something that we all have to protect, Mr. Speaker.

So I would point out that the provisions identified in this particular Act, it really brings in a lot of different organizations into the fold. The minister talked about consultation. We want to see if there was general agreement from some of the organizations impacted. The minister also talked about the different Acts that were the same for, whether it's a SARM election or SUMA election. We want to find out what kind of provisions that the minister is actually amalgamating into one. These are some of the questions that we have on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker.

So again, if it's a simple case of allowing those that are out for educational purposes, like as I mentioned, students' and Armed Forces' ability to vote, we would encourage that, Mr. Speaker. We would strongly encourage that because they are really, really important parts of our community, especially when it comes to the members of the Canadian Armed Forces. They're there protecting democracy, so why should we deny them the opportunity to participate in that democracy because they have simply moved elsewhere to do their service? And the students as well, Mr. Speaker, they have a right to express their opinion and cast a vote for whomever they wish to support. So, Mr. Speaker, none of those provisions do we find in any way, shape, or form are argumentative, from our perspective.

We would just ensure people out there knew that this is the same government that promoted the implementation of three new MLAs, despite the overwhelming evidence, Mr. Speaker, of the contrary in showing that there are many other provinces — and especially Alberta as the example — where they have a huge concentration of constituents in one confined area. It's almost twice as many as what the Saskatchewan Party government MLAs are dealing with, and yet why do we have to justify three more MLAs that the Saskatchewan Party want to put in place, Mr. Speaker? We find that absurd. We find that not necessary. It's not necessary at all and very wasteful.

And yet we sit by and we sit back, and a year later, here comes the Saskatchewan Party government using the words integrity and democracy in the same sentence, Mr. Speaker. That is something that, from our perspective, is a laughing matter when we see what the Sask Party has done in the past, Mr. Speaker.

I think the other thing that's also important, Mr. Speaker, as I said, it's important for us to allow members of the Armed Forces to vote. It's important for us to allow the students that have relocated from some of their home communities to further their education, Mr. Speaker.

But once again alarming to us, and certainly to myself as an Aboriginal member of this Assembly, is some of the provisions they've put in some of the northern communities around the eligibility to vote. We really watched this issue really carefully, Mr. Speaker, because one of the points in the last election is that when the Saskatchewan Party proposed ways in which people would be allowed to vote, Mr. Speaker, they made a bunch of provisions. And from our perspective, we looked at the provisions, and we basically were quite shocked at what the Saskatchewan Party was trying to do, Mr. Speaker. And one of the arguments that they made, the Saskatchewan Party made in making tougher rules, tougher rules to vote, Mr. Speaker, is they cited, they cited abuse, abuse of the electoral cycle.

So we turned around and said, okay we're not going to ask the Saskatchewan Party for advice on what they . . . what we view as their voter suppression tactics. We asked the questions of the electoral office saying, has there been rampant abuse of people voting in areas that have done so in the past, and is there abuse of that system? And the provincial election officer said, no there was no abuse. There was no call for the provincial government to put these new rules around elections as there was no such abuse.

And it was very clearly identified, Mr. Speaker, that all these rules . . . There was some concern that you had to provide photo ID [identification] before you're given a ballot, Mr. Speaker. These are some of the things that I think people in Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan are beginning to realize the Sask Party is all about. They want to be able to thwart the process to allow people free and equal opportunity to vote.

So we asked the question, we asked a question, why would you put in all these different rules on the electoral cycle for the province of Saskatchewan that are different from the particular Act that we're talking about today, Mr. Speaker? And from our perspective, why would you make it more difficult, more difficult for people to vote?

You know, many people don't have photo ID, Mr. Speaker, and I'll give you an example. In my home community, many elders have never driven a vehicle in their lives. They don't have a driver's licence. They may have a social insurance card. They may have a health card. They may have a few other pieces of ID. But they have lived in these communities most of their life, and they voted every election. And now because of the Sask Party's rules, they've got to try and . . . they had to present photo ID in order for them to cast their ballot.

So on one hand, Mr. Speaker, we make provisions for those in

the Armed Forces that are protecting our democracy. Yet on the other hand, the Saskatchewan Party puts in these silly rules that actually thwart democracy, making it more difficult for people that don't have photo ID to be able to cast the ballots. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen evidence of that in northern communities.

And we asked, we asked the elections officer, who's an independent elections officer, the Saskatchewan Party government said this was a problem, people were abusing the voting privileges by not giving proper ID. So we asked the question, why is that a problem? And the electoral officer said, no it was not a problem.

So why did the Saskatchewan Party government put all these rules in that stopped people from voting? Mr. Speaker, that was a deliberate plan, in our perspective, called voter suppression. And that's exactly what they had in mind, Mr. Speaker. So many people that immigrated to Saskatchewan, many of the elders that don't have photo ID, many of the people that have just moved here, Mr. Speaker, don't have photo ID. There are tons of examples of people that wanted to be able to vote, that as a result of the rules that the Sask Party put in place, Mr. Speaker, they cannot. They cannot, and that's a crying shame.

And to me, I think that's an affront to democracy. And that's why, when I hear any Sask Party member talk about democracy and integrity in the same sentence, Mr. Speaker, you know, I like to call it what it is in this Assembly, but obviously it's important that we refrain from that particular language, Mr. Speaker. But this is exactly my sentiment.

So number one is, who asked for these changes to the electoral Act, Mr. Speaker? The provincial elections officer didn't ask for it. There was no group or organization that came out of the woodwork complaining about people abusing the election cycle by not providing the proper ID, Mr. Speaker. There is nobody in the whole province of Saskatchewan that wanted these rules in place except for the Saskatchewan Party. There's nobody in the province of Saskatchewan who wanted three more politicians, except for the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. Except for the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, that's who wanted them, Mr. Speaker.

Now if you want to talk, if you want to talk about accountability and you want to talk about democracy, you want to talk about integrity in the electoral cycle, Mr. Speaker, I would challenge the Sask Party government to release the transcripts of their last . . . in the last election when they were using the phone bank service to call a number of Saskatchewan homes, talking about the First Nations and resource revenue-sharing matter and the issue that they manipulated to their political advantage. Would they release the transcripts of that tape recording, that many people of Saskatchewan heard, from the Saskatchewan Party phone bank? Are they prepared to release that transcript today, Mr. Speaker?

I would challenge them to release the transcript, what was said, what message was given to the people of Saskatchewan through their phone bank, Mr. Speaker. On the election of 2011 when it came to First Nations and it came to resource revenue sharing, what was their message from their phone bank to many hundreds and thousands of homes of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? And they won't release that

information. They won't release that information.

And that's why when they talk about integrity and democracy in the same sentence, we on this side of the Assembly know exactly that's not what their intention is, Mr. Speaker. And it's silly for them to use that particular language at all, Mr. Speaker, when they're not allowing people to vote, when they make up problems to try and suppress votes to their political advantage, when they create new seats for three new MLAs when nobody asked for new MLAs, and when they run phone banks, Mr. Speaker, when they do these robocalls much like the federal Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, when they do these robocalls to create divisions amongst the people of Saskatchewan. And they don't have the courage to release the transcripts of that recorded message from their phone bank, Mr. Speaker. They don't have the courage to do that, Mr. Speaker. To me that's thwarting democracy. That's thwarting democracy, Mr. Speaker.

So once again I'm challenging the entire Sask Party bench, release the transcripts of your robocalls from the last election where you're talking about giving the First Nations resource revenue-sharing opportunities and, Mr. Speaker, we ask them to do that today. And I can guarantee you today that they will not do it, Mr. Speaker. They're ashamed of it. They're going to hide it. They will not release those transcripts. We need to see those transcripts. We need to know what they're telling the people of Saskatchewan through their phone bank, Mr. Speaker, through their phone bank. We want to find out.

So whether it's the electoral cycle, Mr. Speaker, trying to get more politicians in here, whether it is trying to suppress votes as they're doing, or whether they're trying to divide the people of Saskatchewan, we see that the Saskatchewan Party have taken a lot of lessons from Harper and company, Mr. Speaker, in Ottawa. And, Mr. Speaker, they have on every, every front tried to thwart democracy when it comes to their interests, and yet they insist on certain processes when it comes to the local governance of our RMs, of our communities, and of our school boards, Mr. Speaker.

These RM councillors and reeves, and the mayors and councils of many of these communities, of our cities, of our smaller centres, and the school divisions, Mr. Speaker, they operate under great scrutiny. They operate under great expectations. And they're confined many times by the amount of resources they get out of this government, Mr. Speaker, and yet they've got to do all the jumping through all the hoops to meet what they, the Saskatchewan Party, deem are responsible, democratic practices.

And yet if you look at their record, Mr. Speaker, it is a shameful record. It is a shameful record from every perspective, of loading up numbers to get more politicians, to thwarting the people that wish to exercise their democratic right to vote, and certainly to providing divisive statements when it comes to trying to represent all the people's interests in the province of Saskatchewan. That's the Saskatchewan Party record, Mr. Speaker, and they'll hide for it for the rest of their lives, Mr. Speaker, as they will not release those transcripts.

We want those transcripts. And we've asked the electoral officer office themselves that in the future, in the future, if any party should use that option to divide the people of

Saskatchewan, that there should be a full investigation, that there should be a full investigation of what was said on those recordings so the people of Saskatchewan can finally see for once in your lives the amount of manipulation and the lack of courage that the Saskatchewan Party government have when it comes to democracy and integrity of the democratic system, Mr. Speaker.

So they ask of the school board members. They ask of the rural members. They ask of the urban members, of whether you're an RM, a village, a town, a city, or whether you're a school division. We want you to jump through all these hoops to prove that there is integrity in the local election system, but they sure don't practise what they preach, Mr. Speaker. That's our fundamental argument on this particular bill today.

[15:30]

So people of Saskatchewan, we would encourage them to pay extra close attention to anything that the province of Saskatchewan or the Saskatchewan Party uses in any legislation that they bring forward and any Act that they bring forward or any rule or regulation they bring forward, Mr. Speaker. If they use democracy and integrity in the same sentence, then pay very close attention to that, Mr. Speaker, because once again they're coming back to try and thwart that democracy. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of people and organizations across the province of Saskatchewan frown upon that, and they think that it's old school, Mr. Speaker.

Now I spoke about the value of democracy, Mr. Speaker, a number of times. And when you talk about those that served in the Armed Forces, I'm very proud of the number of people within my family that served in the Armed Forces, Mr. Speaker. I shared that, and I shared it on many occasions in which I was very proud of the service that they had given to their country, and they were proud as well. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a great career for young people that are looking at an opportunity to travel, to learn, and to create friendships, and certainly to show their support and patriotism to their country.

So serving in the military and in the Armed Forces is something that's a great honour and privilege. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important because their message was that there is no condition that they have given to anyone to serve their country. They just served their country because they thought it was their duty to do so. Now if they came back home and they tried to vote and they didn't have photo ID or one of their family members didn't have photo ID, would they be allowed to vote, Mr. Speaker? Would they be allowed to vote? And that's one of the important points that I want to raise is that if we are thwarting the efforts of people that should be voting, allowing them the right to vote, that's exactly what many people in our Armed Forces fought for: democracy. They want to see a democratic system set up.

And the Saskatchewan Party, the Saskatchewan Party are trying to thwart that democracy because, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't help in their self-interest. Their self-interest is to try and manipulate the process as to not letting people vote or creating divisions amongst those that do vote. And, Mr. Speaker, that kind of action, activity, will catch up sooner or later, and that old phrase, what goes around comes around, I think will certainly apply in many instances when it comes to this particular

government.

So, Mr. Speaker, the moment the minister talks about democracy and integrity in one sentence, right away I tell people to watch out because once again they're up to their old tricks, their old habits, and they're trying to do something that would position them a lot better politically at the expense of democracy. We've seen that happen time and time again.

So from the same government and same minister that are promoting more politicians, the same minister is in government that's talking about putting tougher rules for people to cast their vote, Mr. Speaker, and the same minister and government that won't release the transcripts of their phone bank message to the people of Saskatchewan on election night. This is the government that's sitting across from the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

And while we see the bill itself, when they talk about democracy and integrity, it only applies to the reeves, to the mayors, to the councillors, to the school divisions of our villages, of our towns, of our urban areas, of our rural areas, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't apply to the senior government called Sask Party because they can do what they want to manipulate, what they have to manipulate in order for them to retain power, Mr. Speaker. But that train has left the station, and people are really watching what happens next election.

And I dare say, and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to be continuing to press the elections office to make sure they monitor this kind of activity in the future. They've got to monitor that kind of activity in future, Mr. Speaker, because we think that this kind of action and activity is actually hurting democracy and thwarting the efforts of many people that have provided the democratic right to cast their vote, people like our veterans and people that have served in the military and those that continue serving in the Armed Forces, Mr. Speaker.

So it's important that we raise these issues. It's important that we pay attention to what they're doing. And we all know, Mr. Speaker, what the Sask Party tells the local government in terms of integrity. They put these rules down, and our local leaders will do what they have to do. But my only advice to them is that, you know, don't follow the Saskatchewan Party's lead, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to democracy, and don't follow them when it comes to the integrity of the democratic cycle. Use your own judgment because many times local leadership make better decisions, better decisions than the minister and the Sask Party government that have manipulated the electoral process to a point where people are just getting tired of it. And they want answers, and they want answers fairly soon, Mr. Speaker.

Now I've pointed out that there are many differences. There are many differences in our province. And the other part of the bill that I think we have to pay attention to, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister talks about amalgamating some of these rules to make sure we do away with the provisions that are not relevant in certain instances and that we keep the ones that are relevant to many and bring everybody under one tent.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that there's many differences in our province in terms of the demands on certain municipalities,

the roles of certain . . . like an RM versus a small village. There are just all kinds of these rules out there. And that's why it's important to pay attention to what is being proposed, and that's one of the key points that I would raise.

Yes, SUMA and SARM will pay attention to this but, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure, we want to make sure that we hear from as many mayors and reeves and councillors as possible on what they perceive as issues that would be concerning to them as the minister proposes and proceeds with Bill 166.

Now, Mr. Speaker, northern Saskatchewan itself, as I often speak of northern Saskatchewan, they have some extenuating circumstances that many local leaders have to deal with, and we're not talking about the cost of goods to transport north. We're talking about the isolation factor as well. We're talking about the transportation costs. There's a number of factors of attracting professional people to do business that a northern community has to undertake in northern Saskatchewan to ensure that it stays vibrant, Mr. Speaker. They have unique challenges. They have unique circumstances. And they certainly want to be able to have a focus on those issues by government.

And what we're seeing here is that there's a movement away from northern affairs overall. And some of the provisions under northern affairs, Mr. Speaker, would apply in this instance. And I think it's important that we read into the record what exactly is being changed, Mr. Speaker.

And the whole notion is, if you look at some of the parts of the Act, they spoke about the importance of the minister working closely with the northern communities and advocating for the northern communities. Now obviously if they're doing away with northern affairs, does that advocacy stop at the minister's level? This is what's really important, Mr. Speaker. And it is clear that the Minister of Northern Affairs should've been there for many northern communities. Now it's obvious they've done away with northern affairs. There's no longer a focus on northern government, Mr. Speaker. We're all under one tent despite the significant differences in operating a local government when it comes to northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, many northern communities don't have the luxury of natural gas service in their community. The cost to provide and make sure they maintain certain systems like water and sewer, community maintenance, garbage collection, and so on and so forth, Mr. Speaker, these are tremendous strains on a local community. And they want it to be . . . They never complain about it, but it would be sure nice if they were understood and it was accepted that these are some of the challenges that have to operate under.

And what they have done is they have changed this particular process to really not give a lot of attention to northern Saskatchewan communities, and that's a crying shame, Mr. Speaker, because there's some great leaders out there that are doing wonderful things with some of the meagre resources that the Sask Party government has given them.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot to say to on this particular bill. We want to make sure, we want to make sure that when they talk about democracy and integrity that this sends off alarms,

alarm bells on a continual basis, Mr. Speaker.

Why? Because we've seen how they've dealt with the provincial electoral cycle. They have manipulated it. They have instituted voter suppression tactics. They have created positions for three new MLAs when not one single soul in the province of Saskatchewan asked for more MLAs. And what's worse, Mr. Speaker, is they didn't do it based on population. They took anybody over the age of 18 and up, and that's how they determined where these MLAs were to be, and they created new ridings for them, Mr. Speaker.

And we're sitting in the back saying, oh my goodness. This is too obvious in their efforts, Mr. Speaker. And once again we sit here and we say, my goodness; here they go. What rules they make for the local government Act, Mr. Speaker, they don't follow on their own front.

So a lot of time I tell the local leaders, just do what you think is necessary. Follow the law. Operate within your budgets, and do a good, hard, honest job, and you needn't worry about your future. And don't take advice about democracy and don't take advice about integrity on that democracy from the senior government called the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker, because they have thwarted democracy on every front that they're able to do so, and we in the opposition certainly have seen evidence of that, time and time again.

So we have a lot more to say on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, but at this point I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 167 — *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Local Government Election Act, 2014***

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. This Act makes an amendment to one bilingual Act, *The Education Act, 1995*, because that Act refers to *The Local Government Election Act* and the provisions dealing with the election of school board members. *The Local Government Election Act* governs all municipal elections throughout the province as well as school board elections.

No changes are being made to how school board elections are run. The amendments only change the name of the Act and the section number being referred to so that the references remain accurate. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The Minister of

Government Relations has moved second reading of Bill No. 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think what's really important is that, as I said at the outset of the previous bill, we want to pay very close attention to anything the Saskatchewan Party government may want to promote in terms of democracy, Mr. Speaker. And I think the key thing that we would want to point out in this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, is that when we look at the operation of many of the municipal governments throughout the province of Saskatchewan . . . As I said at the outset, we have had a lot of experience of sitting down with some of the local leaders and asking what their aspirations would be when it comes to their actual operation, you know, as a community.

And I want to focus a bit of my time and attention on the northern communities because I understand them well. A lot of people may not know this, but I served on the SUMA board for a couple of years. We learned a lot about the local elections issues and the local government of the southern part of the province through a lot of the different organizations and people that presented at SUMA. And being on a board for SUMA for a couple of years, I was exposed to a lot of the information of some of the local municipal bodies, whether they're a small village or whether they're a hamlet or whether they're a resort community or whether they're a large centre, Mr. Speaker. They have had a lot of challenges in front of them.

And one of the key things that we hear on a continual basis from a lot of the communities, and it really applies in northern Saskatchewan and that's why it's important that we pay a bit of attention to *The Municipalities Act* whenever they bring an Act forward, is to take this opportunity to talk about the particular bill and get advice as to who is speaking at this particular bill and some of the changes that are being proposed. What are the net effect and the impact, and who is being impacted by this? But we have this continual dialogue with the northern and the southern leaders, the community leaders. And when I say the municipal leaders, I'm talking about the big-city mayors, I'm talking about the medium-sized cities, and of course I'm talking about the hamlets and the small villages and so on and so forth. So it's really, really important that when we say some of the buzzwords, we talk about all the communities involved, no matter how big or small.

So, Mr. Speaker, wherever you go it is important, it is important that you look at some of the aspirations they've had over the past number of years and the aspirations they have for the next number of years.

[15:45]

And it goes back to the earlier point that we've made, is that you've got to consult the municipalities on any bills, whether it's a consequential amendment Act or whether it's election Act or whether it's an infrastructure Act. There's got to be heavy consultation. We've seen evidence time and time again that this particular government does not, does not have a lot of history, does not have a lot of background, and does not have a lot of success when you talk about consultation with a lot of these



communities in question. And that's why it's important to take the opportunity on any bill they present to further their case on some of the issues that I speak about, Mr. Speaker.

And a good example of that is when you look at the northern community of Ile-a-la-Crosse as an example. They have asked for support on a number of occasions and, Mr. Speaker, that support, that support has not gone over well in terms of dollars. And one of the biggest things that I think I want to focus on is that communities in northern Saskatchewan, they have, they have the obligation, Mr. Speaker, to run some of these communities, the water and sewer, the maintenance, the street, to make sure they have their budgets properly done up. They have an incredible amount of responsibility. And no matter what Act that is brought forward by the province of Saskatchewan, they should consult these communities on a fair and equal and continual basis, no matter the size of their community, Mr. Speaker, and of course the area or geographical region that this community is in.

And a good example I would use, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about these communities, is the whole notion around the costs that these communities are finding themselves in. If you look at the recent example that I spoke about, when we used to do housing for these northern communities — a good example — the federal government came along with the provincial government and they committed to developing social housing throughout northern Canada as a whole. And since we're part of northern Canada, we were eligible for some of the housing dollars that were set aside to help build homes in northern parts of Canada. Northern Saskatchewan was eligible.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you see a number of years later, the Saskatchewan Party government comes along and most recently they announced a housing project in a number of northern communities. I think the federal MP [Member of Parliament] was with them. And they travelled to some of these communities and they announced this money that they were putting in for these northern communities to help deal with the municipal strain of providing homes for local families, because some of these communities are growing.

So one of the arguments that was used was that, well the federal government put their money in, the province will put their money in, but now the local government's got to put their money in. And the local governments, Mr. Speaker, they primarily operate on a grant versus collection of land taxes. And, Mr. Speaker, some of these communities are small. They're not very big. And some of them certainly, as they get bigger, they have more challenges because obviously they've got to provide more services.

So one of the things that I thought of right away when I looked at the bill and I looked at all the different parts of the bill that they're talking about and all the impacts that might be occurring, the point that I would make is, has the consultation been thorough enough? No matter how small the bill is and no matter how inconsequential it may seem, there are major ramifications for the partners in governance when it comes to not only southern Saskatchewan but as it should also be involved when you come to the northern part of Saskatchewan. They should also be involved in the consultation as well.

So going back to my housing example, Mr. Speaker, what happens next year? For example, in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse, I think they are covering 55 per cent of the cost, which is a huge strain and drain on the local revenues, Mr. Speaker. And they're building five homes. Now what happens next year? What happens next year, Mr. Speaker, if they need more homes? Do they have to go another half a million dollars in the hole, Mr. Speaker? Do they have to go another half a million dollars in debt? And how about the year after that if they need more homes? Is that another half a million dollars more debt that these communities have to assume? So every year the debt's being added on to these northern communities and yet the senior governments, the provincial government and the federal government, are gradually getting away from providing support for constructing housing units in northern parts of Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we saw the federal minister . . . or the federal MP and our provincial Housing minister smiling for the camera and as they're holding a spade, what they were doing was they were digging a hole with the spade. And that's kind of where the finances of the community would end up if we continued on with this kind of arrangement where you have a huge debt or a huge hole of debt that came along for the local community because the federal and provincial government are getting out of providing support for social housing. And they're hoping that the communities like Ile-a-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, Beauval, La Ronge would be able to afford the cost on their own.

So these are some of the examples that I wanted to share with you when it comes to any Act, consequential or not, Mr. Speaker. I think it's really important that we have those discussions and that we take the opportunity. When we're given the opportunity, the opposition say, we're going to study the bill and make sure we move forward with as much of the consultation that's necessary to look at the organizations and groups that may be impacted, seek their advice, seek their participation, get their support, get their endorsement, and challenge the government on any front that they may have on this particular bill. So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 167.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

#### **Bill No. 168 — *The Government Relations Administration Act***

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 168, *The Government Relations Administration Act*. This bill continues the work to update executive government legislation in Saskatchewan. The purpose of this bill is to create one Act that reflects all areas of the Ministry of Government Relations and meets the current needs and mandate of the ministry.

Specifically the bill does four key things. Number one, first it

will reflect the ministry's current mandate as it relates to municipal affairs, northern affairs, public safety, and First Nation and Métis relations. Second, it will consolidate and standardize the general authorities of the minister now contained in four separate statutes that are now outdated and inconsistent with other ministry legislation. Third, the bill will include new ministerial authority to deal with certain situations. And finally, it will provide for consequential amendments to the three municipal Acts as ministerial authority to help resolve intermunicipal disputes.

I will briefly touch on each of these areas. It's important to note the bill must be read in conjunction with other legislation and the regulations that pertain to the ministry and has been drafted so as not to duplicate any of this.

Mr. Speaker, there are currently four outdated former department Acts under the responsibility of the Ministry of Government Relations: *The Urban Affairs Act*, *The Rural Affairs Act*, *The Rural Development Act*, and *The Northern Affairs Act*. Each of the four former department Acts were written at a time when there were separate urban, rural, and northern departments. Those departments no longer exist and have not existed for some time.

This bill proposes to consolidate authority from and repeal those four outdated former department Acts into a single new Act for the ministry. The Act will be more consistent with the ministry's current mandate and functions which now includes public safety, First Nation and Métis relations, northern affairs, and municipal affairs.

The second thing this bill will address is standardizing the general authorities of the minister. Provisions relating to current ministerial powers and ministry programs and services such as providing financial, administrative, and technical support services will be retained in the new Act. Other provisions that either no longer reflect or are no longer part of the ministry's mandate will be removed.

The repeal of the four former department Acts and the introduction of this bill is not intended to remove powers and duties that are required today to provide specific programs and services; rather it ensures that these powers and duties are inclusive of all types of communities and local governments where appropriate.

The third thing this bill does is support the ministry's role in setting the education property tax mill rate and then monitoring and ensuring compliance in the reporting, collection, and remittance of education property taxes by municipalities to school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to compliance, I want to point out that the vast majority of municipalities are compliant with education property tax collection, remittance, and reporting. However there are rare instances that the ministry is aware of where municipalities have not collected or remitted education property taxes owing to the school division. This is money the school division relies on to help fund day-to-day operations and services.

Currently the ministry has few tools available to compel

municipalities that do not remit the education property tax they collect to the school division beyond withholding grants for an indefinite period of time. In order to ensure school divisions throughout the province receive tax dollars they are entitled to, the bill will include new ministerial authority to redirect the school division grants of municipalities that have not levied, collected, or remitted education property taxes to the school division.

Mr. Speaker, this authority would be used as a last resort to address situations where a municipality does not comply with the legislative requirement to levy, collect, and remit education property taxes.

The last point I want to touch on is the consequential amendments to *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act*, and *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2010*. These would enable the minister to appoint a person to review, make recommendations, or assist in resolving intermunicipal disputes where no dispute resolution mechanism exists. Currently the three municipal Acts provide for voluntary dispute resolution by consent of the municipalities involved in a dispute. The Acts also provide for dispute resolution by the Saskatchewan Municipal Board in certain circumstances where municipalities are required to seek mediation and dispute resolution to resolve a matter.

However, Mr. Speaker, there arise other instances where the minister may need to become involved — a voluntary dispute resolution is not attempted and municipalities are unwilling to resolve a matter, or there is no dispute mechanism provided in legislation. The consequential amendments to the three municipal Acts will provide clear authority for the minister to appoint a person to make recommendations or assist municipalities in mediating or resolving an intermunicipal dispute. This will replace the ability to appoint a municipal administration adviser in *The Rural Affairs Act* and *The Urban Affairs Act* and will address the lack of ability in the three municipal Acts to act if municipalities cannot voluntarily bring themselves to resolve the dispute.

In terms of consultations, first within government, the ministries of the Economy, Agriculture, Social Services, and the Water Security Agency were consulted regarding the relevance and necessity of the provisions in the former department Acts that are jointly shared. All three ministries and the Water Security Agency indicated that there were no specific concerns with the repeal of the four outdated department acts. Government Relations also undertook the normal consultation process with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and New North. All three associations have indicated, in writing, support for the proposed legislation. These consultations began in late November 2013 and concluded this past August. They involved meetings and sharing draft side-by-sides of the amendments for review and comment.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those individuals who took the time to provide input, advice, and feedback in the development of this legislation.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this bill continues government's direction to repeal legislation that is obsolete, or consolidate and update legislation that provides for similar duties, powers,

and responsibilities. It will better position the ministry and Minister of Government Relations to continue working with respect to municipal, public safety, northern, and First Nations and Métis stakeholders to support provincial priorities and objectives in these areas. And so, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 168, *The Government Relations Administration Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 168, *The Government Relations Administration Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again as we go through the bill, Bill 168, I think it's really important to note that there are two particular areas that I want to pay a bit of time with.

First of all, in terms of the collection of education property tax, a lot of people in the province of Saskatchewan would know that the municipal governments have that role. When they issue their annual tax collection notice, part of the bill of course is for education property tax. And their duty and obligation of course is to collect that tax and certainly to remit it because it is intended to go to the boards of education within that specified region.

[16:00]

The other notion I want to spend a bit of time, Mr. Speaker, is on the whole issue of conferring more powers to the minister. We need to know what prompted that particular exercise, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's going to create some problems and challenges in the future. A lot of communities right across the province, they jealously protect their local community, their local authority, their local autonomy. They feel that they have a huge role to play, and rightfully so. And now we're going to be giving and affording the minister more powers. We need to know what kind of powers those are distinctly, what kind of overarching authority they have over a local government, Mr. Speaker, and when in these instances would these powers be utilized. And above all else, who asked for the additional powers that the minister has granted to himself, Mr. Speaker? These are some of the questions that we obviously need to know.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that in northern Saskatchewan as well as right across the province that we have much a similar system in a sense of having school divisions operate within a certain region. And these school divisions obviously count on revenues from the tax base and property tax base and, Mr. Speaker, the local governments of local towns and villages and the different municipal entities out there, they actually collect these property taxes. And the theory is they collect them for both the education portion and the municipal portion. And then they're supposed to, as they do so when they collect these taxes, they submit the amount that they collected for the education portion and that goes directly to helping fund the schools and boards of education right across our province.

So I guess the first initial question I'm going to ask is that the minister said at the outset that the vast majority of local governments follow these rules: they collect and they remit

these dollars that they collect on behalf of the education and property portion and that there's no problems. The question I would have for the minister, well then why are we putting these rules in place? How many communities are being impacted? Who asked for these changes, Mr. Speaker? And how rampant . . . Is there a rampant problem? And I understood him to say that the vast majority . . . Is it 70 per cent? Is it 95 per cent? Is it 80 per cent? It's really difficult to ascertain from our perspective how bad the problem is of communities or local councils collecting the education portion of the property tax and not submitting it on time and not following the rules.

How bad is this particular situation? Are there examples? Is it a rural issue? Is it a northern issue? Is it a southern issue in terms of the larger centres? We need to know where the problem is, Mr. Speaker, for us to determine whether these new processes are effective and that there isn't something that the government is not telling us when it comes to this process of collecting property tax through the municipal bodies.

We need to find out, Mr. Speaker, exactly what were some of the reservations of SUMA and SARM. They obviously are really important partners in governing the province of Saskatchewan. They would give some really good, sound advice. And I understood the minister in his previous bill said they got written confirmation, and this bill as well, that they do have some support from those organizations. New North was also mentioned. We need to find out, Mr. Speaker, whether that . . . if the minister is able to provide us with copies of that letter and exactly what kind of consultations occurred with some of the organizations I mentioned previously.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of information we need. It is not something that you take lightly, as I said before. Understanding these Acts and what the intent of the legislation is, what the issue at hand is, how they're going to fix the problem, has consultation been done? These are all the things that the opposition have to ask.

And one of the processes that I enjoy with this particular Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is that the bills are introduced; we give our first speech on a wide variety of bills, as I'm doing now. And then we take the bills and we research them and we look at options and we talk and meet with groups that might have concerns on these bills. And when the spring sitting is upon us, Mr. Speaker, that's when you come forward with a lot of the recommendations. And people are more involved with the Act and hopefully they become more vocal and certainly participate on a greater level to make sure that we get this Act right.

We've seen the government from time to time make many, many mistakes on the legislative agenda, Mr. Speaker, many mistakes. And we find them, as I said at the outset yesterday, they have an amendment to an amendment to an amendment from a previous bill that was amended earlier. So they get themselves confused.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the things that's important is, in opposition, we point that out. And we tell people of Saskatchewan that we need to make sure that the process that we undertake in this Assembly is sound in the sense that we have our chances in opposition to look at the bill, research it, communicate it to people that are impacted on it and bring back

the weaknesses and the problems with the bill and challenge the government on that front. And that's part of the accountability process that needs to be undertaken.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to chat a bit about was the fact that the minister talked about some of the communities not remitting the education property tax. And we know that many municipal governments in the province of Saskatchewan struggle. They struggle on a continual basis. And as they have the means to collect some of these property taxes, Mr. Speaker, they also, you know, they hold the money for a certain amount of time.

And after all, as the communities get pressured, as the communities get pressured to do more things, Mr. Speaker, it's always enticing to raise your property tax or look at some of the education taxes you collected while sitting in a bank account earning interest. And this is why it's important. Most of the communities, if not all, understand that legally the money belongs to the education system of the province of Saskatchewan.

And that's why it is a bit surprising, a bit surprising that the minister's conferring new rules upon himself. And why are these rules coming into force through this Act? What are the new rules that he's conferring upon himself? And why is he given this extra power and extra authority to do all these different things? We need to find out exactly what rules. He's giving himself an advantage over the municipal governments to make sure that he fixes some of these problems that he states out there. We need to know what rules, what problems, and what do you hope to solve. And, Mr. Speaker, based on the information that we received from this particular minister, it is very, very sketchy information. We need more information overall.

The other thing I think is really important, Mr. Speaker, is that you have to be very careful when you deal with northern communities, and certainly when you deal with the southern communities as well. The municipal bodies we have right across the province of Saskatchewan, whether it's the city of Saskatoon or whether it's the northern community of Buffalo Narrows or whether it's a small hamlet in the southeast corner of the province, what's really important is we've got to recognize that a lot of the local organizations, local leaders, they're doing a tremendous amount of good work. They are volunteering their time. The mayors and councils, the reeves and councils, the school divisions, they're volunteering their time to do all this good work, Mr. Speaker. And if it was not for them, there would be some significant problems because the government obviously cannot administer the operation of our communities in any way, shape, or form because the current provincial government do not have the capacity to deal with all the issues that the local communities have.

I see it every day when we meet with some of the mayors and councillors and some of the reeves, Mr. Speaker. They've got a huge responsibility, a huge undertaking, and they need a government that's going to complement their effort and respect their participation, not one that's going to confer rules upon themselves and be able to come in and with a fell swoop determine the course of action of a particular community or a particular RM, Mr. Speaker. They should engage that

community or that RM to the extent that they should be, that the communities want to be engaged.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is very, very important that the message get through, as I said with the other bills. No matter what the bill involves, the message that I have for the government is that these municipal entities that are out there, whether it's an RM, a local village council, or a city council, that they want to be recognized for the problems they have, the challenges they face. And on issues that need collaboration, they want to be able to get a respectful dialogue going with the government.

And this particular Act talks about more powers to the minister. What powers is he conferring upon himself? Where did the demand for these new powers come from? And how prevalent is the problem that they're trying to deal with? And in this case he indicated the collection of education property taxes. How big is that problem and which communities are being impacted?

So we have a lot of questions on Bill 168, Mr. Speaker. We obviously want to talk to our municipal partners. We want to engage them. Obviously there's a few changes for *The Northern Municipalities Act*. We obviously want to talk to the New North, and we also want to talk with SARM and to SUMA as well. And anybody has any particular advice for the opposition or perspectives on this bill, most certainly encourage them to contact us, Mr. Speaker, because a lot of times you get some great information from the people of Saskatchewan.

We want to keep that information flowing to hold this government to account, Mr. Speaker. And people out there are giving us tons of information, and a lot of the information we'll use to strengthen Saskatchewan overall and to call the government to account on some of the lack of vision they have when they talk about respect for municipal leaders and certainly the lack of vision they have when it comes to the legislative agenda. We have to make sure they're on the right track, and we encourage our partners to contact us to give us that information, give us that advice, give us your perspective. And we'll use it properly, fairly, and respectfully in this Assembly to make sure that your values and your input are not forgotten and that the government gets the message and gets your message loud and clear.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to say on this, but I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 168.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 168, *The Government Relations Administration Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 163

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 163 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to enter into this debate on Bill No. 163, *An Act to amend The Education Act, 1995*. And 1995 was a great year. Obviously some good work went into this, and I think that we could review 1995. But I will be reviewing certain dates, Mr. Speaker, because I have a lot to say about this bill particularly, and about some teachable moments we might have today, some teachable moments here.

So some things that we need to get the record straight on, the record straight on. And I know that this is an important piece of legislation to a lot of people in Saskatchewan, a lot of people if not everyone. Everyone has an interest in good, solid public education, you know. And I think that it's really important that we take a moment and just reflect back a bit on how important public education is in Saskatchewan. We have a long, long history here in Saskatchewan about public education right . . . in a formal sense because I certainly don't want to discount the traditional way of learning prior to the public school system being set up because that was a huge way of passing knowledge down from generation to generation. That's hugely important and it should not be discounted or forgotten. And so I just want to make sure we acknowledge that.

But in the formal sense I want to take a moment to talk about the education, the public education here in Saskatchewan because it's a huge, huge thing that people respect. And I don't think they take it for granted here in Saskatchewan because we have such a strong record of education. And whether that be from back in the original homestead days, the early days of the province as we now know it, where education became more formalized for the settlers and the newcomers.

And as we saw this Act evolve over the course of time, many changes have been brought forward to improve it. And one that we felt was really not a great idea, not a great idea, was when they introduced the legislation around changing when students would be back in the classroom after Labour Day. And it was such an interesting thing that when the minister at the time, and it's the minister we have now, made that announcement. And it was part of an election campaign.

But it's so much of how this government has operated. It's made announcements, knee-jerk announcements, and haven't really consulted with primary stakeholders such as teachers and families, and what the impact would be, what the impact would be. And here we are now seeing the unintended consequences.

And I think, I wish that we had more time and more resources to do the research on this, but if we were to go back and look at the old speeches from just a few years ago — when we talk about old speeches, we're not talking about many, many years ago, but just a few years ago — we would have all been on this side talking about the unintended consequences. And one of them would be, we would be predicting that we would be back here today. And here we are fixing a wrong that this government had made because they acted in haste. They did not

consult with the folks that they should have consulted with.

[16:15]

And to that extent, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a minute and talk about the minister's . . . Actually when he was talking in the Throne Speech and he, even he, even the minister then acknowledges that it was the first time that they had actually gone out and consulted. I think this is what it means. And I quote from page 5564 of the *Hansard*, October 28th, 2014, when the minister said, "We've undertaken a historic consultative process called student-first where teachers', parents', and students' voices were heard."

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, I think in many ways we would say, yes that's right because you haven't consulted — first for this government. They haven't gone out and consulted. And it's great that the minister's actually acknowledging that it's historic, that they're actually going out and consulting. This is something this government is not known for doing, whether it's *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, you can go through all the whole list of things, the employment Act, many things where they have not gone out and consulted. So it is good to see that the minister actually acknowledge a historic first, that they've actually gone out and done some consultation.

And I don't know if it came up then, or when it came up, but somebody pointed out to the minister, you know, there is a problem with that piece of legislation that you introduced a few years ago where you changed when kids would be coming back to school. And if you do it the way you had it right after Labour Day, at some point — and they are fixing the number of school days — at some point you're going to have a problem. You're going to have a problem, Mr. Minister. And he finally acknowledged that that day had arrived. And here we are, and now we have to change the legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, the list doesn't stop there. When we look at this Act, and there's four main parts, and I will talk about many of those parts. But many of the other parts that he should be talking about, the changes this government has made without consultation . . . And I refer back to that quote about the minister acknowledging that they don't do very much consultation, that in fact historically they've done a bad job of consulting, that there are other issues.

And that is, for example, the number of hours of instructional time that has caused chaos, chaos out in many school divisions because they're trying to coordinate what does that mean. They've established their processes to make sure they have a strong educational program. And I think that if this government is saying that they weren't having a strong educational program, then we need to hear that. We need to hear that. But they created a lot of problems out there because they didn't think through, they didn't think through what the consequences would be. And so we are glad to hear that they are doing now consultations, full consultations.

You know, we can talk about standardized testing. We can go on about standardized testing, about how this government refused to listen to the teachers, to school boards, or even academics about the problems of their infatuation about standardized testing and how they were going to pour money,

come whatever, into that. And so, Mr. Speaker, I have some real problems with how this government operates when it comes to education and their method. But I'm glad to hear that they are doing some consultation.

But I do want to talk a minute because, you know, this minister, he prides himself on accuracy and how he feels that, you know . . . and today decide over there, talk about fact checking and how they are really wanting to be accurate. Well here's a teachable moment. Here's a teachable moment here because I want to refer to again the Throne Speech response from the Minister of Education. And he often likes to talk about me in his speeches. And he often talks about me, and maybe some people would say, he kind of gives me, a bit of giving me the gears, I think. And you know, and this is a lesson. This is a teachable moment about how, you know, people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. And that's the lesson today. If you live in a glass house, it's not a good idea to throw stones.

This is what the member from Saskatoon Southeast was talking about. He said, and I quote, "The member opposite has said he's wanted a minimum wage and he's talked about *The Minimum Wage Act*, something hasn't existed in our province since 1969." So he's talking about me. He's talking about minimum wage. But the quote goes on.

The member opposite went on at great length about wanting to have a minimum wage Act. I don't know where he was in the summer of '69, whether he was watching the moon landing or watching Woodstock on TV, but that was the year the NDP did away with *The Minimum Wage Act*.

Now I ask you, in 1969, now some of you may remember who was in government in 1969. Do any of you remember who was in government in 1969? Now I know the member from Walsh Acres prides himself on being a factual type of guy. Would he remember who was in power in 1969? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well so the world didn't start before the member from Walsh Acres was born. That's an interesting approach. Anyways, Mr. Speaker, just for the benefit of those folks at home who may not remember or for the folks over there, it was not the NDP. It was the Liberals.

So my point here is for people who live in glass houses, for people who live in glass houses, they should not be throwing stones. And this minister, when he talks about being accurate, I'm talking about *The Education Act* because I hope he's accurate in that, because we keep talking about how we have to come back and fix the education mistakes. Here he has something pretty seriously wrong. He doesn't know his history, doesn't know his history. I don't know where the Minister of Education was in 1969. Maybe he was at Woodstock, I don't know. He could have been at Woodstock. I know where I was in the summer of '69. I was listening to the moon landing up in Waskesiu. That's what I was doing. I don't think I left the province that year.

But I'll come back to that because sometimes people say you have to repeat lessons seven times, seven times to get the point over there. So I may say this is lesson one or more times for the folks opposite because at the end of the day I really want to emphasize the point for everyone — you should not throw

rocks if you live in a glass house.

And if you don't know who was in power in 1969 in Saskatchewan, I mean he was actually kind of famous because, you know, when this happened, there was some important labour legislation that the Liberals actually brought in about labour standards. And I think they actually deserve a lot of credit for that because they consolidated a lot of things and made it *The Labour Standards Act*. So you know, the Liberal at the time, and actually it was Minister Coderre who was the minister at the time. And I would know that because Coderre is not far from my hometown of Mortlach, and we know a lot of people from Coderre. But at any rate, I digress on that point.

But I do want to say that we want to talk a little bit about the bill before us, Mr. Speaker. What I wanted to say about this was apparently there's four pieces of . . . And I'll take a minute here to review the minister's comments here. And he talks about four amendments, essentially four amendments that will be in place by September 1st, 2015, by Labour Day 2015.

The first change being proposed is to amend *The Education Act, 1995* to rename section 4.1 to the Education Scholarship Fund. The newly . . . Education Scholarship Fund will include the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall Scholarship and also the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Scholarship in alignment with the Premier's announcement on May 23rd, 2012 [which was a good announcement].

But I do want to say that the Prince of Wales announcement when it was first introduced — and I believe it was introduced in the spring of 2001 — in fact it was one of the first things that our former premier, Premier Calvert, had done just after being elected leader and being elected premier. That was one of the first things he set up and it was a great scholarship. And it was done in recognition of the Prince of Wales's visit here to Saskatchewan in the spring of 2001.

So I think it's fair enough, and if it means we can do more scholarships, then that will be a good thing. And that's a good thing because, as we know, especially for high school students as they enter post-secondary education, it is getting tougher and tougher. And we hear the stories in Saskatchewan. We know this government's in dispute about whether or not it's easier to get into schools here than it was. We know that it's still a challenge and it's very important.

And that's one of our main goals in education, is make sure that we prepare students well enough that they can enter into post-secondary education if they are so inclined. But we do not want to see financial costs as a barrier, and too often we see that, and we see that unfortunately in communities right across this province. And we want to do all that we can to make sure students who have the potential and have the will and have the drive do access post-secondary education, whether it's in the trades or whether it's in the arts or whether it's in other professional studies, we want to make sure that the potential of our young people is fully met.

And again, this is the whole purpose of *The Education Act*, in a sense, to make sure that everyone, every person, every young person in our province has the ability to become, to reach their

full potential. So that's a very important part, and I don't think it's a small part. I think this is important, so we'll be watching to see, and particularly now that we're into the budget cycle and the Premier has alluded to it, in fact alluded to it today in question period, that we're in the budget cycle. And maybe this is a signal that we'll see more bursaries coming forward, more scholarships. So this is a very good thing, and it's one that's important.

And the second change that's being proposed is to amend two expressions that are used in the French version of *The Education Act*. And one is to talk around a change to home-based education program, and also the change, "pupil with intensive needs." And now I do not have the faculty of the French language, and so I will not attempt to pronounce the words. But I understand, and I think that it's important that when we have the translation, we often talk about what's unfortunately lost in translation. And this is important when we talk about students with intensive needs.

I can go back. One of the very first things this government . . . And I still have some questions about this. When they changed, they took the words special needs out of *The Education Act*, and what that meant. And of course we supported the idea, the concept that students with special or unique needs, that we should be moving from a medical model to more of an individual model, an individual needs model. But when you took out the words — words are important — when you took out the word special, that in fact special education had a certain recognition right across Canada, in fact, right around the world. And this change was really problematic. And we still see some of the fallout from that.

But I think it's important that we listen to the translators and understand the nuances. They're hugely, hugely important.

Last week we had a good discussion about the statutes amendment Act and how we saw words like capacity being used. And I had raised some concerns around the idea that capacity may not completely meet the needs of what the government was trying to say in terms of the new definitions.

Clearly language evolves, and it becomes more specific, more current, but we have to make sure that we mean what we say and say what we mean. And I hope that in terms of the consultation that this government took on this, that it does meet the needs.

And this is what we'll be doing as an opposition, meeting with the Francophone community to find out, does this language capture the intent? It's really important that, again, that the intent is not lost. The intent is not lost in translation, and that in fact it in fact strengthens the bill and limits the unintended consequences because we don't want to be back here talking about the amendment again, as we are with the Labour Day, after the Labour Day fiasco that we knew, that we knew was coming. And here is the government today amending something that was almost a certain certainty that we would be discussing this point yet again. And so this is interesting.

[16:30]

So the second change looks relatively straightforward, but we

would like to make sure that it does capture the intent. And you know, I can remember when we asked about when special education, that word was changed, that in fact it did cause quite a stir because the groups, who the minister at the time said that they were consulted, and in fact they weren't consulted. And I think that's the important thing.

Well the third one, this is the one that really captured the news, and the government did issue a news release. And everybody, you know, quietly just shrugged because everybody knew that we were going to be coming back to this, that this was too big of a problem, and the government had to face it and face it head on. And of course that was to amend *The Education Act* to allow school divisions to start the school year prior to Labour Day when it occurs on or after September 5th.

And he talks about:

Current legislation provides that school divisions are required to commence instructional time no sooner than the day following Labour Day and to end no later than June 30th.

And this is where really the problem was caused because you're setting out parameters that just were difficult in Saskatchewan to meet because people have certain expectations around what a school year was, and generally speaking, we've always thought that school starts around or after Labour Day. Everybody had that idea, and then there were concerns, and people started seeing the school year creep maybe too much into August when there were too many days that were not instructional days happening in the school year, the main school year between September and in June. And so they were really concerned.

So people have an expectation about what will happen at Christmas. People have an expectation around Thanksgiving. And people have an expectation around Remembrance Day, and that's one that we know. And you know, I have to take our hats off, and I don't know who put the holiday, the stat holiday for Remembrance Day into being, but I think when we looked across Canada . . . And I know that's a debate that actually the federal government is having right now and moving relatively quickly. I don't know what the deal is with it, but making Labour Day a national stat holiday, because unfortunately it isn't, and we see variations across the provinces on that one holiday.

But we all have an understanding what spring vacation or Easter vacation would be. Now interestingly, and I'm not sure what the correct terminology is, whether Easter or spring, I think of it as Easter break because it's tied to Good Friday and Easter Sunday, but it may be more appropriately referred to as a spring break, and how people have an expectation that it will be a week. And so this is one that really shows how important consultation really should be in our province, Mr. Speaker, because there's just so many moving parts when you talk about holidays.

But as well, you know, ironically when I was a teacher, and actually the minister of Education at that time was the chairman of the public school board, and we have an interesting history in terms of, I was the chair of the local bargaining committee and so . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — We heard some stories about you back then.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Yes, there you go. We were all great. It was all great. But I tell you we had some interesting discussions around prep time and how important preparation time for teachers is, very important because it has a direct correlation to improved instruction, and improved instruction of course leads to better learning. And that's a great thing for students because at the end of the day, that's what all our goal is, is how can we help our students achieve better. And of course there's many ways of getting to that, but how you use your time wisely is really important.

So this is something that I know the minister's been thinking about for many years. And I've been thinking about many years because we've been talking about it for many years. But I think that it's one that here we are when you see quite clearly evidence of something that's not well thought out.

And of course this is a government and this is a caucus really, you know, and I don't know whether they have this process called stop-the-line, when you see . . . Did anybody in that caucus raise their hand and say, you know, to the people who are making those promises in that campaign, this isn't going to work? At some point this is going to be a problem. And when many of them got elected, you know, and the bill came forward in caucus, did anybody say, whoa, stop the line? Stop this line?

Oh there's one who said he raised his hand. Okay, it would be him who said he raised his hand. He raised his hand to say, stop. This is not going to work. We're going to be back here. We're going to be back here in a few years. Somebody over there should have said, whoa, stop the line. Stop the legislative line, because this is not going to work. This is not going to work.

Because here we are. Here we are. We should be debating things like buy local. We should be debating that bill on P3s [public-private partnership]. But instead here we are, fixing up a mistake that this government made because nobody would stand up. Nobody would stand up and say, whoa, stop the line.

I think that many of those over there suffer from what they call group think, you know, because they don't want to stand up and say, you know what, Mr. Minister? This is not going to work. This is not going to work. We're going to be back in a few years. So I really do urge them. And I know many of them got up and, you know, we had quite a stirring debate about the statutes of limitations and spelling, and they really get into that over there. And you know, I think this is the kind of stuff, when they come forward, they need to say, hey, stop the line. Doesn't make any sense. Doesn't make any sense.

Because if you know how the calendar works, dates and days change around. If you know how that works . . . a little different, you know. And you have a leap year and that throws another curveball into it. And so I think the folks over there needed to sit down and figure out, needed to figure out what was going to happen if they put in that legislation. And they did. They did. And because, you know, as we had these second reading speeches, we have these second reading speeches and I would hope that they listened to them. I hope they would listen

to them and say okay, this doesn't make much sense. Now today the fix is correct. We think that . . . But we need to talk to the people, the stakeholders.

But there are other things that you could be fixing and talking about today. They should be talking about the minimum hours of instruction because that isn't really very helpful. You should go back to and say, so what are we trying to resolve here? What are we really trying to resolve? You know, we all want our children to do better at school. That is a given. How do we make that happen? How do we make that happen? Well we think there should be better funding in schools. They should be addressing issues like that. They should be fixing the issues that teachers are identifying. Now the issues of overcrowded classrooms, the issues about educational assistants, that should be fixed. Now they're all saying this is done — done, done, done; it's all done.

The last thing on their list, the last thing on their list was to fix the calendar. Was that what they're saying? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. If that's the last thing that needed to be fixed, then we've got a problem. We've got a problem because a lot of people out there have a lot of concerns about how we can make our Saskatchewan schools better.

We have a great opportunity. We have a great opportunity. More kids, more kids in schools than ever before — this is a wonderful thing. We've got excellent teachers. You've got excellent teachers. But frankly they feel their hands are tied because they're not getting the resources they should be getting. And this government . . . We'll be watching the budget. We'll be watching the budget.

**An Hon. Member:** — Like in 2009 when they slashed over 300 educational assistants.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Three hundred educational assistants? Where did they go? And yet they say things are better.

And they have this infatuation about standardized testing when we know that doesn't prove education. And we know we have to do much more for First Nations and Métis education. And we saw there was a great consultation piece that happened a few years ago and it was put up on the shelf, put up on the shelf. And we know there's much more work to be done, much more work to be done.

So we do see, we do see a challenge for this government because they do have these ideological blinders put on and we're . . . And this really brings me to the fourth point, brings me to the fourth point when we talk about P3 schools or the rent-a-schools. Talk about blinders, talk about blinders. They should be looking about. You know, one day we'll hear they look across the country and they see what other provinces are doing and how they're backing away from certain things, they're changing things because that's what other provinces are doing. And then the next day they say, hey, we're going to do this first, or is it worst? They're going to do it first or worst? I don't know. I think they're going to do P3s, the rent-a-school thing. We're going to be watching this one very closely.

You know, the whole thing about transparency and accountability, even when the BC [British Columbia] auditor



says, not a great idea, not a great idea because of the way you're forcing, the way they're forcing the local school boards to borrow money, the way they're forcing local school boards to borrow money at 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 per cent higher and this could result in increased costs, in fact several hundred million dollars. I've heard some estimates of \$300 million . . . [inaudible] . . . on these P3 schools. Now I don't know what \$300 million could buy. Could that buy a school or two? I think it could. I think it could.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is the same . . . Here you have on one hand the point three, where they're essentially saying, okay, we admit that we made a mistake. But wait till you see point four. We're going to talk about our biggest mistake, and that is tying the hands of our local school boards and saying we've got to do P3s.

Now really what it does, section 9 removes the requirement for the board to get a quote on a loan before passing a resolution to borrow money. And we think this may be a way of hiding the higher interest rates on P3s, which cost in BC more than 3.5 per cent. And that's huge. That's huge when you think of the costs that . . . when you're thinking about the scale of these projects. That's a significant amount of a money, and a significant amount of money.

Now if we're going to see the same kind of accountability that the minister from SaskPower says he's talking about, the CCS [carbon capture and storage] project, that he's going to do the analysis after a \$1.6 billion project is done . . . We're going to only see the analysis after it's done, not before it's done. It must have been done before. I mean clearly this government, any government, any government would have done its work before, would have done its homework before.

And so we have some real questions about this, Mr. Speaker. And I think that we have to really reflect on how this government . . . and its commitment to education.

And you know, when I think about this and I think about, you know, what I had said earlier, and I think I want to talk a little bit more about especially around the history. And we have the Minister of Education who doesn't know when the last time a Liberal government was in power in Saskatchewan, doesn't know but yet seems to take quite a lot of pride in throwing rocks at glass houses when he himself lives in one. I think this is something he should think about, he should really think about. When he makes a big deal about pride of accuracy and knowing the facts and letting the facts tell the story, and here he is, here he is throwing rocks. And really he should be watching what he's talking about because clearly somebody . . . Now I know the quality of Sask Party researchers aren't so great. But they've gone up a little . . . Well I don't know where they are. They're kind of . . . That one bad one is, yes, out the door. But they were sort of at the D level, floating around the F, D level, somewhere in there, up and down. But you know the researchers . . .

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

**Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave to make an introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked for leave to make an introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. To you and to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce Mr. Ian Chisholm. He's no stranger to this Assembly. He's joining us from British Columbia today. He's doing some work on behalf of Pearson College, and that's an institution that I know he is a trustee with, but he is also connected to this fine Assembly through the good work of his father, Michael Chisholm, who served very ably on this side of the Assembly most recently. And so I'd ask all members to join me in helping to welcome Ian to his Legislative Assembly.

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

[16:45]

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — With leave to introduce guests.

**The Speaker:** — The member has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with the member opposite and welcome Dennis Chisholm's son, I believe . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Michael Chisholm's son — sorry — to the Assembly here today. And I would like to say that I enjoyed actually working with his dad although I'm sure we had different perspectives on a whole lot of issues. We quite enjoyed working together on Public Accounts and I always valued his work and focus on that front. So a pleasure to welcome his son here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 163** — *The Education Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur l'éducation*  
(continued)

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's great to have people in the gallery as well. And I think it's important that when we have debates like this, when we're talking about something so fundamental and *The Education Act* really is one of . . . You know, when we talk about core pieces of legislation, this is I think one of the most fundamental pieces of legislation in our whole legislative suite. I mean and I know that people would argue whether it's labour or health, of course,

environment would be right up there as well, and all of the good work that government is required to do, education is clearly one of them. *The Education Act* is a real fundamental, foundational document that I know the stakeholders, whether they be the school boards or whether they be the teachers, you know, parents, and now you know, in our new day and age too with young people and how it's so important to consult with them.

And we talked about that just a few days ago in terms of the international day of children and the United Nations declaration that recognizes how important it is to talk about the consultation and recognition of the rights of young people. And really this is what we are here all about in terms of making sure our young people are educated well and they have the ability to move on and the opportunities that, you know, as every generation moves forward to new opportunities, and we want to make sure that there are no limitations, that in fact we have the best education here in Saskatchewan.

And so it's not something we take lightly, and so when we go out and we consult with the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], we will ask them, so what should have been in this Act? What should have been in this Act? And will we see yet another amendment Act?

Because quite often this is what happens with this government. They put one Act . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, they haven't fixed the hour issue and we'll probably see a second education Act. We'll probably see yet another bill and it will be called an Act to amend *The Education Act, 1995* (No. 2). We might even see an Act to amend *The Education Act, 1995* (No. 3). Because the government never seems to finish it, never seems or never really finishes the job. What are the key pieces that we need to have done? And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's really, really important that we take the time.

And I know this government doesn't have a really strong legislative agenda, does not have a strong legislative agenda this session. And really we are concerned about that because some of the things that we're seeing before the House, you know, we look at their agricultural agenda, the legislative agenda was essentially one bill that was one line long. And here we have . . . And the points itself do have merit in terms of having a discussion. We do think it's important to make sure we allow a process to have more bursaries or scholarships. I think that's hugely important, and that's great.

I mean, but the real challenge will be if we just change the name to Education Scholarship Fund, and if we just changed the name and yet put no more money into it, that would be a real shame, wouldn't it? What would be the point? And so is this a signal that we're going to see more money in the budget for the Education Scholarship Fund? Or are we just going to see a name change and that's it?

You know, we were very proud to create the Prince of Wales scholarship back in 2001, and that was a good thing. And now we need to see more, more supports. We want to make sure, as I've said, we want to make sure that the barriers for post-secondary education are gone. And if the barriers are gone, then that's a great thing so kids can take full potential.

The second point the government made is around the French

translation, on those two points about home-schooling and students with special needs or unique needs and how a better translation is very important.

But I think the last two points are very interesting when we talk about the Labour Day change. And of course, as I've said, there was a collective sigh right across the province where the government finally owned up to the fact that they had made a mistake, that they should've consulted. And even in the minister's own words that they had, you know, a historic, a consultation process, something they hadn't seen before. And we agree, they have not really engaged in good consultations.

We've seen a reluctance to have public meetings. We've seen a reluctance to actually engage face-to-face meetings. Especially that minister is one who really doesn't seem to get out and meet with people. He'd rather have people do things through the website. And we do have really major concerns about section 9 that removes the requirement for the board to get a quote on a loan before passing a resolution to borrow money. We have a lot of concerns about what that means in terms of transparency.

We've put forward a bill about transparency for P3s, and yet the government refused to pass it last time. And we've got it . . . They don't want to be accountable or transparent. They're going to do it their style, their style. And I don't know if that's the style of the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, the smart meter style. You'll never find out anything unless you really pull and pull and pull, pull. And we don't want to see, we don't want to see that happen. We don't want to see that happen. And I just thought it was so passing strange that that minister could get up today and lecture us on strange financial behaviour, strange financial behaviour, somebody who's managing the smart meter fiasco. There's no lessons from that guy, no lessons from that guy about how to explain things, no lesson at all from that guy.

You know, so you have that minister and you have this minister over there, the Minister of Education who really wants to rewrite history, rewrite history, writing out the Liberals. And there's some Liberals over on that side; I don't know how they feel about it, how they feel about it. They're fleeing because they see the Sask Party rewriting history, writing out the Liberals out of Saskatchewan history. Because it was in 1969 they did away with *The Minimum Wage Act* to create a much better piece of legislation called *The Labour Standards Act*.

So that Minister of Education really needs to take a few lessons himself. Or maybe his researchers need to take a few lessons because I think that this is a real problem. And this government who likes to talk about glass houses, they themselves live in a glass house. And they should watch when they start chucking rocks because you know what happens? What goes around comes around, and it's coming back to them.

And that minister loves to have a few laughs. But you know, it's odd when it comes back and gets him right in the House. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a problem. I think that's a problem. So we have some concerns about this. We want to know. We will be talking to the stakeholders and we'll be talking about a whole host of issues in education. How's it going? How's it going with the educational assistants? Are the kids with needs getting their support with the special needs? Are they? This

government says, yes they are. They say, yes they are, and there's not any more work to be done.

Well we'll have to hear from the people in the front lines, in the classrooms, about that case. And we have some real questions about that. We have some questions about First Nations and Métis education. How is that going? Should there be stuff in this bill about that? What's not in here? What's not in here? We have a lot of questions about that.

And again, when I talk about the P3s, this is really a question that we have. Because clearly, you know, when we see the mayor of Regina raising questions, when we see the auditor from BC raising questions. We see what they've done in Alberta when they've walked away and say, this isn't working. This isn't working. This is a real problem. Again, it's really about ideological blinders. These folks are looking straight ahead. They're looking straight ahead until there's no more road.

And this is what happened with the Labour Day fiasco. Clearly they were caught. They were caught in a jam, and the minister had to admit that it was, they had to admit, they had to admit it was wrong. It was wrong. And while it was an interesting idea, too many people couldn't believe what they heard. And we remembered during that campaign when people go, what? Where did that come from? Where did that come from?

Well you know, it's like so many things that they've brought forward, like the 950 hours, you know. Where did that come from that it had such power that this government would go right to it? What about the standardized testing? Who was calling for standardized testing? Who was calling for, who was calling for the cuts to educational assistants? Who was calling for crowded classrooms?

So, Mr. Speaker, we have questions about this. And we think that we don't want to be back discussing or debating another amendment to *The Education Act*. And it would be very interesting, and it might be just something that we'll have to do a little work on, to find out how many times have we amended past legislation when this government did not clearly think through the consequences? And we raise this. We really do. And I know the folks over there go, oh that's just a . . . you always say that. Well we do because there always seems to be a point where we come back, where we come back and find out that there's been a problem.

They haven't really thought it all the way through, or if they've said that they've consulted with folks, they really haven't consulted with the folks. When we call them up and they say, so we hear this is what you're saying. Is that right? And they go, well no, it's not really what we're saying. And we hear, you know, in fact actually it was . . . It would have been interesting here that this, you know . . . Actually as I look through the minister's speech, there is no acknowledgement of having consultations with any of the stakeholders on any of this. And I think this would have been very, very important, you know.

I think it would have been very important, for example, and this is one I think is really important, is when we talk about the scholarships. Were you talking to groups who really, who really have faced barriers to post-secondary education? Who are those

folks? Who are those folks that are facing real barriers?

Well one group I know, and I think the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union president, Max FineDay, raised a really interesting point about kids who have grown up in foster care, and what about the barriers they have? And is there something that we can make sure that they have access to post-secondary education because we see, as I've said, a direct correlation, the kids who do well in school then go on to post-secondary, and just achieve very well in later life. They have to have that option, Mr. Speaker, they clearly have to have that option.

And so I know that there will be many of my colleagues who will have a lot to say about this, and particularly around the P3 borrowing change here that we see, and how it's been disguised as giving local school boards options when really, really they don't have options, and as well the amendments around the Labour Day. As I said, this was a really, a very good opportunity for the government to come clean and admit to some of the other areas, but they're only doing this one. So we'll probably be, we'll probably really . . . So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like adjournment of the debate on Bill No. 163. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 163, *The Education Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to facilitate the work of committees this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. [Inaudible] . . . we will be sitting at 7 o'clock. The House stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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