



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

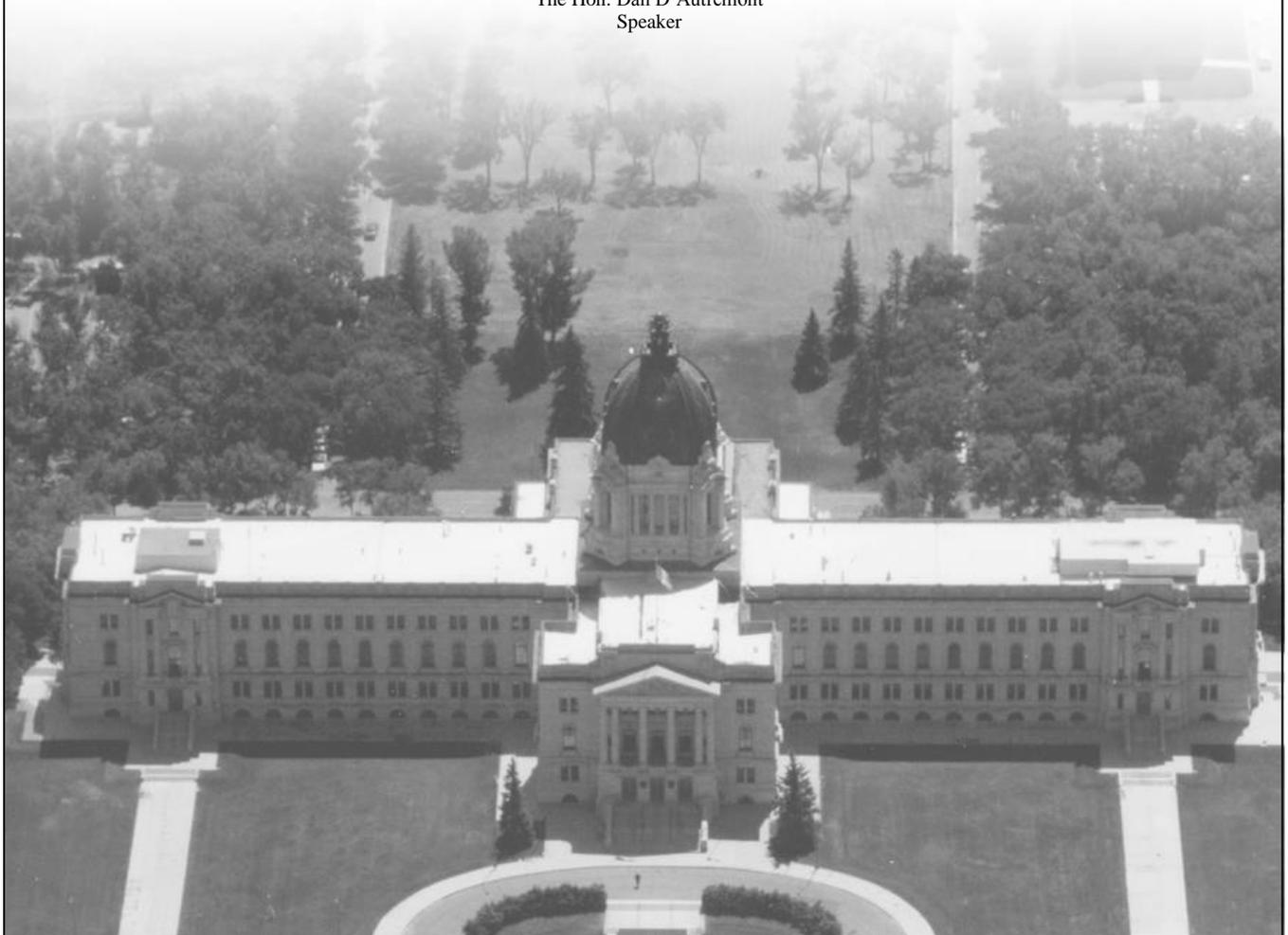
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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]

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — I wish to table the 2014 report volume 2 of the Provincial Auditor as provided for in section 14.1 of *The Provincial Auditor Act*.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I would like to welcome, seated in the Speaker's gallery, the Privacy and Information Commissioner, Mr. Ron Krutzeniski. And his spouse and staff are here today for a reception that will take place at 2:30 p.m. in room 218, and everyone is invited. I would welcome everyone to welcome Ron to the Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the Minister for Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'm pleased to introduce a number of guests seated in your gallery. They are representatives of our outstanding education system and have joined us today for the introduction of *The Registered Teachers Act*.

With us today we have Connie Bailey, president, Saskatchewan School Boards Association; Darren McKee, executive director, SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association]; Gwen Dueck, executive director of Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; Fay Elke, senior administrative staff, STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation]. And I probably should have said this one first: Randy Cline, vice-president of STF and, I believe, acting president of STF at the present time; Mike Walter, president, League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents of Saskatchewan or more commonly known as LEADS; Dr. Bill Cooke, executive director of LEADS; and also Gerry Hurton, executive director, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

I want to thank all of them for coming today and taking time out of their busy schedules to join us, but most of all for having the leadership and vision to come together and ensure that we are doing everything we can to protect our most valuable resource, our students. I want to ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests to their legislature today.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to join with the Education minister and welcome these leaders in education, or the educational partners, to their legislature here today. It's a pleasure to have them in their Assembly. It's a pleasure to appreciate and recognize their leadership that they provide to education in our province day in, day out, year-round, Mr. Speaker, as well.

But it's nice to have President Connie Bailey, and Darren

McKee with the school boards here today. It's a pleasure to have Mike Walter and Dr. Cooke from LEADS. Mr. Walter is also the deputy director here in Regina, leading Regina Public. And here with the STF, it's a pleasure to have Gwen Dueck; Acting President, Randy Cline; and Fay Elke here today.

So as I said, it's a pleasure to join with the Education minister here today. I believe there's also some fine ministry officials that are here today. We know that this sector works best when it works in partnership and collaboration. And when you speak of the SSBA, LEADS, and the STF, along with government, that's exactly what it should be, a partnership. And when it's exercised as just that, better outcomes are a result. So it's a pleasure to welcome these leaders to their Assembly here today.

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you, I'd like to introduce some community leaders within the northwest community of Regina. Through our job, we get to meet a lot of community leaders at organizations that do a lot of great work throughout Regina. And I would like to introduce Pastor Jerven Weekes from the Rosewood Park Alliance Church, along with his hard-working staff, Sarah, Jacob, Jaci, Leone, Jolene, and Joel. Give a wave to us.

I have had the fortunate opportunity to meet Jerven after I was elected, and he gave some great mentorship to me. And I came to call him a good friend; I trust his advice, and it's very great. We get together and have a breakfast every now and then, and his mentorship means a lot to me. So I just want to introduce him to all members of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, I'd like to introduce some individuals who have travelled here today, Mr. Speaker, from the communities of Craik, from Central Butte, and from the surrounding areas. And seated, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery are the following individuals: Webster Lee, John Ackland, Shelley Rogers, Mayor Rick Rogers of Craik, JoAnne Yates, Sarah Wells, David Ashdown, Reeve Hilton Spencer of the RM [rural municipality] of Craik, Raymond Carrick, Richard Murray, and Dr. Elie Karam.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these individuals to the Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce four special individuals, constituents of mine from Yorkton. The first is no stranger, my constituency assistant and foundation back in Yorkton, Ms. Lauretta Ritchie-McInnes. I'll ask Lauretta to wave. And she's very active in the constituency as well as serving the community in a bunch of different needs as well, Mr. Speaker.

With her are three members of the Lortie family from Yorkton: Pierre, the father, along with Isaac and Benjamin are with her today. Isaac is a grade 6 student at M.C. Knoll School in Yorkton. His strongest subject is physical activity. He plays hockey and tennis, but I know that he has a special capacity for chess also, Mr. Speaker, and a great amount of mental stamina. I'm sure that his intellect will serve him well in that activity as well.

Pierre is the dad of Isaac and Ben and Sofia, who is at home with her mom, Narom, today. Pierre's background: he's a Canadian military Armed Forces, retired; a degree in electronics. In fact one of the satellite projects that he's worked on is still up there orbiting the Earth, Mr. Speaker. He made a career change recently. He is now serving with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] in Yorkton, his first posting since depot. His family has moved to Yorkton just over four years ago. Pierre's wife Narom couldn't be here today. A very interesting story meeting her, she's a Cambodian refugee. They met in Canada and have been married and started their family.

The main reason that they all travelled here today was for Benjamin. He is a superior tennis player and a chess player, achieved many goals, and I'll be highlighting him in member statements later, Mr. Speaker.

I ask everybody to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to introduce to the Assembly and ask all the members of the Assembly to welcome some very special guests. We have some engaged citizens. We have some community leaders. We have some business people. They have questions and concerns around the Regina bypass decisions of this government. And this is a very big and very important project; it's critical that we get it right. And these citizens are here to ask questions and, Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that answers are provided. And I ask all members of the Assembly to welcome these very special guests.

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

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Ms. Speaker, I would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the guests who are here today. We understand the Regina bypass is a huge project, Mr. Speaker, and we have, as a government, endeavoured to make the right decisions and look forward to the completion of the bypass. But I do want to welcome the guests that are here today as well.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you, Matthew McStravick. Matthew is a young man; he's in grade 9 in Winston Knoll High School in the constituency of Regina Qu'Appelle Valley. He's a member of the SRC [student representative council].

Now Matthew, for his birthday this year, asked his dad to take him to city council. So he has attended every city council meeting since July the 28th, which was his birthday. So I would imagine we should all get used to seeing Matthew because if he's interested in city council, I'm sure he's going to be very interested in the goings-on in the Legislative Assembly today.

So thank you very much, Matthew, for coming out today. And I had a nice opportunity to meet with him, talk to him about his interests. He's interested in both provincial, federal, and international politics. So this is a young leader that we should all be watching. Thank you very much for coming today, Matthew.

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

**Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my great pleasure to introduce a wonderful group of students and educators from Grant Road School right here in Regina.

Today in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, we are joined by 24 grade 5 and 6 students. Give us a wave, you guys. Great to see you. They are accompanied by Daina Seymour, classroom teacher; Janet Davies, educational assistant; Shannon Leib, school learning resource teacher; and Danika Wolfe, who's the intern.

Let's welcome all of them to their Assembly today. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to take a minute to give a shout-out to one of my former colleagues, Mr. Gerry Craswell, who I went to university with 30 years ago when we graduated.

So he stuck with a teaching career. He's almost ready to retire. I bailed on that, so I'm going to be working a lot longer than him. But he used to be known as The Cras. He taught in my hometown of Lafleche. He's now working with the Ed ministry. So just say hello to Gerry. Everybody, please welcome him to the Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting in your gallery, through you and to you, is a constituent of mine, Mr. David Bowman. If you could give us a wave. And seated with him, his wife, Arlyne Bowman.

I've known David for a number of years now, and always interested in some of the talks. Also today happens to be Arlyne's birthday, and so if we could all have a little clap and a happy birthday at the same time, we'd all appreciate it. But if we could welcome them to their Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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

We know that in September this year, this government walked away from a new 48-unit, low-income affordable housing project 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 to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to the danger created by that government on Dewdney Avenue with the inundation of heavy-haul truck traffic. Certainly they note the importance of timely completion of the west bypass, but there’s immediate and urgent actions required to ensure safety on Dewdney Avenue. 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 residents in Regina and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Homelessness is a major problem in La Ronge and other parts of the North, and it’s getting worse. Shelter is a basic need for everyone, but under this government it’s getting harder and harder for people to find adequate housing, especially families, seniors, women, and children who face abusive situations. Their problem is getting worse because of

the rising level of poverty and skyrocketing costs to homeowners. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Saskatchewan government to build a homeless shelter in the Lac la Ronge area to meet the needs of addressing homelessness in the Lac la Ronge area.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

[13:45]

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I stand in my place to present a petition on the Prince Albert bridge, and the petition is to build a second bridge for Prince Albert as opposed to renting. 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 primarily from Saskatoon, but we’ve got pages and pages of petitions signed from all throughout the province, and I so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of safe staffing levels in long-term care. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that many aspects of long-term care are deteriorating under this government, that the Government of Saskatchewan actually recognize the need for safe staffing levels to provide hands-on care to residents. They point out that the government is failing to fix the basics in long-term care, including rejecting the further urgent requests from long-term care facilities for increased and needed staffing levels. The petitioners talk about the government removing the regulations requiring a minimum standard of care for seniors, resulting in neglect.

They point out that chronic understaffing in long-term care facilities results in unacceptable conditions, including unanswered calls for help, infrequent bathing, and a rise in physical violence amongst residents. And they point out that fixing the basics and achieving real improvements in long-term care services requires a firm commitment to actually listen to front-line health care workers, residents, and their families as opposed to failing to properly listen to their concerns. 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: to cause the government to commit to the creation of safe staffing levels for all valued members of the health care team and to reintroduce actual numbers of staff to match the level of care needs and the number of residents under their care in long-term care facilities.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks in Swift Current, at Gull Lake, Herbert, and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of better health care in Saskatchewan. In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to recognize health care is getting worse under its watch and to begin fixing the basics by listening to health care workers, patients, and their families; properly maintaining hospitals and care facilities; and focusing its resources on front-line care instead of spending millions on its lean pet project.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Canora, Lloydminster, and Carrot River. I so present.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition from people of Saskatchewan who are opposed to correctional service job privatization. People are concerned that the government wants to privatize food services in the corrections and young offender facilities. They are concerned that the government isn't listening to these workers about the concerns they have about the impact of the loss of jobs, both how it affects the correction system and the community. So the prayer reads that:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan may be pleased to cause the government to cancel its privatization in the corrections and young offenders facilities in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to present a petition condemning this government's dangerous smart meter program. The individuals who signed this petition want to bring to our attention the following: the government knew about major safety concerns related to its smart meter project; the government ignored those safety concerns and plowed ahead with its program; and the safety of Saskatchewan families was put at significant risk.

In the prayer that reads as follows, they:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to take responsibility for its failure to act on readily available information about the 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by individuals from Cupar, Dilke, Lumsden, Wishart, Wynyard, Regina, Melville, Shaunavon, Saskatoon, Outlook, Hudson Bay, and Indian Head. I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Black Lake Students Recognized for Math Excellence

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my place today to recognize a remarkable accomplishment of some grade 7 students from my constituency. Ms. Clarke's grade 7 math class at Father Porte Memorial Dene School was recently recognized as one of the top classes in Canada for math.

Now that would be an amazing accomplishment for any community, Mr. Speaker, but the fact that the students in this remote northern community have been able to rise to the top of the nation is a story that deserves recognition. The students were able to rise to the top because of Ms. Clarke's innovative teaching techniques. She has successfully integrated cutting-edge technology, using iPads and computers, to make learning easy and fun.

I am so proud of the teaching staff, of the students, and am so proud to be the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for this wonderful, hard-working team and community. The students and staff at Father Porte have worked very hard to win this award, and I'm looking forward to travelling to Black Lake tomorrow to meet these important community members in person.

Many students in the North struggle with math and sciences, but this group of students from Black Lake demonstrates that great things are possible for students in any community. I ask all members to join me in congratulating these Black Lake students, their teacher, and their principal, Steven Thatcher, on this remarkable accomplishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### International Day of Persons with Disabilities

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise in the House today to proclaim today as International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Mr. Speaker, this day has been observed since 1981 and was later proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992.

It aims to provide an understanding of disability issues and rally support for the dignity, rights, and well-being of people with disabilities. This year's theme is Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology. Technology is an important communication and safety tool for people who experience a range of disabilities, providing many opportunities to express themselves and increase their independence.

Mr. Speaker, technology continues to play an important role in connecting all of us together to share experiences and interact in ways we never thought possible. Developments in video conferencing; text-to-voice translation; accessibility functions on computers, tablets, and smart phones are just a few examples.

Our government is committed to making Saskatchewan the best place to live in Canada for people with disabilities, and we are continuing to work on improving their lives and developing a province-wide disability strategy that will be released in the spring of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, our province is strong. We need to ensure that everyone is able to share in the opportunities created by this strength. I ask all members to join me in celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise too in the Assembly to recognize that today is the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The purpose of today is to promote the dignity, rights, and well-being of those in our communities who are living with disabilities. Currently there are over 1 billion people living in the world with some form of disability. We know persons with disabilities not only face physical barriers, but also social, economic, and attitudinal barriers.

At the national level we salute this week the unanimous agreement of the House of Commons to commit to support the needs of those who are victims of thalidomide, and now we look forward to the release of our own provincial strategy on how we can best support those living with disabilities. In both cases the real challenge will be actual supports, including financial resources from governments.

Mr. Speaker, we've noted that many groups are looking for better housing and better educational opportunities. One group that continues to face barriers in our province is the deaf and hard of hearing community. I continually hear that from the advocates of the deaf community. They need stronger supports in our schools, including supporting American Sign Language as a language of instruction.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing today as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and that our work to ensure that our province is the best place for all citizens must be a real priority.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Yorkton Athlete Excels at Tennis

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have already introduced you to the Lortie family, specifically Benjamin, and would like to now highlight a few of Benjamin's many accomplishments. Benjamin is 12 years old and has been living in Yorkton since 2011. At age 10 he began to invest himself in tennis.

Ben and his coach, Blaine Stoll, went to the Saskatchewan Summer Games in 2012 and earned a gold medal in mixed double for Parkland team. At the time he was only 10 years old and competing against 11- to 14-year-old division.

Since 2012 Ben has been a member of the Saskatchewan provincial tennis squad. Tennis has given Ben the opportunity to travel to Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, and Ontario, as well as compete in a number of tournaments all over our province. As of today, Ben is ranked 26th in tennis in Canada for his age category. He will be going to Miami, Florida later this month to participate in the Orange Bowl International Tennis Tournament.

On top of tennis, Ben is an avid chess player and has already represented Saskatchewan three times at the highest national competition.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Ben Lortie for all of his hard work and dedication. May we wish him further success as he continues to represent Saskatchewan's athletic strength in Canada and throughout the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. University exams are just around the corner and post-secondary studies are soon ending for the Christmas holidays. This past fall, the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship awarded nearly \$6 million in scholarships to 12,000 students attending post-secondary education across our province.

Since being introduced in 2012, this program aims to make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable for Saskatchewan students. This scholarship is available to all recently graduated grade 12 students as well as students who completed adult basic education or their GED [general equivalency diploma] after January 1st, 2012. Students can qualify for \$500 per school year up to a maximum of \$2,000. Since 2012 nearly 26,000 scholarships worth \$13 million have been awarded. Programs such as the Advantage Scholarship provide just one more reason for our students to stay in their home province after their graduation.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008 this government has invested \$5.5 billion in post-secondary institutions and students. This government values education, and we are seeing the benefits of our investments by high-quality graduates who are coming out of these institutions. Programs such as the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship as well as the graduate retention

program are investments in our future.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating this year's recipients of the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, and we wish all post-secondary students the very best in their future endeavours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Social Services.

### **New Educational Facility Opens in Humboldt**

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of the Humboldt Public School and Child Care Centre. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that our government contributed \$13.8 million and partnered with the Horizon School Division to help with the completion of a major addition and renovation to the school.

The renovated school combines a portion of the former Humboldt Collegiate Institute, which we built new a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, with the Humboldt elementary school. The new renovations and additions include a gym with a new stage complete with sound and lighting system, seven additional classrooms which will include new industrial arts, home economics, and science labs, art and music rooms. The facility also includes a new library resource centre, a therapy gym, a Snoezelen room, and a 51-space licensed daycare centre.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few years we've seen remarkable growth across the province and in our schools. Our government is committed to supporting that growth by ensuring that our students have a safe and comfortable learning environment. That is why we've committed approximately 700 million towards 47 major school projects and numerous smaller projects since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, we all know our children in this province are our most precious resource. I ask all our members to join with me in congratulating the city of Humboldt and the Horizon School Division for the grand opening of the Humboldt Public School and Child Care Centre. Thank you.

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

[14:00]

### **Weyburn Native Wins Most Outstanding Lineman Award**

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Brett Jones, the starting centre for the Calgary Stampeders, on another outstanding season. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday he won the CFL's [Canadian Football League] Most Outstanding Lineman Award in only his second season in the league. And on Sunday, as we all know, he helped the Stampeders to a Grey Cup.

Mr. Speaker, Brett is no stranger to success. He played high school football at the Weyburn Comprehensive and won 3A division city championships in both 2007 and 2008. He then went on to an all-star career with the Regina Rams, where he was two-time CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport] all-star and

was Canada West top student athlete in both 2011 and 2012.

But even with this success, he wasn't even sure he was going to play professional football. Brett actually applied for medical school before being drafted by the Stampeders in the second round. Thankfully for the Stampeders, he ended up playing football where he was the most outstanding rookie last season.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to point out that Brett is the second consecutive product of the city of Weyburn to win the CFL's Most Outstanding Lineman award, as last year Brendon LaBatte won the award.

Mr. Speaker, clearly there's something in the water at the Weyburn Comprehensive, and as you can tell, it clearly wasn't in the water when I was a student there. But, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join with me in congratulating Brett on another successful season.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Provision of Health Care and Physician Services**

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're joined today by a delegation from Craik and Central Butte and area, including Reeve Hilton Spencer, Mayor Rick Rogers, Dr. Elie Karam, and several others. They've travelled here today because they're upset with this government for scaling back health care services in Craik. They've tried to meet with the Health minister and the Rural Health minister, but they were told, Mr. Speaker, that both ministers were too busy.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier. Will he agree to meet with these individuals today to hear their concerns first-hand, and then at least instruct one of his two ministers to follow up on their concerns?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly want to check with the two ministers, the Minister of Health and the Minister for Rural and Remote Health with respect to a response they might have given to an invitation to meet with the folks because, Mr. Speaker, I know both of them have readily accepted all invitations to meet with communities about health care issues and health care concerns. And that's what we would want them to do, as a government. Mr. Speaker, these are the people that we serve in this legislature, including those that have concerns about decisions being taken.

Mr. Speaker, I'm aware of some of the specific concerns around doctor coverage with respect to this particular area. I can get into the details of the answer. The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that as a result of a candidate ready to begin her practice in Heartland in mid- to late-January who will join a Dr. Lang in Davidson, Mr. Speaker, we think we're going to achieve that third, that third doctor coverage that's required to continue the services as we would want them, Mr. Speaker.

I note in a letter from Five Hills Health Region dated 6 November 2014, there is a quote with respect to the summary of

this additional, this doctor that will practise and the service that will be provided that says:

Along with the service agreement between the two health regions, this funding arrangement will enable stable physician coverage in Craik as well as stable on-call coverage for the hospital in Davidson.

It also goes on to say, "We do not anticipate this resulting in any change of service within Craik."

Mr. Speaker, there'll be issues with respect with Central Butte we can chat about. I know ministers will want to meet with the delegation immediately after question period. But we are responding, in my understanding, through the region in terms of providing doctor coverage. And if there's more that can be done, I'm sure we'd be interested in hearing directly from the guests that have joined us in the gallery.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, if the minister is questioning what the delegation are saying about what has happened, the Premier should meet with them this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. And I know they would very much welcome the opportunity to share first-hand to the Premier what they're experiencing. They don't come to the legislature, Mr. Speaker, because they are happy and satisfied. They come because they have real concerns, concerns that should be listened to.

The previous doctor in Craik, who moved to Moose Jaw, had about 5,000 patients. Dr. Karam, a Canadian-trained physician wants to keep working and practising in Craik and provide services to these patients. But the government wants to prevent Dr. Karam from doing so because it wants to centralize doctors in a different community.

Mr. Speaker, in the delegation today, we're joined by John Ackland; he's with us. John had a severe heart attack. John told me, Mr. Speaker, that his life was saved because of the services provided in Craik and the health care that was provided by Dr. Karam.

My question is to the Premier: will he commit today to ensure . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and the member from Indian Head-Milestone is heckling about this, Mr. Speaker, when people from a rural community come with concerns, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Premier: will he commit today to ensure that Dr. Karam can keep practising and keep saving lives in Craik?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I think the minister that was just referenced by the Leader of the Opposition was commenting on the monumental work that's had to take place in this province to rebuild health care in rural Saskatchewan after that party closed 52 hospitals across this province. So we'll say it. We'll put it on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote, with respect to this issue, I will respond and quote directly from a letter. This is certainly the understanding we have. And if more can be done, if more can

be done, we'd certainly want to hear directly from the visitors to the Assembly. And I quote, this is the letter from Five Hills Health Region from November 6th:

As we've discussed in the past, our direction is to ensure the stability of physician services to the Davidson/Craik corridor, both for routine scheduled visits and also for on-call coverage. In order to provide the level of service consistently, a group of three physicians is required.

It goes on to say:

We understand that Heartland has a SIPPA candidate. [That's the new process we've gone through to expand the number of rural doctors we have.] The SIPPA candidate will be ready to begin her practice by mid to late January to join Dr. Lang in Davidson.

Accordingly a contract extension was offered to Dr. Karam on October 29, 2014 which would take him through to January 31, 2015. At that time funding for the physician in Craik will be combined with those provided for Davidson.

Mr. Speaker, so that's where we are to date with respect to the specific question of the doctor. There will be additional coverage. We can meet with the community and find out what more can be done.

But I would point out, we are training more doctors now in this province. We are recruiting from more places around the world. There are 400 more doctors practising than when those folks were in the government. We know there is work to do. We're always willing to listen to communities that have concerns, and we welcome the chance to do that today in the legislature.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the doctor is here today. The mayor of Craik is here today. The reeve of the RM is here today, Mr. Speaker, because this Sask Party government wants to pull services out of Craik.

That's why they've travelled to the legislature because — get this, Mr. Speaker — the government wants to take away the stabilization and observation unit and put in a bunch of offices. And the Premier talks about the plan that's been cooked up by the health region, Mr. Speaker. Well it's clearly not working for the good people of Craik.

The health region actually had contractors who have already been in the health care centre drawing lines on the floor while the offices are going and start tearing down the walls because they want to take out the observation unit. And get this — the town had to enforce a bylaw, Mr. Speaker. They went in and kicked out the contractors because the health region and this government didn't even have the right permits in place as they tried to carve up the observation unit, Mr. Speaker. The government, Five Hills Health Region, should be embarrassed about that, but they should be mostly embarrassed about taking important services out of Craik and area. And that's why they are here today, Mr. Speaker.

The community has a Canadian-trained physician who wants to practise. Community members want the services that they've always had. When I spoke with them, Mr. Speaker, they said, we don't want anything that we haven't had before. What we want are the services that we've had in Craik for a hundred years, Mr. Speaker. And if this Premier wants to talk about things that happened when I was 13 years old, well he can go down that path. But right now, Mr. Speaker, we have people from Craik who are upset about the health care in their community.

My question to the Premier: will he have the courage to meet with them today right after question period?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the short answer to the question is yes. And so will ministers of Health meet with the officials that are here.

But, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that there has been a change. There was a significant change in health care coverage for Craik specifically, long before the concern around doctor coverage happened. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, was the NDP [New Democratic Party] government that ended 24-7 emergency services in communities . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, no. No. And it's why . . . well, Mr. Speaker, they don't want to hear the facts.

The fact of the matter is that we as a government have been working hard to try to rebuild rural health care. The fact of the matter is that since we were elected, we've hired more doctors for rural Saskatchewan. The fact of the matter is that 144 of 151 SIPPA doctors are now practising in rural communities, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is there are more nurses practising in rural communities than there were. The fact of the matter is that beds for long-term care are opening in rural Saskatchewan where they used to close. The fact of the matter is that what we are rebuilding from is the legacy from members opposite, including at Craik where they ended emergency services.

Yes, we'll meet with the community, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we're going to continue to ensure the Five Hills Health Region is working with them. They've lined up another doctor, Mr. Speaker, with respect to what'll happen in January. And if there's something else we can do in terms of flexibility, or ask the region to do, we would be more than happy to do it. The member for the area has been making this a priority with the ministers and with my office, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to make it a priority. I'd be happy to meet with them after question period.

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

#### **Role of the Health Quality Council**

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, this Premier's idea of improving health care services in Craik is taking away the observation unit and bringing in more offices, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't add up for the people of Craik, and I'm glad that the Premier has agreed to meet with them, Mr. Speaker, because they deserve better answers than what they just heard.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the provincial auditor released her report. And she says that the Health Quality Council does not know whether the use of lean is creating sustainable change or whether it's making health care better. It's not collecting the right data and it's not reporting the right information, Mr. Speaker. In fact, the only thing that it has coordinated well, Mr. Speaker, is the cheerleading, and we have seen that time and time again.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. What is going to change as a result of the scathing criticism from the auditor? Will he finally allow the Health Quality Council to report the objective truth?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the work that was done by the Provincial Auditor. The Health Quality Council has accepted all of the recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, I can inform the House that the Health Quality Council will be implementing a risk management framework. A timeline and a set of work plans have also been developed to assist with monitoring and managing risks and gaps. Regions are working with the Health Quality Council to better assess those gaps and issues. As well, the Health Quality Council, in partnership with other health organizations, will be redesigning the strategic and operational walls to align with monitoring and reporting to strategic priority areas.

As well, since last summer I can report that the Health Quality Council — which I believe does address one of the concerns that was raised by the auditor — is working in partnership with the health system organizations to work down on the backlog of RPIW [rapid process improvement workshop] audit reports. So all health organizations have been asked to upload those audit reports to the Health Quality Council, Mr. Speaker.

So I can confirm that the Health Quality Council agrees with the auditor's recommendations and will be implementing all of them.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, what we see from this government, we see from this minister is always dismissing, always minimizing concerns when they're brought forward. The Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, found that the Health Quality Council is simply providing information about the number of events and the projected gains from those events. They are not providing objective information about outcomes and whether those outcomes, Mr. Speaker, are actually sustained. And we know why they're not doing that, Mr. Speaker, because this government is obsessed and consumed about the optics around lean, and that's why it's directed the Health Quality Council to take on a role that is not an objective one.

Mr. Speaker, the auditor's report talks about how they created a rapid response team. And we've talked about the lean go-teams, Mr. Speaker, before. They talked about their need to deal with "negative media attention." We see the meddling, Mr. Speaker,

by this government in Health Quality Council affairs. They're not providing the objective information that would actually improve the health care system here in Saskatchewan.

Here's a quote from the auditor: "At the time of our audit, HQC did not know whether the use of Lean has created sustainable change or is making health care better."

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier. When can we stop, the cheerleading to stop around lean and John Black and Associates? When can we expect and when will we have objective analysis and objective truth from Health Quality Council?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, the auditor's report does indicate that — and I would refer to the member to page 3 — that the Health Quality Council mission is to accelerate quality improvement and quality of health care throughout Saskatchewan. And it says, and I quote, "Since its inception, Health Quality Council has been involved in quality improvement in the health sector."

Mr. Speaker, this isn't a change in terms of the mandate of the Health Quality Council. But I can report, as I indicated in my first answer, that the Health Quality Council is in agreement with the auditor's recommendations, and it is developing a plan to implement all of the auditor's recommendations, Mr. Speaker. Health regions know that according to . . . as the plan is laid out, that they have to report audited information on lean events over a certain number of time frames, such as 60, 90, and 120 days, for example, Mr. Speaker.

That report, that information isn't always updated to the Health Quality Council on a timely basis. Health Quality Council and the health organizations agree to get through that backlog. They agree with all of the recommendations and will be implementing all of them.

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

#### **The Lean Initiative and Contract With Consultant**

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, they've been busy because this government has directed them to have the lean go-team and deal with media and negative press, as opposed to actually dealing with what matters in our health care system.

It's not just the Health Quality Council that isn't providing objective information. We've also seen it from the Health minister, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the minister refused to answer written questions about financial savings achieved through lean. Either he doesn't know the answer, Mr. Speaker, or he doesn't want to share the information with Saskatchewan taxpayers and the public.

[14:15]

The auditor is critical of the Health Quality Council for failing to track and report the right information and she's also, Mr. Speaker, critical of this government's \$40 million American

lean consultant. The auditor says that ending the relationship with John Black will mean that things will improve.

Well here's an action, Mr. Speaker, that this government could take from the auditor's recommendations. Why doesn't it just fire John Black and rid this province of John Black and his toxic version of lean once and for all?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, we will be ending our contractual relationship June of 2015 with JBA [John Black and Associates], Mr. Speaker. But I will go on further to report when it comes to the auditor's report, Mr. Speaker.

The auditor has recommended that the Health Quality Council give written reports to the Ministry of Health on results, Mr. Speaker. Health Quality Council currently does produce monthly reports that are shared with the ministry, and in early 2015, the Health Quality Council is planning to work with health organizations and the ministry to determine appropriate reporting format, schedule, and audits.

Mr. Speaker, as well the Health Quality Council is recommended by the auditor to report to the public on the outcomes, Mr. Speaker, something that I think the Leader of the Opposition would call cheerleading. But, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the recommendations of the auditor that certainly is accepted by the Health Quality Council. In fact, they've put together a website, betterhealthcare.ca, as a launch point for public access so that the public does have this information, Mr. Speaker.

But as I said before, the Health Quality Council accepts all the recommendations and will implement them all.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the auditor said this morning that the consultant has way too much control. And the Premier, Mr. Speaker, should pay attention to this. This matters, what's going on in our province. And it fits with everything we've heard, Mr. Speaker, about this government's approach to John Black. We know this government placed John Black at the top of the org chart, so it's no surprise that the auditor would say that this consultant has way too much control.

Senior health administrators, Mr. Speaker, have said that John Black lacks respect, that he rattles, that he undermines, that he gossips, takes people on if they even dare to question his authority. The auditor says that things with lean will improve if John Black is gone.

To the Premier: even . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And they can heckle about stuttering, Mr. Speaker. It's a pretty normal thing. Even the Health minister, Mr. Speaker, has said that John Black doesn't tailor lean for Saskatchewan's needs. My question to the Premier: why keep John Black around to summer? Everyone agrees that he's toxic, that things will improve when he's gone. Will the Premier have the courage to stand up and fire John Black?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, we have indicated to the public, as well to JBA, that we're going to be exiting the contract earlier than was originally planned, Mr. Speaker. But in order to further implement lean throughout the entire health care system, Mr. Speaker, we knew that it was going to take a number of years.

We're also looking forward, Mr. Speaker, to the transition for when the health system will take over this work on its own, Mr. Speaker, knowing that, Mr. Speaker, other organizations that have looked at this type of lean transformation have engaged outside consultants, have built up capacity, Mr. Speaker, as we're doing now, both in the Health Quality Council as well as in our health regions and our cancer agency and in the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know though that there have been good results in terms of the efficiencies within the system but also, Mr. Speaker, the quality improvement work. We know that there's more work on that front to be done, but we think that this provides one of the tools, as does increasing staff levels, Mr. Speaker, as does renewing facilities, Mr. Speaker. It's just one tool, but it is one that we find is effective in health care. and we're going to continue forward with it.

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

#### Distribution of Medication in Care Facilities

**Ms. Chartier:** — We've heard many concerns throughout this session about care plans for residents in care facilities not being properly followed or updated. And now the Provincial Auditor is raising major concerns as well. The auditor says that this government is putting seniors in care facilities at risk of drug complications, overmedication, and fatalities because it's not properly managing medication plans. To the minister: will this government change anything as a result of the auditor's findings or will it continue to minimize these very serious concerns?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly we do not minimize these types of concerns, Mr. Speaker. As the Provincial Auditor has pointed out in her report, that we do have program guidelines for special care homes. They do include policies for regional health authorities for the provision of long-term care services, including medication.

Mr. Speaker, I can report that Heartland Regional Health Authority is committed to addressing the Provincial Auditor's recommendations. They take this very seriously. They have put in place a regional steering committee that will be working on this issue that will include physicians, pharmacists, nursing staff, region leadership, as well as engaging clients and families to inform the work. The project plan will determine how to improve their processes so that they are in compliance with the guidelines that are required of them as a health region and as facilities.

Mr. Speaker, as well I can indicate that as of April 2013, quarter medication reviews became a requirement of the special care home guidelines. We expect that all of our regions would follow them.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — In the auditor's review, every single resident they looked at was receiving one or more potentially inappropriate medications. Two-thirds of the residents they looked at were receiving three or more potentially inappropriate medications, and every single resident with dementia was on antipsychotic drugs to sedate them.

This is all hugely concerning, but it should not be a surprise to this government. After all, this government's own statistics show that one-third of residents in care facilities are on antipsychotic medications without having a diagnosis and without having psychosis.

To the minister: when will this government get serious about delivering only safe and necessary medications to seniors in care facilities?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we require that regional health authorities monitor seven quality indicators and report that back to the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker. That is the most of any other province, Mr. Speaker, that does have a requirement for reporting back to their ministry or department, Mr. Speaker. One of the seven measures is antipsychotic use without a diagnosis of psychosis, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we also require that when a health region or facility reports a number that is greater than the provincial average, that they do put in place and report back on a mitigation strategy to reduce that number, Mr. Speaker, of their residents that are being prescribed medication without a diagnosis. Mr. Speaker, that is something that has been put in place by the Ministry of Health for over a year now, Mr. Speaker. But again in this serious situation, this health region, they do accept the recommendations of the auditor and will be putting in processes to make improvements on this very serious issue.

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

#### Route of the Regina Bypass

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of people who are concerned about some of the decisions by this government that it has made in regard to the bypass. There are concerns about the location, the safety, and the functionality of the chosen route. There's no question that this city needs a bypass and it needs one quickly, but it's important to get it right. We need a Regina bypass, not a bottleneck.

My question is to the Minister of Highways: will she agree to meet with these concerned citizens who are here today to hear

their concerns first-hand? Will she do that?

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

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Regina bypass is the biggest infrastructure project that this province has undertaken. As the member opposite said, it is necessary. And, Mr. Speaker, for a project this size, we understand that not everybody's going to be happy with the chosen route, but we believe that we've chosen the best route possible. And all the interchanges are based on the highest safety standards in the country, Mr. Speaker, and we trust the engineers to make the right decisions.

As to his request with meeting with the organizers of the group that's here today, Mr. Speaker, I have met with them earlier this summer. The previous Highways minister has met with them as well. But I'm happy to meet with them again after question period today.

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

#### Government Use of Consultants

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor has exposed that the Premier's claim to be reducing the size of government, has exposed this as a sham, as a charade. At the same time as the Premier's been cutting jobs in the public service, he's been ramping up spending on the use of expensive consultants. Since 2008 this government has increased spending on consultants to the tune of a whopping 228 per cent. To the Premier: how can he possibly justify that?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan continues to work within a balanced budget. That is our goal. It has been our goal. It has been my goal as Finance minister, and we're going to be continuing to do that.

We implemented a reduction of staff across all of government. We had a goal of 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and that achievement is there. So we're continuing to work in providing the services. We want to make sure that we spend dollars wisely, that we're going to be efficient, and that's the reason why we have taken the path that we have. So, Mr. Speaker, as far as, you know, government moving forward, we want to work within the system that we have, which is of course a financial system that meets the needs of the province but still retains something that the NDP were not really sure about, and that's living within your means.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that's nothing short of a joke from the Finance minister today who's ramped up spending by 228 per cent on these outrageous contracts. The auditor says that the government isn't even writing down the reason for using a consultant when they decide to do so, and over 90 per cent of the contracts don't even provide for monitoring or evaluation of the contracts. This is absolutely outrageous. This government has increased the spending on

contracts by 228 per cent. They're not keeping track of why it's hiring consultants. It's not monitoring the consultants, and it's not even evaluating the consultants.

To the Premier: how is this possibly good use of public dollars? What's going to change as a result of this report?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance is correct. The size of government, in terms of FTEs [full-time equivalent] is 15 per cent smaller than it was four years ago. Mr. Speaker, moreover, what we've seen in infrastructure, in the investment in infrastructure in this province, is record infrastructure — record highways budgets, record build-out in provincial infrastructure. The largest one was just noted on the floor of the House. This work takes consultants. Rather than build up a permanent bureaucracy, Mr. Speaker, we used consultants to get this done.

Mr. Speaker, the members are chirping from their seat, but they'll want to hear this in terms of the finances of the province. Seven straight balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker; they'll want to hear that. Not just Standard & Poor's, but also Moody's has given this province a AAA credit rating. That's the first time in the history of Saskatchewan.

What's the alternative sitting over there? The Leader of the Opposition wrote the campaign platform last time. What would it have cost to the people of Saskatchewan? A \$5 billion hole in the budget, Mr. Speaker, back to the tax-and-spend NDP. Mr. Speaker, we're not going back there. We'll stay with balanced budgets. We'll stay with AAA credit ratings. We'll stay with the leading economy in the nation, Mr. Speaker.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 174 — *The Registered Teachers Act*

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 174, *The Registered Teachers Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Education has moved first reading of Bill No. 174, *The Registered Teachers Act*.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 175 — *The Registered Teachers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Registered Teachers Act***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 175, *The Registered Teachers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved first reading of Bill No. 175, *The Registered Teachers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

[14:30]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 171 — *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2014***

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2014*.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a long history of being a world leader in promoting and protecting human rights. The province's first comprehensive human rights legislation, the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights, traces back to 1947. Its introduction made our province the first jurisdiction in North America to pass a general human rights Act and provided such fundamental freedoms as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom from arbitrary imprisonment, and the right to vote.

As the society has advanced, so too has our perception and understanding of human rights. Over time we have seen numerous enhancements to our human rights legislation, such as prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of sex, disability, sexual orientation, or family status. These enhancements reflect the changing needs and values of our society and are embodied in the current Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

The code reflects our province's highest aspirations for a fair and prosperous democracy, existing to achieve two purposes: to promote recognition of the inherent dignity and equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family, and to further public policy in Saskatchewan that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to discourage and eliminate discrimination.

Although it has remained largely intact since its introduction in 1979, from time to time legislatures have found it necessary to update the code to ensure it continues to remain relevant in a changing province and a changing legal environment. This bill will make further enhancements to the code and ensure that Saskatchewan remains a leader in promoting and protecting human rights.

The first important change proposed in this bill is to add gender identity as an express prohibited ground under the code. I've previously stated in this House, Mr. Speaker, that transgender individuals in Saskatchewan are already protected from discrimination under the prohibited grounds of sex and sexual orientation. This continues to be the case. Transgender individuals who face discrimination are currently able to bring complaints forward to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, and the handling of a recent complaint has confirmed that.

The rights of transgender individuals receive strong protection under the existing code. The proposed amendments regarding the express inclusion of gender identity will not change the existing status of those protections. Rather, following a request from the Chief Commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, these protections against discrimination are being made explicit. This change will confirm existing equality rights for transgender individuals and help bring greater awareness of these rights to society as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will also update the code's provisions respecting rental housing. The code prevents landlords from choosing tenants based on the prohibited grounds. However, a limited exemption allows landlords to select tenants based on sex or sexual orientation where the rental property is a suite or duplex unit that's connected to the home of the landlord or the landlord's family. This bill will amend these provisions by repealing the exemption based on sexual orientation and updating the exemption based on sex to apply only where the landlord or landlord's family share a common entrance with the tenant.

These changes achieve a balance between protecting prospective tenants from discrimination and respecting the privacy and security concerns of landlords who live in close proximity to tenants. The code contains an additional exemption for landlords who share kitchen and bathroom facilities with tenants, as commonly found in roommate or boarder arrangements, and this bill will not impact that existing exemption.

Mr. Speaker, the code contains a provision that provides that no ground of discrimination shall be interpreted as extending to any conduct that is prohibited by the Criminal Code. The provisions of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* do not supersede provisions of the Criminal Code. Further,

Saskatchewan's code does not permit or protect criminal conduct. As a result, we are recommending that this provision be repealed.

A number of additional administrative amendments that have been requested by the Chief Commissioner of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission are also proposed. For example, the amendments will remove wording from the code's hate speech provision that was struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada. This change will not have a substantive impact on the code as the hate speech provision is already interpreted in accordance with the Supreme Court's ruling.

Mr. Speaker, at the request of the Chief Commissioner, the bill will also remove provisions that allow the commissioner to apply for search warrants and update provisions that allow the commission to apply for court orders to produce information when conducting investigations. Generally the commission seeks the consent of parties to search premises or obtain information. Where a party is uncooperative, the bill will allow the commission to apply to the Court of Queen's Bench for an order requiring the party to produce information or respond to other inquiries.

Mr. Speaker, in a related amendment, the bill will make it an offence for a person to interfere with the commission in an investigation or its administration of the code. Although the code currently prohibits individuals from interfering with the commission, in this matter there are no provisions to enforce that rule.

The code contains a provision that allows the court to award compensation to an injured person where that person has suffered with respect to feeling dignity or self-respect or where the party who has contravened the code has done so in a wilful or reckless manner. This form of compensation is in addition to other losses suffered, such as lost wages. The bill will increase compensation that the court can order with respect to dignity and wilful reckless behaviour from 10,000 to \$20,000.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the amendments will increase the maximum fines courts can order against individuals or corporations who have committed an offence under the code to \$10,000 in the case of a first offence and \$25,000 for each subsequent offence. The current limits have been in place since the code was first introduced in 1979.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, let me repeat the words that I have said in this Chamber previously. In Saskatchewan our law recognizes the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family. We do this as a province because the causes for which we stand, of justice, of freedom, and of fairness, cannot flourish where discrimination is given rein to coexist.

This bill will maintain our position as a leader in protecting human rights and ensure that Saskatchewan remains a safe and welcoming province for all. With that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2014*.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 171, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*

*Amendment Act, 2014*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud today to be able to stand in my place and represent the official opposition's first look at the changes that are included in Bill 171. And certainly from the caucus and from the number of people that have worked very, very hard on some of the improvements that were called for and some of the recognition of some of the challenges that some Saskatchewan people face, I sincerely want to commend and to recognize my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Centre, who's done a lot of great work on this, Mr. Speaker.

And it really hearkens the year of 1947 when we all know the history of the Human Rights Code, when the premier of the day at that time, Premier Douglas, introduced the Human Rights Code to ensure that people in Saskatchewan are treated fairly and equally and that absolutely everyone has the opportunity to live life as they wish and that they're able to contribute to the greater good of Saskatchewan in many, many ways, Mr. Speaker. And that Human Rights Code back in 1947 hearkened some of the changes that are necessary in this modern day and age, and some of the champions that are necessary as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out again that my colleague from Saskatoon Centre has done a great amount of work on this particular process and was engaged and certainly represented, I think, a lot of people's views on this matter. And I really want to commend him, along with the minister, in terms of working towards this particular bill, Bill 171.

There's no question that the bill itself has a lot of components that we want to take time to understand better. Obviously that's part of the process here. I think sections 3, 7, 8, and 14 add gender identity to the Human Rights Code, Mr. Speaker. And it really begins to beg the question of exactly how important it is to recognize each other's rights, to have the ability to enjoy each other's company as human beings, and to treat each other as fairly as possible. That is the basic tenet of the Human Rights Code, Mr. Speaker, of 1947.

I think that there is so many ways and means that Saskatchewan has grown over the years from the first initial introduction of the Human Rights Code, Mr. Speaker, and now 2014, a number of years later, we're continuing to make improvements and we're continuing to make substantial gains. And I think it's a great credit to our former Premier Douglas in the sense of his initial work and certainly the challenge that he had at the time to bring forward such a remarkable opportunity for Saskatchewan to celebrate what we call human rights, Mr. Speaker. And that code was introduced by none other than the NDP's very own Premier Douglas.

So, Mr. Speaker, again we look at the bill itself. There are a number of areas that we want to highlight. Obviously it talks a bit about some of the constraints around section 4 which narrows the rules around taking roommates, so that you can discriminate based on your roommate's gender but not on their sexual orientation. We think that that's a pretty straightforward process, Mr. Speaker.

And sections 10 and 11 make tougher penalties for violation of

human rights, Mr. Speaker. And that's the important phrase that I wanted to focus on, violation of human rights, Mr. Speaker. And as was indicated through a number of speeches and positions over time, and continuing on with the vision of our former premier, Premier Douglas, in the sense of making sure that this government . . . The NDP supports this bill. And we're pleased to see the government, after much pressure and much encouragement by champions within our caucus, to make sure that we're able to see this day in a sense that some of the wording that has been put in place is now being changed and that there's a greater respect around the notion and the wording of human rights.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what's also important is you look at some of the information that, you know, that we want to share is that there's obviously . . . While we're encouraging and celebrating the achievement of human rights, it's also important to be on guard for those that wish to destroy those rights or to challenge those rights or to degenerate those rights in any way, shape, or form. So I think there has to be punishment attached to that because obviously it's something that you want to discourage: that it's not just a statement; that there is really, truly, that there is an opportunity for those that are subjected to this kind of activity; that there is recourse; that there is protection for them.

And I think some of the notions as we look at the bill itself overall, of raising fines from 10,000 to \$20,000, those fines really act as a deterrent, Mr. Speaker. And then you look at some of the other fine structure. I understand from the bill itself that you're looking at \$10,000 for the first offence, and if you continue this kind of activity, then obviously there's an increase of 25,000 for a second offence and subsequent offences after that. So it does become a huge challenge for those that wish to express their difference in a negative way that infringes on people's human rights, Mr. Speaker. And we think that those kind of fines and system that's in place are adequate and certainly are a good step forward.

As what's also important, Mr. Speaker, is that there is provisions in there that would discourage people interfering with investigations of a human rights complaint against some of the individuals that are identified under this human rights charter, Mr. Speaker. That's obviously important. We don't want to see any kind of investigations — criminal or human rights charges — to be impeded or to be interfered with in any way, shape, or form. So it's really important that that also be part of the penalty system.

Mr. Speaker, we also noticed that the Human Rights Code has been amended in a sense of the hate speech provisions to remove wording that the Supreme Court of Canada has struck down. So in certain instances, Mr. Speaker, the actual wording itself is updated. It uses modern language, Mr. Speaker. It uses legal language and it certainly has a good legal framework in which they can operate, especially in light of the fact that the Supreme Court of Canada has removed certain provisions, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to human rights overall, and certainly this matter, to be more specific.

So, Mr. Speaker, I really want to point out that the Human Rights Code of 1947, when I asked a question of, where did this all begin, where did all this process start . . . When it came in,

Saskatchewan itself knew that there was a lot of difference, Mr. Speaker, between a lot of different people, a lot of different regions, a lot of different communities. And that difference, Mr. Speaker, was something that we know does not bring the communities nor the people together in a common front.

And we often hear everything . . . From the provincial motto where it says, "from many peoples, strength," Mr. Speaker, I think certainly you look at the Human Rights Code itself. It is something that we aspire to do to the Human Rights Code is to draw from many peoples' strength. And from all those people in all their walks of lives, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we recognize them and their value as human beings and that we continue to, we continue to engage them, and we continue to respect them, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

And we continue making human rights affordable to them in the sense of knowing that they don't stand alone and that they're not alone, Mr. Speaker, and that there are some serious penalties for those who wish to do them harm by either words or, Mr. Speaker, in the worst case scenario, assaults and threats, Mr. Speaker. So certainly in the year 2014 in Saskatchewan it's important that we celebrate human rights as such an important achievement for all of us, Mr. Speaker.

We often hear through the mainstream media some of the challenges that some of the bigger, larger countries have. We often hear of some of the trade missions to some of the countries that do have some serious violations, you know, on the human rights front, Mr. Speaker. And yet people continually bring those matters forward to the appropriate leaders of our country. And, Mr. Speaker, it is often really important that, when I watch TV, when we see the heads of state or the heads of our provinces discussing business with certain companies or certain countries and the notion of human rights comes into the picture, I think it's really, really important that as a civilized country, as a modern, civilized country, that we look at human rights as something that's really important and basic to every day and everything we do as a people. We think that's the first and foremost thing.

And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the human rights, the values of human rights transcend law. It transcends the ability for a modern society to thrive and to exist. So, Mr. Speaker, it is something that I think that we celebrate on the international stage when we have large economic discussions that the notion of human rights begin to enter the picture. It begins to enter the discussions. The media pose these questions to a number of leaders that may be in front of them.

So human rights has always been front and centre stage. And, Mr. Speaker, once again we're seeing the accomplishment today by champions within our caucus and people like the member from Saskatoon Centre, who I know has worked very hard on not only this particular aspect of human rights but a wide variety of human rights, everything from poverty to housing to proper health care and also, Mr. Speaker, recognition of those that suffer in our communities through discrimination and unfair treatment, Mr. Speaker.

So I think it's important as we look to the bill itself that I know

that all our colleagues and many of our colleagues will have a lot more discussion on this particular bill. I am looking forward to the response to the bill from the member from Saskatoon Centre, as I believe he has a great amount of courage to be able to undertake some of these efforts. And, Mr. Speaker, I think he's got a lot of confidence, and he's feeling really good about a lot of things these days, and I think this is one of the particular aspects that has really buoyed his spirit as a human being.

And I think I'm looking forward to that particular speech because I think we're going to hear a dynamite response from him, and we're going to see a great, a great speech from a gentleman that has worked very hard on the issue of making sure everyone and those involved with any community are respected as human beings. And that's a very, very important tenet to being part of a civilized society.

So I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that everything from the defined structure to the discussions to how we go about moving forward on this bill, how we celebrate our differences but not allow it to begin to fester and to foster hate amongst different groups, Mr. Speaker, we've now expanded that information. We've expanded the knowledge. We've expanded the process overall.

And the most important thing is to recognize that absolutely every human being is worth our effort to try and help and support, and worth our every effort to try and strengthen, Mr. Speaker, and that from our perspective, every human being has something to offer and is of value, Mr. Speaker. And that's the whole process that we want to celebrate as a result of Bill 171.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I want to offer my congratulations to my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Centre. I want to congratulate the Minister of Justice for bringing this bill forward. I look forward to the responses from a wide variety of people, Mr. Speaker, and I especially look forward to the response from the member from Saskatoon Centre because I think it's going to be a dynamite response.

And I also want to pay tribute, I want to pay tribute to those that fronted this particular effort. And I go back to the early years when our former premier, Premier Douglas, introduced the Human Rights Code of 1947, Mr. Speaker. We think that that hearkened a new journey for Saskatchewan. And while from time to time you get governments that don't recognize the value of enshrining human rights in their psyche, in their thinking every single day, Mr. Speaker, there are moments in this Assembly where we should recognize the effort that it took to bring forward some of these changes, Mr. Speaker.

And as I mentioned, I am certainly pleased to be able to stand with my colleague from Saskatoon Centre and to commend the minister for his courage bringing forward some of these changes, Mr. Speaker, and to point out that this is indeed a first step towards a long journey in celebrating what we think is basic in all of our lives is respecting human rights. So, Mr. Speaker, I would move at this point that we would adjourn debate on Bill 171.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 171, the human rights code amendment Act, 2014. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to

adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 172 — *The Naturopathic Medicine Act***

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to move second reading of *The Naturopathic Medicine Act*, which will replace *The Naturopathy Act*.

Mr. Speaker, naturopathic medicine has been an established health profession in our province for decades. It is a form of primary health care that is tailored to the patient and emphasizes prevention and self-care. The current Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was passed in the 1950s and governs the self-regulation of naturopathic doctors and has not been updated since its inception I believe in 1955.

The new Act will modernize this legislation. It will ensure the regulations governing naturopathic doctors will meet patients' needs and that these naturopathic doctors are able to work to their full scope of practice.

Mr. Speaker, the new Act will provide title protection for naturopathic doctors. It will establish the authority for the regulatory body to set qualifying examinations and eligibility requirements for applicants. It will allow the appointment of public representatives to the regulatory body. It will align with the requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade and the New West Partnership Trade Agreement.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new Act will also change the name of the Saskatchewan Association of Naturopathic Practitioners council to the College of Naturopathic Doctors of Saskatchewan. This change is to clarify the organization's role as the regulatory body whose first duty is to protect the public.

Mr. Speaker, these changes mean that the regulatory body will have the power to stop individuals from providing services for which they are not authorized. Because of these changes, patients may not have to travel to other provinces to seek treatment. The old Act prevents Saskatchewan naturopathic doctors from practising to their level of training and expertise, and these changes mean that naturopathic doctors working in Saskatchewan will be more likely to stay in Saskatchewan because they will have the same scope of practice as those working in other Canadian provinces.

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of how we are putting the patient first. People will have more treatment options, and the regulatory body governing naturopathic doctors will be able to better protect patients from harm. With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Naturopathic Medicine Act*. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Health has moved second reading of Bill No. 172, *The Naturopathy Act*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Assiniboia.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Sorry, Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And we look forward to having the MLA for Assiniboia being on this side of the House very soon.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that as I look at the Bill 172, Mr. Speaker, when you talk about the naturopathic college for doctors of Saskatchewan, I understand there are about 25 naturopathic doctors that operate within our province. And I understand that the naturopathic practice, Mr. Speaker, involves alternative medicines because obviously many people go through what I would make reference to as the traditional way of dealing with ailments, whether it's going to see a doctor for medicine, for modern-day medicine, or modern-day services.

There are many families in Saskatchewan and many people and individuals that go to doctors that are promoting a different style of dealing with human health challenges, Mr. Speaker. And I want to point out that it is nice to be able to see that the government is recognizing that the naturopathic doctors that are providing services in Saskatchewan are valued and that they're part of the primary care system, you know, as the minister spoke about.

And certainly I think since some of the activity that we're dealing with and speaking about today have been occurring in Saskatchewan since 1955, we know that the naturopathic services that many doctors provide in the province of Saskatchewan has a lot of merit, and they certainly have a lot of support. And they, Mr. Speaker, have a great number of patients that seek their advice, and there are many people out there that use naturopathic doctors.

And I understand that many of these doctors are Chinese trained because obviously there are different ways in which you can nurture the mind, body, and soul, Mr. Speaker. And some of these doctors of course have some very good training that originated in China, where I think there's a lot of information, a lot more established practices and, Mr. Speaker, a lot more modern-day information that the Chinese institute and of course train some of the Saskatchewan-based doctors that provide the naturopathic services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in my home community, prior to many of the hospitals being established, I often tell people back home that we should be proud of the history that Ile-a-la-Crosse has in terms of being one of the oldest settlements in Western Canada. And obviously Cumberland House is one community that boasts that they are the oldest and, Mr. Speaker, we certainly want to respect them and recognize them for that as well.

But we're not that much further down the path in terms of being one of the oldest. We're the second oldest settlement in Western Canada. I think Cumberland House has been established a couple of years prior to Ile-a-la-Crosse being established. But when you celebrate your bicentennial in 1976, you can see that there's a lot of history to Ile-a-la-Crosse.

And as generations come and go, Mr. Speaker, some of the information is saved. Some of the practices are transferred, and

I would dare say that some of the information is how you would use natural products of the environment to deal with ailments 100 years ago, Mr. Speaker. Some of the people in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse and surrounding the community have kept some of that information.

So we see a lot of people that are using different types of plants, different types of herbs, different types of animal products to deal with certain ailments. And, Mr. Speaker, during my life I haven't seen too much of that, but I note that there was some families in our community that really had intimate knowledge of how to use different parts of I guess nature to deal with common ailments.

And one of the things I quickly learned as I was growing up is that the actual, what they would've referred to as rat root, it's a plant that is being used to treat a number of ailments in our community for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, much prior to any doctors or modern day medicine reaching Ile-a-la-Crosse in the early years. They used these types of medicines to really deal with a number of ailments, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a list of all the ailments, but it has shown historically that the whole notion of dealing with or having nature assist you with dealing with some of the diseases, really, and some of the ailments really does have a lot of merit.

So the naturopathic Act itself, in dealing with the doctors and understanding how they're working and begin to formalize their work to begin to ensure they have protection, to begin to ensure that they're part of the health care system, to begin to ensure that they're properly certified and that they're properly accountable to their patients, these are really important steps to embrace the notion that there are natural cures to some of the ailments in our human body, Mr. Speaker. And there's evidence that shows that, time and time again.

And I've just shared some of the stories that I have in the early years that I've heard, Mr. Speaker, because obviously I'm much too young to remember the days in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse before there were doctors. Because obviously this practice has been going on for hundreds of years, Mr. Speaker, and there are some families that are lucky enough to retain some of that knowledge.

And one of the ladies I think is really important to recognize, Mr. Speaker, is a lady by the name Margaret Johnson. Margaret had a number of children. Her maiden name was I believe Kyplain. She married a gentleman by the name of Nap Johnson. And Margaret Johnson, her married name, she was one of the ladies that many, many people in the community went to see when they had ailments in the early years. They wanted to see if she had ways and means in which she could actually cure some of the challenges and the ills of some children and of course some ladies and men in our town, Mr. Speaker.

So she was actually very, very well known, and she was respected for her knowledge of how to use Indian medicine or the land medicine to deal with common ailments. And Ms. Johnson I think taught a couple of her daughters some of the values, some of the medicines that are found on our lands, Mr. Speaker, and she taught them of the value, you know, of some of the lands. And I would point out the medicinal properties of some of the plants in and around our lakes, in and around our

forests, Mr. Speaker. There's a tremendous value there.

[15:00]

So long before we had doctors, long before we had X-ray machines, long before we had hospitals, Mr. Speaker, long before we had CAT [computerized axial tomography] scans, we obviously had to find ways and means in which you deal with common ailments and some severe ailments of our community when you're looking at living in northern Saskatchewan and even southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We can remember a number of stories in all parts of our province where people had good information of the different medicines that were available naturally to help with some of the ailments that some family member may be suffering through. And that information certainly helped and assisted overall at that time. And in those days, Mr. Speaker, it greatly assisted families going through some traumatic times as a result of threats to their health, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's important that we recognize the naturopathic opportunities that some of the doctors out there are providing to their patients.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is why it's important to recognize their work and to also point out this has been happening and this has been occurring in Saskatchewan for a great number of years. And certainly from my perspective and my history, I can tell you that it has been happening in the communities that have celebrated years and years and years of birthdays, and that includes Cumberland House and that certainly includes the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse. Some of them are over 240 years of age.

So these kind of activities, Mr. Speaker, are really important that . . . Again we're pleased that there's work to recognize this particular practice. We think there are a lot of people who would rather avoid the modern-day opportunities for some of the medicines that are available today. We think that's their choice. Mr. Speaker, some people have an incredible belief that there are natural ways to heal your body, Mr. Speaker. These naturopathic doctors can give you some great advice. And it's obviously encouraging to see that there is some way and there's some means to formalize and to qualify their practice, and to continue recognizing them as part of the primary health care team to support Saskatchewan people's health.

So it's important that we recognize the history, the value, the modern language. And, Mr. Speaker, as we've said at the outset of every bill, we certainly want to see what the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] have to say about this, the association that deals with the naturopathic doctors, the type of training. There's a lot of questions that we have on this. And it's all meant to understand the naturopathic doctor services that we're making reference to, to ensure that Saskatchewan people's interests are being served well and that there's a greater understanding of what these services do, and the value of these services. And, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing wrong with awareness and comprehensive awareness of any service, any health services, natural or modern, in the sense of making sure that people understand what is available and what the challenges and opportunities of each of these services might present to them.

So there's a lot more information that we need on this. We obviously have . . . It's a new piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, so we need to talk about these issues at greater length. We need to consult with a number of groups. I for one look at the value of, as I mentioned at the outset, Ms. Johnson's contribution to our community over the years when she gave some solid advice, and her mother and her grandmother before that. They pass this information and this knowledge on from generation to generation. And, Mr. Speaker, when at times when there's no power, no doctors, no hospitals, many people sought the advice and support of Margaret Johnson in the early mornings when one of their loved ones was sick, and before that her mother and before that her grandmother and her great-grandmother. And thank goodness they passed that information down from generation to generation. Because you look at all the value that Ms. Johnson may have offered to the people of Ile-a-la-Crosse in their area, it would have been a tremendous amount, Mr. Speaker.

So this is part of a contribution that they've made and certainly a part of the recognition that I want to confer upon Margaret Johnson. She has since left us. She since has passed, Mr. Speaker, but as a young kid growing up in Ile-a-la-Crosse, I just knew that she was one of the ladies that we respected because we knew, even in our young minds, that she was a lady that helped sick people in the community and something that we obviously, at a young age, learned to respect very quickly.

So the naturopathic medicines and all the opportunities that the bill has identified, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of information that we want to read through, we want to digest, we want to consult, we want to understand better, Mr. Speaker. And as an opposition it is our duty to do so. And when the time comes during the committee process, we'll be able to ask some of the hard-hitting questions to the minister in ensuring that we get this particular process right because we owe it to the people like Margaret Johnson. We owe it to the many people in our own community. There's hundreds of stories of the different pioneers of our province that will tell you of families, of people that have saved many lives and have helped many people through trying times and illnesses from their community when there was no doctors available and no modern medicines available and no hospitals around. There were families and people that did help, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure every single MLA in this Assembly would know of stories of people that done that type of work, Mr. Speaker, in the early years.

So it's important that we respect that work. It's important that we formalize our understanding of the naturopathic services that are out there. It's important we ask the questions how we can strengthen it, but what's also very, very important is to pay tribute to those pioneers and those families and those people that provided the services before we had modern medicine, before we had highly skilled doctors, and before we had services such as hospitals.

It is a tribute to them, Mr. Speaker, and we would hope that this industry not only thrives, Mr. Speaker, but is respected and widely acknowledged as an alternative form of energy to modern medicine and be part of the overall delivery system of our health care system. So on that note, I move that we adjourn Bill 172, *The Naturopathic Medicine Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 152. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 170

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 170** — *The Fire Safety Act* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Clerk had me worried for a minute there but I'm on the right page so that's good.

This bill was introduced yesterday, *The Fire Prevention Act*. The minister thankfully gave fairly lengthy and detailed comments on the purpose of this bill and quite generally the idea was to replace *The Fire Prevention Act* of 1992 and he said that's a 22-year-old Act and it was time to modernize it.

We're seeing a lot of the work of this government in this term doing this kind of work. I would think that, having been a former public servant, I think public officials are going to be very pleased with the freedom they have and the time they have to reflect on some of these older bills and have an opportunity to maybe modernize and bring some recommendations forward to the minister to modernize some bills that may need some updating.

Certainly there isn't much of substance in terms of substantive new policy that this government is bringing forward. In fact it's probably a very flat legislative agenda as far as innovation and positive ideas. But it does give public servants, who are always looking for ways to sort of improve the work that they do, to take a chance and look closely at some of these bills and dig into them and see where modernization may be required.

The minister said there is three things that the bill is trying to do in terms of updating the powers and responsibilities not only of local fire services but provincial fire services. And he's saying the first thing is they're going to replace the Act that's in place now with the new Act. It will update powers, definitions, and other terminology to better reflect current realities and requirements of the full scope of modern fire departments.

Secondly it's going to give local authorities, their firefighters, and fire inspectors more transparent rules regarding entry in situations involving fire. And then thirdly, the new Act is going to give the province, through the fire commissioner, clearer authority and greater ability to assist and support communities and local fire departments when requested or required by a fire situation.

Before I get into the actual substance of the bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was only introduced yesterday and so obviously we haven't had time to connect or reflect on the impact of this bill. It will have a lot of implications for smaller communities for sure, and I think, given the broadened responsibilities of the fire commissioner, we're going to see some changes on that in how the fire commissioner interacts with the local communities.

I think one of the big changes in definition — and I'm just going to take a look at the old Act here for a second — is local communities and how they're defined. In fact there is very few definitions in the original Act or the current Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are a number of more definitions, newer definitions, in the bill that was introduced yesterday.

And for example, there's a new definition of local authority. In the past we had municipalities. We had hamlets. We had towns. But this says the local authority means "a municipality or a council of a municipality and includes the City of Lloydminster," so something very specific there, and "any prescribed authority or body."

So then when we see that word, prescribed, in the legislation, it's always a clue to go to the back of the bill and see exactly what things are that would be prescribed. And when we talk about prescribed, we talk about where regulations may come in. So a lot of bills that we see these days have fairly extensive regulatory permissions or directions under the bill. And in this case, when you're looking for the regulatory authority, you generally go right to the back of the bill. In this case, in the original bill, it's section 38. In the new proposed bill, it's section 51. So how do you describe local authority then? What it says in section 51(c) is that for the purpose of the definition "local authority," the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations prescribing other authorities or bodies as local authorities.

So one of the questions I have right away here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is whether or not the Lieutenant Governor in Council could prescribe a First Nation community on a reserve as a local authority. And certainly the breadth of the description found in section 51(c) suggests that it could very much be a First Nation.

And then that leads me to some of the news stories we've been seeing lately in respect of First Nations and how we know that First Nations fire protection is something that's certainly of concern here in Saskatchewan. And this isn't something that's limited to Saskatchewan of course, but we know that fire protection on First Nations reserve is, well, weak I guess is one way of putting it.

There was a story in the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] on January 27th, 2014, and it indicated that fire safety on First Nations is a national problem. And it talks about a terrible tragedy in northern Saskatchewan earlier this year where two young boys died in a house fire on a reserve in northern Saskatchewan. It was in Pelican Narrows, in the constituency of my colleague from Cumberland. Pelican Narrows is about 120 kilometres northwest of Flin Flon.

And there was two young boys. Solomon Ballantyne, 10 years old, and his brother Josiah Ballantyne, 9 years old, died in this house fire. And also a young girl was seriously injured. Four

other people escaped, but the boys didn't make it out, and the fire investigators found their bodies the next day. The boys were described as outgoing youngsters who loved to laugh and had many friends. And their dad said he'd "... tried to bring them into this world to be nice people to anybody, to be forgiving. To have a positive outlook on life. That's basically how they were." That's what their dad said.

It was believed the fire was accidental, but what happened, Mr. Speaker, the fire truck in the community wasn't working. The reserve fire truck, the only reserve fire truck is over 25 years old. It wasn't up to standard, an old piece of equipment. And of course this was January 27th, so you can imagine it's very cold. And the chief also, Chief Peter Beatty of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation said, "... we don't have trained personnel for the volunteer fire department or the crew."

[15:15]

And one of the other volunteer firefighters said the truck was also needing repair back in September when a 10-year-old was killed in a house fire. And he says:

I've been here 16 years. I've seen quite a number of people that burned. It bothers me because I know these people. I have a hard time sleeping, when we attend to fires like this and we can't do nothing.

And that's the tragedy, Mr. Speaker. We know that proper firefighting equipment is expensive, and I think maybe that's something this bill will attempt to ameliorate, in a way, is to ensure that local communities and local authorities such as First Nations would maybe have some assistance from the provincial government to ensure that these kinds of tragic deaths stop occurring.

I know on March 6th, our leader wrote to the Prime Minister of Canada, and he talked about another fire on March 2nd where Iesha Rabbitskin died in a house fire on Witchehan Lake First Nation. Again, a horrible tragedy. And our leader also referred to the two deaths that I just referred to. And then also in 2013, a young 10-year-old girl, Denasia Highway, died in a house fire in Pelican Narrows.

So we've called on the federal government to increase its funding to help First Nations get training and equipment needed to save lives, and that the federal program is inadequate. So we were calling on the federal government to make those changes.

I guess my question for this government: is that something they're prepared to do now by changing the definition of ... Well they didn't even have a definition before, but having this Act apply to a local authority and then having the ability in the regulations to define a local authority as other authorities or bodies.

So whether or not the chief and council of a First Nation could be considered a local authority, I think that's a legal determination, but it's certainly one that there is room for interpretation. And I'm hoping that perhaps that might help alleviate some of the serious, serious inadequacies that we see once we cross into First Nation reserves where the supports aren't there to assist them with their firefighting and their

training of their firefighters.

The Act itself is quite detailed, and first of all I think one of the things we want to look at is the actual role or function of the fire commissioner, the deputy fire commissioner, and then of course there are assistant fire commissioners and provincial inspectors. So there's a lot of people involved in the whole world of fire safety.

And this is, I have to admit, a fairly new world to someone like me who, you know, for me, I just hope that if I have a fire I'd call 911 and the fire truck shows up. I think that's something that as normal citizens we just hope and expect will happen.

I certainly remember when my kids were small. I think it's in grade 3 maybe. My two boys, when they were going through school, at a certain point in grade 3 the curriculum was about fire safety and burning. And I remember my sons, each one of them, coming home when they were in grade 3 and asking, Mom, what would happen if there was a fire in the house? And they were all panicked about it, and they were going around unplugging things and making sure that there was not going to be any fires because they, I think, at that age sort of start getting an awareness of the world around them and the outside world.

And they were quite terrified, both of them. They're two years apart. So the first time was my son Zach and the second time was my son Sam. And I remember saying, well you know, it's okay. We have safety things in place. We have a fire alarm. You know, we have safe plug-ins. And they weren't convinced.

And I remember one son actually quite panicked saying, well, Mom, what happens if there is a fire on the main floor of the house? How would we get out? And I said, well we would climb out the window or, you know, out the door in the back part of the house. Well what if we couldn't do that? What if the fire is in your room? And finally I had to say to my son, well then you probably are going to burn. Like I didn't know how else to say it. But that satisfied him at that point because I think their little brains are kind of logically thinking through all the consequences, and he knew that was the answer that I was going to get to but he had to hear it. And then I think finally he was able to go to sleep that night.

But I really appreciate the fact that the fire people came to the school. Often the kids can have a tour of the fire truck.

And I remember when I was young, probably about 10 years old, there was a house fire in my hometown, and that was such a shock to drive by and to see a house completely gutted by fire. It was horrifying.

And as I told my kids at the time, you know ... "Well what if things burn down and everything? You know, I don't feel safe." I said, look around our neighbourhood. How many houses have you seen that are burned down? And they couldn't think of any. And really, I have to commend our fire protection services for the amazing work they do and for, I think, the education that people now have when you have fire alarms. If you leave that pot on the stove and something starts burning and all of a sudden your fire alarm goes off, that really, really I think helps prevent fires.

And obviously the original bill, the bill that's in place right now is called *The Fire Prevention Act*. This new bill I think is *The Fire Safety Act*. So it goes beyond prevention, according to the intent of the drafters, and it's going to talk about not just fire prevention but fire safety.

One of the things the minister mentioned in his opening comments was about fire safety and how fires these days are quite a bit different than fires in days past. And I think part of that, well largely is because of the materials that are used in construction nowadays. Quite often I think a lot of firefighters don't know what they're walking into in terms of the chemical mix that's in place, and I think the danger that they're exposed to is something that . . . I think it takes a lot of courage to be a firefighter these days because it's not just wood and nails and maybe some vermiculite or whatever insulation was used 30, 50, 70 years ago. But we know that a lot of the modern building materials are made up of all kinds of polymers with all kinds of plastic configurations that could be very, very dangerous.

We were fortunate on November 19th to sit down with the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association. I think both caucuses were invited to meet with them. They actually bought us lunch, which was really quite wonderful. But they also brought to us some of their concerns and some of the things that they want to see the government do, and I think they made a very compelling case. And I'm hoping that those who were available to attend — perhaps Mr. Deputy Speaker was there for that, when the firefighters attended and made their case to the government — I hope it didn't fall on deaf ears, because I think they made some very compelling cases for some of the safety concerns that they have.

So one of the first things they talked about . . . There's a number of things that they're looking for in terms of better supports for firefighters in Saskatchewan, and the first piece they talked about was the additional funding for the fire service and staffing for safety. And one of the things, I think the biggest worry that they have is the shortage of . . . the size of crews. And we know that some of the larger cities in Saskatchewan put in place professional fire departments staffed around the clock by full-time firefighters, and certainly the larger the city, the more capacity you have to have that kind of staffing.

And they go on to say that these cities have identified the greater risks that exist from the large number of homes built close together, from multi-family dwellings, and from larger numbers of different businesses, proximity of businesses, and so on. And they're saying a crew size of four firefighters or less on an initial first-arriving single pump response to residential structure fires inadequate to safely perform the functions: water supply, interior firefighting, search and rescue, and also be in compliance with provincial occupational health and safety regulations for firefighters.

And unfortunately in a number of cities in Saskatchewan, they aren't able to continue to meet these requirements. And I think there's a lot of very serious concerns by the firefighters on that shortfall. And unfortunately I think it's fallen on deaf ears, because municipal governments are saying we don't have the money to do that. The money that we're getting to do what we need to do and provide services is not enough, and we simply cannot provide the additional funding.

I know a lot of these firefighters identified, that live in smaller cities in Saskatchewan, are actually looking to move out because they're too scared for their own safety. They're scared for their health. They're scared for the wages that they're getting. And I think it's really a shame that the smaller centres aren't able to properly fund these firefighters and make sure that they have the adequate crews that they need. It's a serious issue, and I'm hoping that their message did not fall on deaf ears when they met with the government last month.

The second issue that they raised is about occupational illnesses among professional firefighters. And I was alluding to that a couple minutes ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talked about the chemical mix that's often present now in modern fires. And in their background notes they . . . it's become known, they say, that professional firefighters suffer from serious occupational diseases and among those diseases are cancer and heart injuries. So there's been some examination of those types of illnesses and work to bring this to the attention of workers' compensation boards showing the linkages between the firefighting and these types of cancers.

So the firefighters indicated that they're grateful that the Government of Saskatchewan introduced some presumptive cancer legislation for professional firefighters in 2003 and then adding to the list of cancers that are covered in 2005 and '11. But there are a number . . . They're saying there's still additional cancers that they would like to see added to the list. And in particular they're suggesting that breast cancer, prostate cancer, skin cancer, and multiple myeloma are occupational illnesses among professional firefighters. So there's a number of . . . They explain how the science works here. And they are saying that these four types of cancer should also be added to *The Workers' Compensation Act* as recognized occupational diseases for firefighters.

An interesting fact, Mr. Speaker, that the firefighters shared with us is that there are over 70 million different chemical combinations that firefighters can be exposed to over the course of their lives and their careers. So 70 million different chemical compounds. I mean, who knew there was that many and that these are the ones that firefighters are exposed to? Also of course a lot of these chemicals in and of themselves may not be dangerous, but when they're put into a chemical soup, they can be incredibly dangerous.

They indicated some of the kind of toxic soups that they can get from smoke. Firefighters are exposed to benzene, hydrogen chloride, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs, chlorine, acrolein, formaldehyde, acetic acid, formic acid, oxides of nitrogen, phosgene, hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide, dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls, and acetaldehyde, I think. And then from building materials . . . So that's just from the smoke. Then from building materials, firefighters are exposed to asbestos and lead. Diesel exhaust exposures include polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which I mentioned earlier, in the smoke, and then benzopyrine and sulphur oxides.

So it sounds terrible, and I think hearing those kinds of things make me really realize how thankful I am that we have these brave firefighters that are willing to go in and fight these fires and save lives and save buildings.

The other thing that they mentioned in their lobby when they were here in the Legislative Assembly was using the fire service itself to enhance the delivery of emergency medical services. And I know this is something that my colleague from Riversdale has also brought to my attention several times, is that in a lot of the private care homes — and we've been hearing about some terrible falls that seniors are exposed to — a lot of private care homes don't have the lift capacity that they need, and I think the acuity of some of the people living in private care homes is getting more and more serious. So a lot of them, when they need to lift one of their clients or one of the people living in their homes, they'll call on the fire department to provide those lifts.

And I don't think the firefighters are ever saying, we don't want to do that, but it is an extra strain on their services. And we know that, you know, firefighters are always there to help, but that's something that, you know, if the private care homes don't have the adequate facilities, it will take place.

What the firefighters are saying is that they can help actually improve also our emergency response system or EMS, emergency medical services. So when looking for ways to improve EMS or emergency medical services, the firefighters are urging this government to recognize the efficiency of using firefighters to improve patient care and patient outcomes. And, Mr. Speaker, we know, certainly from what we've heard here in the legislature this fall, that the government needs help when it comes to patient care and patient outcomes.

One of the things . . . Well there's a number of bullets that they had provided in terms of making their case for using firefighters to help improve EMS. First of all, they're strategically positioned in Saskatchewan cities. They're on duty 24/7, and they're typically the first on scene at medical emergencies. They already have medical training, and the majority of full-time fire departments in the province are requiring a pre-entry qualification of primary care paramedic. So they already have that training.

They're feeling that the fact that they have that training is greatly underutilized and wasted in enhancing the delivery of emergency medical service, and they've identified — like we have, Mr. Speaker — there's a financial crisis in the delivery of health care in Saskatchewan. And yet nothing has been done in examining the cost-effective approach of utilizing the fire service.

Systems of cross-trained firefighter paramedics serve a number of Canadian cities very well and it would be a cost-effective resource for EMS and patient care that remains largely untapped in Saskatchewan. So that was the third piece of the package that the firefighters brought to us last month. And there is two more.

[15:30]

The fourth one is about post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, and they are identifying it as an occupational illness among professional firefighters. And I think we heard a little bit of that earlier when we heard from a volunteer firefighter up in Pelican Narrows who witnessed a fire that took the lives of two young children. And I just can't imagine how that would feel, Mr.

Speaker. I've never had to have that experience and I certainly don't ever want to. But to deal with fires where lives are lost, where children are lost, where beloved pets are lost, where people lose all their worldly belongings, where we see businesses that are destroyed and business owners being completely devastated by these kinds of traumatic and disturbing events, I can't imagine what you would go home with as a firefighter, either a volunteer firefighter or a professional firefighter.

In their opening comments, they say that one of the problems . . . We know the physical demands of firefighting but less known are the mental demands of the occupation, including the effects of working in a profession that regularly exposes firefighters to graphic scenes and images that anyone would find disturbing and difficult to use. Firefighters are required to attend the scenes of accidents, crime, suicides, and other incidents where people have died or been seriously injured. They have to maybe extricate a deceased accident victim from a vehicle or other confined space who has suffered extreme physical trauma or severe burns. In other cases like a medical call or a drowning, a firefighter may experience the difficulty of trying to save someone but not being able to do so.

What they're saying is that PTSD was often hidden. It was hidden behind the scenes. Nobody wanted to talk about it and people were feeling . . . They felt, you know . . . This we hear about in PTSD all the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that it's always been hidden, when soldiers didn't want to admit weakness. And I think that's where we first heard it coming out was soldiers who came back from war. But you know, it's the whole idea of being weak. And I don't think that stigma is there anymore. People are starting to recognize that this is real, this is traumatic, this is debilitating. And so they're saying that in the past they didn't want to reach out for help and often what would happen is they would turn to alcohol or other drugs to deal with their difficulties. In many cases, they were worried about turning, calling themselves sick because they needed the money to feed their families. They needed their wages.

So what they say in their report here is that PTSD has claimed the lives of numerous firefighters across Canada who succumbed to thoughts of despair and homelessness and then committed suicide. They've identified there's a growing awareness, and there are actually some provinces in Canada, particularly British Columbia and Alberta, that formally recognize the mental health aspects of emergency services personnel, and they've passed legislation saying that PTSD is presumed the result of a firefighter's occupation for the purpose of worker compensation benefits.

So they cite examples from British Columbia's legislation and they also talked about Alberta's legislation. What they're saying is that they're calling on the government here to show their continued leadership in the area of recognizing occupational illness, and they're asking this government to amend *The Workers' Compensation Act* to add PTSD to the list of illnesses presumed occupational when experienced by professional firefighters.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's a reasonable request. And I hope again that the request did not fall on deaf ears, that this government heard that request at the lobby meeting they

had with the firefighters, and that they will make these changes; the Minister of Labour will take this into account and amend *The Workers' Compensation Act* to include PTSD as an occupational illness for firefighters.

And then finally the last piece they talked about was a piece of fairly heavy-handed legislation that was introduced by this government early in its existence, and it was Bill 85. And what happened in that bill is it created a problem for firefighters that simply did not exist ahead of time. What they're saying here is that what happened in Bill 85 is it upset the binding arbitration process that firefighters . . . that had provided labour stability in Saskatchewan for decades. It was very, very unfair. It imposed a harsh and unfair constraint on the ability of the province's four smallest firefighter local unions to strive for fair working conditions, without any rationale.

So I think it's one thing to change the law and impose something that's unfair and harsh on someone when there's a rationale, but what they said in this case with Bill 85, there wasn't even a rationale. They say, and I'll quote this from their brief. It says:

It is a harsh solution to a problem that does not exist, and it stands to drive down the wages of the lowest paid firefighters in the province, also some of the lowest paid firefighters in Canada, despite the fact that they risk their lives and their safety on behalf of their fellow citizens every day just like firefighters everywhere else. A firefighter should not be treated differently in terms of their ability to bargain for fair wages and working conditions simply due to the size of their municipality.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have four communities here: Weyburn, Yorkton, North Battleford, and Swift Current, and they are the lowest paid professional firefighters in Canada. We're in Saskatchewan where we're doing pretty good right now. We have a strong economy, and yet we have the lowest paid firefighters in Canada. This seems very unfair and, I would submit, very unnecessary.

I think part of the problem again is that the local municipalities are saying, we don't have any money for this, and then the firefighters are now prohibited by Bill 85 in terms of going to arbitration at least and saying, wait a minute, this is incredibly unfair, it's harsh and it's unnecessary. And as I mentioned earlier, I think a number of those communities are going to have difficulty finding qualified and professional firefighters if they continue to put them at the bottom of the pay scale across Canada for firefighting. I mean you can just imagine. Of course the individuals are going to want to be able to feed their families. They're going to want to be able to afford the cost of living. And so they're going to seek higher pay elsewhere, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So when you look at their lobby, they're asking that the Government of Saskatchewan reconsider, just reconsider revoking access to interest arbitration the province's four smallest firefighter locals. For example, all they have to do is restore the previous population threshold of \$10,000. They're asking us as members of the legislature to restore fairness by asking our Labour minister to make this change and demand that all the full-time firefighters who risk their lives protecting

the people of Saskatchewan be given the same ability to achieve working conditions as other full-time firefighters everywhere else in Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present these petitions on the part of the firefighters' association here in the Assembly today. I certainly hope that the Minister of Labour has taken their request seriously and that, you know, it just doesn't seem right to single out firefighters from Yorkton, Weyburn, North Battleford, and Swift Current and tell them, you have to be the lowest paid firefighters in Canada. It just doesn't seem fair. And to take away the arbitration provisions, which is what Bill 85 did, is simply, well it's harsh and unnecessary and I think very, very unfair.

So hopefully the Minister of Labour has a heart and he's listening carefully to their plea and will revisit some of the harsh and unnecessary impositions that Bill 85 brought on our professional firefighters of Saskatchewan.

I just want to talk a little bit now about the actual office of the fire commissioner. I really knew nothing about . . . As I said earlier, I don't think about fire and sort of the larger political and infrastructure that's part of the firefighting here in Saskatchewan. But I can tell you this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The office of the fire commissioner is here in Regina, and there's one in Saskatoon as well.

And how many employees do you think they might have, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well I can tell you that. There's 13 full-time employees right in the offices of the fire commissioner and that includes the fire commissioner him or herself; two fire prevention officer supervisors who are in charge of regional services, technical services, programs, and standards; and eight fire prevention officers for delivery of programs to regions; and then of course the administrative support staff.

And the mission of the office of the fire commissioner is to provide communities, fire departments, and emergency service organizations throughout Saskatchewan with information, education, and leadership to enhance their capabilities to protect citizens from the devastation of fire, environmental, natural, and man-made emergencies.

So they have a fairly lengthy description on their web page of the types of services and programs they provide. For example they deal with fire prevention, and I think that's something that the school programs are all about, is preventing fires, making sure that homes are safe, and educating people on how to do that.

They teach how to use firefighting extinguishers to groups, including industry, health care workers, prison guards, babysitters, and scouts and guides. They have educational meetings for the public. And so there's a lot of work that's being done. And we know always, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that prevention is always less expensive and more prudent than dealing with emergencies and fires that are avoidable.

The second types of services they provide is fire investigation. And I think this is something that's really important in terms of prevention as well. So they keep records of fire losses to analyze why fires occur. They'll determine methods of reducing

losses by fire, and this is distributed throughout all the fire departments and fire safety agencies. It could be things like flame-resistant children's pyjamas, childproof lighters, flame-resistant tent materials.

And certainly from my days tree planting, Mr. Speaker, I know there was a number of near disasters where people would have lit candles or lanterns that are, you know, propane lanterns, and those kinds of tent materials are really important. Flame-resistant carpeting is another example of items that have come about as a direct response to the gathering of these statistics.

They develop new codes. And of course every fire in the province has to be reported, so that helps them take this information and data and then analyze it and then make recommendations.

They also provide advice and consulting services to every municipality in Saskatchewan. They conduct seminars and training for department staff, municipal authorities, and they also provide answers to questions if there are questions. So anybody can call the office of the fire commissioner and get some advice.

And finally they're responsible for the administration and enforcement of the law. In this case, once the Act is replaced it will be under *The Fire Safety Act*. It's currently *The Fire Prevention Act* of 1992. So this is sort of the administration that's been built up and established over the years for the office of the fire commissioner.

There's different layers of responsibility. There's obviously layers under the federal government and it even refers to the National Fire Code of Canada, for example, that they're responsible for, but of course there's also *The Saskatchewan Fire Code Regulations* they have. Municipalities are responsible for fire suppression under three Acts: *The Urban Municipality Act*, *The Northern Municipalities Act*, and of course *The Rural Municipality Act*. So there's the interaction between the fire commissioner's office and the individual municipalities.

The local assistants or fire inspectors also have a number of responsibilities under the Act, and then they also have a number of powers. So for example a local assistant has the right of entry, and that's under the current bill, but it's also under the proposed bill . . . or the current law, but it's also in the proposed bill. So it allows people to go in and inspect. They can issue orders. They can authorize corrections. They can charge people under the Act, and of course they are limited by a number of pieces as well. So that's kind of a bit of a summary of the current situation for the office of the fire commissioner.

Now under the bill itself, I think it's important to take a little look at the actual description of the fire commissioner and the types of authorities that they do.

Whenever I look at a bill, Mr. Speaker, I always look at the second part because I think that's usually where the meat of the bill is. And if you're reviewing legislation, you want to make sure you understand what is this bill all about, so usually you find that in the second part of the bill where the real powers are

identified. And that's what is actually happening in this bill. As I said, at the end of the bill, you'll find the regulatory authority that's been given to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the executive government. And then in the second, in the subsequent parts, you'll often find administration, enforcement of bills, some general clauses dealing with liability, and things like that.

[15:45]

And then the third and fourth part of the bill in this case is sort of the meat and potatoes of what this power is all about.

So what is the power of the fire commissioner? We're going to take a look at that and we will see it in part II of the bill. Section 4 . . . And I compared as quickly as I could, Mr. Deputy Speaker, previous duties and powers of the fire commissioner in the old bill and the duties and powers of the fire commissioner in the new bill. They're very, very similar. A lot of the wording has been updated. But there are some new changes as well. They haven't really taken anything away from the old law, but what they're doing in the bill is actually adding some additional duties and powers.

So in section 4 we talk about who are these people that are in charge of fire safety in Saskatchewan. And so it allows the minister to employ or appoint an employee of the ministry as the fire commissioner. And the ministry here is the ministry over which the minister presides. It doesn't tell us in the bill itself who the minister is for this, so we would have to go to an executive order of the government to determine which minister is responsible. It's a bit of a goose chase, but you can find it. There's always a line. If you want to follow it, you can find the line to the power.

So the minister can appoint the fire commissioner and other employees as deputy fire commissioners to carry out the Act. So there we go. We have the fire commissioner and we have deputy fire commissioners. Deputies can always act in place of the fire commissioner, so that's down in section 4(2).

And of course in 4(3), the fire commissioner can limit the powers of the deputies in terms of what the fire commissioner feels is appropriate.

In sub (4), well it's just a technical clause where "The exercise of powers and the performance of duties by a deputy fire commissioner pursuant to subsection (2) are deemed to be the exercise of powers and performance of duties by the fire commissioner."

You will see this often in delegation of authority clauses in legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's just a typical legislative instrument where you can have deputies when they're acting, they're acting as if they are the commissioner him or herself.

Subsection (5) allows the fire commissioner to designate an assistant fire commissioner, a provincial inspector, and any other staff required to assist the fire commissioner. And for the purposes of that under subsection (6), it tells us that the commissioner can designate anyone the fire commissioner considers qualified. And also the fire commissioner can impose

limitations or terms and conditions on the designation that the fire commissioner would consider appropriate.

Section 6 is the meat of the bill. It's called duties and powers of fire commissioner. So we see, as I mentioned earlier, there's a number of these that are already in existence. This isn't a complete re-haul of what's in place, but there are some additional responsibilities.

So under 6(1) it says "... the fire commissioner shall." So this is what the fire commissioner must do. First of all "promote and encourage fire prevention and information about fire services and other fire programs."

Secondly, "investigate or cause to be investigated or hold inquiries into any fire whenever the fire commissioner considers it necessary to do so in order to ... [determine how the fire happened.]"

Thirdly, "keep records of all fires that occur in Saskatchewan ... ." These are all from the old Act as well, the legislation that's in place.

Now here's something that's new. The fire commissioner now shall, and this is section 6(d):

keep records of all emergencies to which a fire department or fire brigade in Saskatchewan responded, including the cause, origin and circumstances of each emergency and other information respecting each response that the fire commissioner considers appropriate.

So this is a new responsibility and it's one of gathering and collecting data. That is considered to be incredibly important. Also, again some of the powers that he has:

collect and disseminate information respecting fires ...

administer and enforce this Act ... within park land.

And that was in the old Act as well, so they're still responsible for what happens in parks and regional parks.

The next one is "provide or facilitate the provision of training courses ... ." So there's a whole responsibility for training of fire departments.

And then of course there's always a catch-all, "perform any other duties that the minister may direct." And that's also in the existing legislation as well.

The second clause is sort of his advisory responsibilities and it's more, I guess, permissive or not quite as direct as the previous clause. It says here, "The fire commissioner may advise and provide recommendations and assistance to local authorities ... ." And again we have that word local authorities. So we don't know exactly what it means right now but we'll find out once the regulations are passed.

So he can "... advise and provide recommendations and assistance ... respecting the following." And in this case, again these are from the current legislation. There's not a lot that's new. But they mention something here called the fire brigade.

And I'm not sure why that's something that's added as new. I'd be interested in knowing that. I guess if you look to the definitions here, this is a new definition that didn't exist in the old bill, I don't think. I just want to double-check that. Yes, fire brigade is a new term.

What would you think a fire brigade might be? When I think of a fire brigade I think of those old movies where you see people lining up with buckets and passing water along and putting out a fire. Well in this case, it's a private enterprise. So a fire brigade according to this Act is "... a privately owned fire suppression service that provides a response to an emergency fire situation but that is not established or operated or contracted with by a local authority."

So I'm trying to imagine in what circumstances you might have a fire brigade, so somebody that has their own private fire suppression service. Maybe in agricultural contexts there might be something like that where they're providing services to ... Maybe in the oil patch or somewhere like that where you can hire private firefighters, basically. And it said it's not established or operated or contracted with by a local authority. So it would have to be something definitely in the private sphere. But what's interesting about this is that we are giving the fire commissioner the direction to advise — I guess it's his discretion, his or her discretion — to advise and provide recommendations and assistance to local authorities or other people regarding the establishment, administration, and effectiveness of a fire brigade.

So I guess that maybe reflects something that's happening on the ground right now. The minister didn't really give a lot of explanation in his comments about why there's a fire brigade established here and why they chose that term, which I think is interesting in and of itself. But there it is. And I think, you know, as we have an opportunity to consult with folks out in the field — this is the second day this bill has existed, basically, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that we'll maybe get some answers to some of those questions.

The other thing that's new in terms of what the fire commissioner may do under section 6(2) is the establishment of a fire department services agreement or an interjurisdictional area to plan, organize, and deliver fire safety programs and fire department services. And I think this is a reflection of quite likely the shrinking population of rural Saskatchewan, where we know that municipalities are really struggling to provide services on their own because of the lower tax base and the less people that are living there. They still have the responsibilities for covering the same geographical area, but there's less people that are there to do it.

So I suspect this is reflective of some of the regionalization that we're seeing happening in rural areas. And now the fire commissioner is being asked to assist in the establishment of these interjurisdictional areas for proper planning and delivery of fire safety programs and fire department services. I would think many municipalities would really struggle to be able to provide proper and adequate fire services on their own, so this is maybe a way for them to work together, and certainly that's a responsible approach.

In terms of changes from the old Act to the new Act in this

duties and powers area, there is a fair amount of new clauses now. The old bill was pretty straightforward and had only . . . The bill that's in place right now really only had maybe five or six clauses in relation to the powers of the fire commissioner and his deputies and assistants. There is now a new section, section 7, that talks about the powers of the fire commissioner in an emergency, and again emergency is a new defined term as well in this bill. But they're talking about a new definition of something called an incident command structure, and I'll just read what the clause says. 7(1) says:

In this section, “**incident command structure**” means a management system of procedures for directing personnel and the use of facilities, equipment and communications during a fire or an emergency that requires fire department services, police services, environmental services and other emergency services personnel to work collaboratively in an effective and efficient manner towards the goal of eliminating, reducing or controlling the effects of a fire or an emergency.

So it sounds like this is a collaborative, interdisciplinary type of command structure where the fire commissioner is going to have a direct involvement. Now it's not clear to me, and I would have to go into great detail in terms of the clause itself in terms of who decides who's the head of the command structure, but we know that this is now establishing this definition, and it's a management system of procedures.

So what it says in section 7(2) is that in an emergency that requires fire department services, the fire commissioner may, after reasonable consultation with the local authority or if they're not willing to provide a response, he could take any action that he considers necessary to meet the emergency and to eliminate, reduce, or control its effect, including establishing an incident command structure.

This is an incredible power that we're giving to the fire commissioner here where he can establish an incident command centre and direct quite directly fire department services, police services, environmental services, and other emergency services personnel. So it's giving a great responsibility and authority to the fire commissioner to commandeer, so to speak, all of those different agencies to attend to the site of the emergency. He is also responsible for coordinating all these services personnel at the site and directing land that needs to be evacuated, causing the closure of premises or land as necessary.

So there's quite a long description here of how the fire commissioner can create one of these incident command structures and basically take charge of a major emergency and direct other emergency professionals in the management of the emergency.

There's other new clauses that we find in this bill. The provincial inspectors are now prescribed as peace officers, so they're going to act as peace officers under the Criminal Code. They're saying that the provincial inspector can enforce this Act and the regulations throughout Saskatchewan.

So again, I'm not sure how that applies to First Nation reserves which, although they are geographically located within Saskatchewan, I think section 88 of the *Indian Act* always says

that provincial Acts apply except where they affect land. So there's always a question of whether that would apply here or not.

General powers of fire inspectors are described in section 10. So this is an interesting clause. It says:

In addition to exercising the powers conferred, and fulfilling the duties imposed, by this Act on fire inspectors, a fire inspector may aid in the enforcement of any Act, regulation or bylaw.

So it's pretty broad. Now we're talking about fire inspectors not just the commissioner, so they can help enforcing any Act, regulation, or bylaw. So again, and I'm thinking in an emergency situation whether they can act as . . . well, obviously as peace officers. We've already said provincial inspectors can be peace officers, but here the fire inspectors may also aid in the enforcement of any Act. So I think it's broadening the duties of fire inspectors for sure.

And then section 11 is also new.

The fire commissioner may appoint a person as fire chief for park land constituted pursuant to *The Parks Act* or a regional park established pursuant to *The Regional Parks Act* . . .

So that's a new area. I think it used to . . . Certainly the area of hamlets was in the old bill, where we could appoint a fire chief for hamlets. But now the fire commissioner can do that for parks as well.

And then there's a few other clauses here in terms of powers of the fire commissioner, fire chiefs, local assistants, provincial inspectors and municipal inspectors, peace officers. So there's a lot of detail in this particular new bill.

Part III of the bill deals with the actual suppression of fires, reporting and inspecting fires in emergencies requiring fire department response. So as I mentioned earlier, quite often we know our professional firefighters are called in for emergency medical services actions although, as the firefighters have indicated, there certainly is more room for utilizing our firefighters in that capacity. And that's something they are looking forward to being able to do, so I'm hoping that this government will do that.

[16:00]

Part III goes into things like suppression of fires, entry and related powers. So in terms of people's privacy, when do you give people the right to enter? This bill describes that in quite a bit of detail. We have imminent risk of fire, and so if there's an imminent risk, what kinds of powers do you have to enter premises or people's property?

And then there's investigation in clause 20, and reports. So there has to be an investigation for any fire occurring within a local assistant's jurisdiction. So again that's part of that data collection.

There's also rights of entry. When investigations are being

conducted, it gives local assistants and fire inspectors authorities to enter the land to do the inspection and investigation.

And in section 22 it talks about notification and investigation regarding significant fires. So there's actually a definition here of significant fires. To me, every fire is significant, but I guess these are ones that are maybe larger or more destructive. But if you take a look at it, there's a definition here. A significant fire in section 22 means a fire that is . . . 22(1)(a) says, a fire that:

is, in the opinion of the local assistant, of suspicious origin with a significant amount of loss or damage sustained to property or the environment or is otherwise of interest to the fire commissioner.

So first of all we have suspicious origin in (a); (b) says "involves death or serious injury to a person." And the third one in (c) is "involves a premises owned or leased by the Crown."

So there's three types of things that will identify something as a significant fire. First of all, is it suspicious? Secondly, is there death or serious injury? And third, does it involve premises owned or leased by the Crown? So that's a new definition that does not exist in the existing bill.

So there's a bunch of things that the local assistant must do every time there is a significant fire, and there's also responsibilities here for the fire commissioner as well.

Section 23 talks about investigation and report by provincial inspectors.

And then there's other reporting requirements, section 24.

Also section 26 talks about inquiries. So you will see the fire commissioner, that he can always conduct or cause to be conducted an inquiry into a fire or an emergency. And there's two conditions here, whether it's "destroyed or damaged property or the environment" or "caused injury or death." And I can think of almost every fire that would be certainly one that would destroy or damage property. Now an emergency may not be something that destroys or damages property, but quite often then you would have injury or death as well. So this is fairly broad range for the fire commissioner to determine whether or not to conduct an inquiry.

Of course when you have fire, you have insurance. And so there's quite a report here on . . . an extensive section here on section 27 to require reports by insurance corporations and adjusters. And it says that, every fire insurance corporation that's licensed under *The Saskatchewan Insurance Act* shall provide the commissioner with a statement with respect to every fire for which they are interested as an insurer. So again it's the gathering of information and tracking of information. There's all kinds of things that the insurer must provide the fire commission under this section.

Part IV deals with compliance. So the responsibilities an owner or occupant when . . . Let's just have a look at this. On section 29(1) it says:

Every owner of a premise shall ensure that the premises is

. . . [designated], constructed, erected, placed, altered, repaired, renovated, demolished, relocated or removed in accordance with this Act, the regulations, any order made pursuant to this Act . . .

So basically it's saying, if you own premises, you have to follow this Act. And that would mean, especially when you're destroying or constructing or doing anything to your premises. I'm not sure that a lot of owners or occupants are aware of that requirement and take time to look at what their obligations are under *The Fire Safety Act*. So that's something maybe I want to check up when I get home, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There's a number of other clauses on investigation powers and warrants that can be provided, how orders can be established. There's all kinds of orders that the fire inspector can issue. He can order people to repair, remove, or demolish their premises. They can replace materials used, remove combustible, or explosive material. It's quite a long section in that area, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And then with these orders, there's also a provision for appeal through various levels.

Part V is the enforcement clause of the bill and under this clause there's a number of offences and penalties that can come into place. "No person shall: tamper with fire alarm devices or systems," or fire, heat, or smoke detection services. So the other night in my apartment when I left the heat on for too long and the alarm went off, I immediately did what everybody does, I pulled it apart. But I shouldn't have done that I guess. But I did put it back together, so it's still working and I made sure it's still working. That is an offence under *The Fire Safety Act*. So we have to make sure that all those detection devices and fire alarms are in place and are functioning properly.

The last part of the Act is section 6. And I talked about earlier — part VI — where we have just a number of different types of boilerplate clauses that you will see in a number of bills. There's a lot of specificity of course for this particular bill, but it's the type of, you know, things about immunity, service of documents, posting notices of closure, effective use of the bylaws and the like. So that's it.

And then finally is the regulations clause that I spoke of earlier. There's a large number of things listed in here in terms of what the Lieutenant Governor in Council may do, in terms of how they're going to define some of the definitions in this Act. And that's always something . . . I really think that the definition of anything should be found within the Act and not in the regulations. Maybe I'm old school, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I really struggle with the idea of having the ability of the executive government to make definitions when really they should be defined . . . I don't know if this is a cost saver or a time saver for the drafters, and why this practice is taking place, but I think it's really important for people who are looking at legislation to be able to know what the words mean rather than having to go to the regulations to find out what they do mean.

So there's all kinds of, you know, more detailed things here about what kind of regulations can be made. For example, they can make regulations:

with respect to solid fuel burning appliances and equipment, including fireplaces, furnaces, ducts, flue pipes

and chimneys:

governing their approval, sale, distribution, installation and servicing; and

respecting the training and qualifications of persons who install, service or test the appliances or equipment and requiring those persons to be licensed or certified in the manner prescribed.

So some very, very detailed requirements that the Lieutenant Governor in Council can do through the regulatory process.

In general, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that, you know, this bill is comprehensive. It certainly is attempting to modernize what's going on or what has been going on to date under *The Fire Prevention Act*.

Again I think it's really important to recognize the importance of our firefighters and the service they provide to us as citizens and keep an eye on us and provide for our safety. We don't see a lot of fires. We don't see sort of the kind of destruction and damage that we know occurred in centuries past. I think of, you know, trying to do family research and family history and finding out that my ancestors in Ireland, I can't find out where they were born because everything burned down. Anything that was made of wood back in the late 1800s, early 1900s would generally end up, if there was a fire, it was gone.

We saw a fire destroy parts of our own House of Commons in Ottawa, and so we know the devastating effect of fires. And certainly one applauds the work that has been done by our fire commissioner and by our firefighters and by the people that are looking out for the safety of Saskatchewan people.

At this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I've extended or reached the extent of my comments on Bill 170, *The Fire Safety Act*, so I would like to move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 145

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 145 — *The Fee Waiver Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 145, *An Act respecting the Waiver of Fees and making consequential amendments to other Acts*.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding of this particular piece of legislation is that it relates to a number of issues that are current

in this decade. Quite a number of them relate to the cost of litigation, how much it costs people to participate or use the public court structure. We know that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, has regularly given speeches about the cost of litigation for people in Canada, and she specifically talked to members of the courts of the country and to members of the lawyers' associations across the country around some of these costs. And many times it relates actually to the professional fees of the lawyers who are involved, but there are also costs that directly relate to the fees that are paid to use the adjudication services of the courts.

And so in Saskatchewan we have looked at this issue in a number of ways. Clearly the government has looked at the issue. I know that members of the Canadian Bar Association have looked at this issue. And also we have the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan who has taken a look at the whole issue of this access to justice and in fact completed a final report on this called *Access to Justice — Needy Person Certificates and Waiver of Fees*. And that report was delivered in May 2003.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this bill is the response of the government to the report but also to the general discussion in the community. And it's an important issue, and I think that there are some good suggestions in this legislation. But I think we need to talk a bit about what is being done here and why it's being done and then probably talk a bit more about where there are some additional things that we need to look at the legislation.

So practically, what we have is a system whereby fees will be waived for litigants in various courts in Saskatchewan, and it's also courts and public bodies. And so when we look at the legislation, the definition of court now includes the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan, the Court of Queen's Bench, and the Court of Appeal. Now this is important because fee waivers were available in the Court of Queen's Bench and, through using the Court of Queen's Bench rules, in the Court of Appeal, but they have not been available up until this point — or until this legislation is put through — in the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan. So what we have here is an expansion of the places where fees can be waived in the court system.

As well we have a reference to public bodies. So basically fees can be waived in courts but also in public bodies. And what are public bodies? It seems like a bit of an interesting term that has been defined in the legislation. I'm not sure if it's used in any other pieces of legislation, but it actually relates to an organization or a tribunal that's available.

So right now the public bodies mentioned in this Act are the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission and the Office of Residential Tenancies. But in section 2, it says that public body means also, in section 2(g)(iii), "any other prescribed board, commission, ministry, Crown corporation, or government body." So we have this fee waiver opportunity that applies to three courts and two bodies that are similar to courts, which is the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission and the Office of Residential Tenancies.

[16:15]

The Automobile Injury Appeal Commission is a body that is set up with a number of people who hear claims under the SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] legislation that we have in Saskatchewan. And they effectively have expert judges of a sort who are usually senior lawyers who have experience in this area, who listen carefully to the concerns of the individuals involved, and basically make an adjudication over their concerns as it relates to how their claims have been dealt with by SGI or, I assume, some other bodies that are there.

In that process there are obviously fees, and what this legislation will do is give the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission the opportunity, through an official of the commission, to waive the fees for somebody who is using their services.

In the same way, the Office of Residential Tenancies will have that ability to waive any fees that they have for people who qualify for having their fees waived. Now it's interesting that the third category under that public body is "any other prescribed board, commission, ministry, Crown corporation or government body." I don't think that there will be an ability to apply, you know, for waiving fees that might be charged related to something other than a court-like dispute or dispute resolution process.

And that's in fact what the legislation says. It says that a proceeding — it's going to be waiving fees related to a proceeding — and so the definition of proceeding in section 2(f) describes that it's "any matter before a court or public body." So and then public body includes "any other prescribed board" and "includes an application, investigation, hearing, review, dispute resolution process or the issuance of a document or certificate." So we don't know exactly what other kinds of disputes that may come up there, but it could be something as practical as insurance inspections and fees that might be there that are needed in an investigation of an insurance claim and an adjudication. So it could be that it would relate to the Crop Insurance Corporation, for example, or to other property that's being dealt with.

And so what we need to understand is that these questions around the waiver of fees can have quite a broad application even though the legislation itself is brought primarily to deal with the three courts and these two public bodies.

So how the application for a fee waiver is to be done is set out in section 3, and I'll give a little bit of a description of what goes here, and then we'll go back and take a look at what was recommended by the Law Reform Commission. But effectively what this legislation says is that a person, other than a corporation . . . So in other words corporations are not going to be getting into this whole area of being a needy person even though they may be short on cash. It'll only apply to individuals. And so they'll be able to apply for a fee waiver certificate. So in other words they get their certificate directly from the body or the court that they're dealing with.

And how this is done is not totally set out in the legislation because it does say that many of the ways and the limits of who can apply will be set out in the regulations. So what happens is it says you can apply before a proceeding commences. In other words, you want to have the fees waived right at the start. Or

during a proceeding, if you end up running out of money, you can apply at any stage during the proceeding for a waiver of the fees and it's subject, all of these waivers are subject to an order in section 3(3). And subsection (3) reads:

After an order is made in a proceeding, a person who has not previously obtained a fee waiver certificate may apply for a fee waiver certificate with respect to fees relating to the enforcement of the order.

So what that relates to is, they may have paid the fee to get to getting a final order, and then don't have sufficient funds to pay the fees related to enforcement of the order, and that may be sheriff's fees or other things. And then they would be able to apply at that stage.

So what do they do to apply to have the fees waived? Well section (4) says that that application, which has been submitted by a person, not a corporation, will go to an official of the court or public body and that official may issue the fee waiver certificate if (a) the applicant meets the prescribed requirements. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's an issue here because we don't know what the prescribed requirements are under this legislation. We can assume that some things will be done that will set these kinds of requirements in an appropriate fashion, but we don't know that from the legislation itself.

And also in that section they can issue the fee waiver certificate if "subject to the regulations [again], the applicant demonstrates . . . there are special circumstances that justify the issuance of a fee waiver certificate." So this term, special circumstances, if you go and look in the definitions in section 2, "special circumstances" means special circumstances as defined in the regulations." So once again we have a bit of a circular situation where we don't know whether an applicant meets the prescribed requirements in part (a) or in (b), whether there's special circumstances that justify the issuance. So we have legislation where, kind of in the core of what you're doing, nothing is here until we get regulations from the Justice department.

Now normally when we have a bill like this, if you go and look at the very end of the bill, it will say that the Act comes into force on proclamation. So that means it may be there for a year or more as they develop the regulations, and that hopefully it won't take that long on this type of a bill. But what it does say to all of us is that we don't have the full package here to actually make our decision about.

So then what do you do? Well basically the official of the court who gets the application may have some instructions or may have information in these unknown regulations, these prescribed requirements that just allows the fee waiver to be issued. But if there was some question about that, then the official may refer the matter to a judge of the court to which the application has been made. And so that's in section 3(5). So then the judge of the court will have the ability to determine whether to issue a fee waiver certificate.

Now it doesn't say in this legislation, I don't think, that the judge will be bound by the rules or the regulations. And maybe there will develop over the course of time some guidelines for judges about when these kinds of applications would be granted, but I think it probably once again is a place where we

don't really know how this will be laid out. Now there may be some precedents over the last number of years as it relates to the applications to the Court of Queen's Bench that will be of assistance to this, but in the legislation we don't have that information.

Then if we go on to section 3(6), we end up looking and to see that a public body, in other words as defined here, the automobile insurance appeal commission or the Office of Residential Tenancies, if an official of one of those places doesn't have a clear application for the fee waiver . . . And so what will happen is that that person will refer it to the public body. So what you would have then is the whole commission, the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission, making a decision about the fee waiver certificate. And once again we don't really have the terms or the parameters of how that's going to be dealt with.

So now it's interesting, as you move on in the legislation you get to section 3(7) and it says that "notwithstanding any other provision of this section but subject to the regulations [in other words, rules that we don't yet have] an official may waive the requirement for a person to apply for a fee waiver certificate." And so it's possible then that the person would automatically get a fee waiver in certain circumstances, and we would hope that may be the case. And as we'll see in a few minutes, that may be responding to some of the recommendations that are in the Law Reform Commission report.

Now then, when you go on further into section 3(8), it says this, that:

If an official waives the requirement for a person to apply for a fee waiver certificate in accordance with subsection (7), the person is deemed to be the holder of a fee waiver certificate issued by the court or public body for which the official is responsible for administering fee waiver certificates.

And so basically we'll see how that relates to the report, but there may be certain classes of people that automatically have their fees waived, and this would allow for that to happen.

The final part of section 3 is subsection (9) and it basically says, once again, "Subject to the regulations, the decision of an official, judge or public body pursuant to this section is final." In other words, it can't be appealed through a structure.

Now we don't know what the regulations are that are going to be set up around that particular process, because usually there will always be a place where people can appeal. And I think the attempt is in the legislation to say, we've got this process in place, and once decisions are made, the issue around the fee waiver is done. It will be interesting to see whether that can hold out in all situations, but it is an attempt to have the fact that the discretion of the official or the judge or the public body is final discretion and there's no further appeal from that.

Now an important part in section 4 is that when you're talking about fee waivers, any time a person applies for a fee waiver certificate, you can't be charged a fee for that. So that's a pretty smart move actually because it would be the ultimate in very strange legislation to have to pay a fee to apply for a waiver of

fees in a proceeding.

So then what we have in section 5 is that the fee waiver certificate is issued, and at the date when that certificate's been issued, the person is then excused from paying any further fees in that proceeding before that particular court or before the public body. And it's presumed I think, looking at this legislation, that that would only relate to the proceeding in which the person is involved at this time. It wouldn't necessarily relate to another subsequent proceeding as it relates to this matter.

[16:30]

Section 6 of the legislation goes on to say that there's, once again subject to the regulations which we haven't seen, there's an ability of the official or a judge or the public body to cancel the fee waiver certificate at any time. So it appears to be a bit of a transitory . . . or something that's there but may not be there if somebody decides that you should no longer have that waiver certificate. And we don't know what the regulations are that would allow for the matter to be removed, but quite clearly in the legislation this allows for an official or a judge or a public body to cancel that waiver certificate.

You go on to section 7 of the legislation. It talks about the costs that may be paid by one party to another party in a proceeding that's intended to reimburse the recipient for any fee or expense paid by the recipient with respect to that proceeding. And effectively I think what this section is trying to do is to make some adjudication or comment on what happens in a proceeding where costs are awarded to somebody who has had their fees waived under a fee waiver certificate. And what it says is that — here once again subject to the regulations which we haven't seen — the court or the public body can make an order for costs that includes that waived cost in some fashion, I think is what they're trying to say.

So in other words, a person who loses their case and they can afford to pay, they shouldn't be in a position where they've had to pay a little less in costs because the person who sued them doesn't have any money. Now how that works and how the regulations will work, it will be quite interesting to see how that all is organized. But it's interesting. And in this, only in this particular area, it sets out in section 7(3) this, and this is another interesting aspect:

When determining whether to make an order for costs to or against the holder of a fee waiver certificate, a court or public body may take into account one or more of the following:

- (a) access to justice;
- (b) fairness to the parties;
- (c) the conduct of the parties;
- (d) any other factor that the court or public body considers appropriate.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this basically says that the court or public body has almost absolute discretion about how to order

costs, but it clearly will give the court power to make an order for costs if the conduct of one of the parties is inappropriate. And this I think is important. It also talks about the fairness to the parties. And so it's something . . . I think these concepts probably underlie the whole Act, but they've specifically put it only in this part related to costs.

Now section 8 goes on to look at the whole question of waiver of fees where a certificate has not been applied for. And what this is clearly doing is giving or confirming the discretion — I don't know if it's giving, but it's confirming the discretion — of the courts or the public bodies to waive fees whether that person has applied to have the fees waived or not. And that's I guess a recognition of the power of the court or of the public body to make decisions about that.

Now section 9 goes on to say that, "This Act and the regulations prevail if there is any conflict between this Act or the regulations and any other Act, regulation, rule of court or law." I think what they're trying to do here is to say these rules around fee waivers and around how costs may be awarded will supersede any other provincial laws as it relates to the kinds of issues that we are dealing with here. And so then that ends up I think confirming that this power to waive fees and to award costs in these proceedings is set up such that it will override everything else in the rules as to costs or the rules that the courts make that lawyers will understand and work with.

So then we get to the regulatory part of this legislation which is section 10. And you know, you look at the regulatory powers that are here, and they kind of go back and confirm what we've been talking about when we go through the legislation. So you have the ability, which is standard in all regulations, to define, enlarge, or restrict the meaning of any word or expression used in the Act but not defined in the Act. So in other words, the cabinet, the Premier and cabinet can make these regulations.

Then it goes through and it confirms that the fees in section 2(1)(b) can be set by regulation under this legislation. It goes on to say under (c) that additional public bodies can be prescribed and listed. And that's where we now have the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission and the Office of Residential Tenancies. What other boards could be added in there? Could it be some of the crop insurance appeal boards or other things like that? We don't know for sure, but the power is here to do that.

And then (d), it can define special circumstances. And that's the part that once again is not entirely clear in, you know, how this legislation will apply. And then we go on to the regulatory powers as it relates to how the applications are set up, regulations about what forms are to be used and how they're to be used, setting out some of the requirements for the purposes of section 3(4), and that relates once again to some of the special circumstance kinds of applications or the applications that meet the prescribed requirements.

I'm not sure, but I think that may relate to the fact that if you're a Legal Aid client or you worked with Pro Bono Law or with CLASSIC [Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.] or one of these other groups that you would automatically have your fees waived, and you might not have to spend much time going through the application process. But once again, we don't really know that because we don't

have the regulations to work with.

And so then we go through and see that (j) will allow for the regulations that would relate to the payment of lawyers' fees by the holder of a fee waiver certificate. Now we don't totally understand or have here in the legislation what that means for lawyers, but clearly there's a power to set some rules in the regulations around how the lawyers' fees are paid when somebody holds a fee waiver certificate.

And then we go into the regulations that will set up procedures for review of decisions of officials, judges, and public bodies made pursuant to section 3. In other words, that's the rules around how these decisions are made. Even though the legislation has stated that these decisions are final, there's still seems to be a process which allows for some review of the process of how the decision was made. And so once again there'd be a whole series of regulations that we haven't seen.

And then there's regulations that would be there around prescribing the rules for a cancellation of a fee waiver certificate, and it'll include regulations about how much notice is required and also setting out the rules around how an appeal of a decision to cancel a fee waiver certificate may be created. So we have a whole layer upon layer of regulations that will actually tell us how this Act is going to work. It's not in the Act now; it's going to be coming in the regulations.

Then you get to section 10(m) and basically it talks about prescribed regulations as it relates to section 7. And section 7 is all of that issue around costs and dealing with the issues of access to justice, fairness of parties, conduct of the parties, and any other factor that may be included. So there has to be a whole series of regulations in that area. Then we also have regulations that are sort of the general regulations, and so it gives us that power. And then finally we have our standard catch-all clause which says that there will be regulations "respecting any other matter or thing that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers necessary to carry out the intent of this Act."

So practically we have not necessarily a very long Act, but it has oodles of regulations which will actually define what the Act does. And so it's interesting how then you end up having to make regulation upon regulation to actually have this piece of legislation work.

Section 11 talks about the transitional situation where a needy person certificate that's been issued now under *The Queen's Bench Rules*, and this certificate's been issued by the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission, that fee waiver will continue through into this new legislation.

And then practically, the consequential amendments relate to the Acts, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act* and *The Residential Tenancies Act* because the appeal mechanisms under those pieces of legislation are the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission and the Office of Residential Tenancies, which are both defined or are part of the definition of public body under this particular legislation.

So we have an Act that's, you know, not necessarily that long, but so much of the substance of the Act is in regulations that we

haven't seen. So we don't really know exactly how this is all going to work. We have an inkling because we hope that rules of fairness will be applied, that the concept of access to justice is the overriding concept and that needy persons or people that can't afford to pay some of these fees will have a method of having the fees covered. And so what we have then is legislation which responds to some of these particular issues.

So in the speech from the Minister of Justice that was made on November 5th, it's clear that the intention is to enhance the existing fee waiver program to include the other two courts and also the public bodies that we referenced, the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission and the Office of Residential Tenancies. So now the legislation will also allow for people who are represented by themselves to apply for these certificates. I think traditionally some of the fee waivers had been done by Legal Aid or by some of the Pro Bono Law or the CLASSIC law group in Saskatoon.

[16:45]

But what this does is appear to grant that fee waiver to self-represented litigants. They will have to make the application. We don't know exactly what the application is until we get the regulations. We don't know what the standards are, but we're assuming that the people will qualify if they don't have a lot of extra money to pay fees in court.

Now one of the things that the minister also says though, in his comments on November 5th, is that "... the Act will grant courts and tribunals discretionary authority to determine if costs should be awarded to or against a litigant who has been issued a fee waiver." And basically that allows for the court to attempt to deal with some of the issues that relate to meritless or frivolous litigation, is the wording that the minister has used.

And so it appears to be a bit of an attempt to chill out or keep people from making applications who may be qualified for the fee waiver because their income is low or they don't have many assets, but maybe their cases don't have much merit or they appear to be frivolous, and it gives that discretion to the courts. I'm not totally certain whether that's going to be then dealt with in the legislation itself or whether it's actually covered under the regulatory portion because I think it does relate to one of the regulatory powers that's here giving that discretion to the courts.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, as I stated earlier, is a response to the general discussion in the Canadian Bar, the Saskatchewan Bar, the lawyers of the country, the judges of the country as well around access to justice. And when the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan took up this issue, they looked at a whole number of pieces or examples from other provinces. And so I think, you know, it's quite a lengthy document, but I think that there are ... It's well worth going through the kinds, the recommendations that they made in summary form and assessing whether the legislation, as we have it so far, deals with some of these or all of these recommendations.

And, Mr. Speaker, everything I say here will be subject to the fact that we don't really know all the rules until we get the regulations at some point in the spring. This is a type of

legislation where having the regulations prepared at the same time as the legislation would actually make a lot of sense so that we can see the whole picture rather than just to get a bit of a glimpse of what's going to happen.

So we have the Law Reform Commission report of Saskatchewan. And the law reform commissioners at the time that this report was prepared were Mr. Donald Layh, who is the Chair; Susan Amrud, who's the assistant deputy minister of Justice, is on the committee; Professor Ron Cuming from the law school who is a long-serving member of the Law Reform Commission and great advisor on all aspects of justice; the Honourable Georgina Jackson, who is a Court of Appeal justice; Professor Michaela Keet, who's a professor at the law school; and then Mr. Michael Milani, who's a Regina lawyer with broad experience in many areas of the law. So we have their report prepared with assistance from staff at the Law Reform Commission.

So what did they say we should do here? Well basically the summary of their recommendations is this: First area is the whole availability of fee waivers. And what did they say? "Needy Person Certificates and fee waivers should be available to self-represented litigants." So that's the first recommendation. It appears from the words of the minister that self-represented litigants will be able to apply for these fee waivers. I think that will be part of the regulations. It's not necessarily ... It doesn't preclude it in the law itself, but in the regulations it will set out procedures for self-represented litigations.

Second recommendation from the Law Reform Commission is that "Needy Person Certificates and fee waivers should be available at any point in a proceeding." Mr. Speaker, this particular recommendation is set out in the Act, and so I think that's an important one. It also includes the ability, after the whole proceeding is completed and somebody's trying to enforce an order or judgment or whatever they have, that fees may be waived at that point as well. And a person can maybe afford the fees in the first part and by the end of the litigation not have sufficient funds to enforce the judgment they've got. This legislation will allow for a person to apply for a fee waiver at that time.

Third recommendation is that "A fee waiver program should be established in Small Claims Court." Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation does do that. That's good.

Fourth recommendation is that "Administrative tribunals in Saskatchewan that regularly adjudicate matters for members of the public should adopt fee waiver policies for individuals."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that recommendation has been dealt with here as it relates to the Automobile Injury Appeal Commission and also the residential tenancy work. And so it's there for two, but the opportunity by regulation is to add more bodies to that particular list. I'm not sure if the Labour Relations Board would get involved in that. I think they have some of their own procedures to deal with that, but that may be another one that's there as well. So it appears that that one is mostly dealt with, although we don't know if the Law Reform Commission maybe had other administrative tribunals to include.

Recommendation no. 5 says that “The fee waiver application policy and process should be the same across all Saskatchewan courts and tribunals.” Mr. Speaker, it appears that that’s true on the face of this legislation as it relates to the Provincial Court, the Court of Queen’s Bench, and the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, and then the two public bodies, the automobile injury review commission, and then the residential tenancies one. So we don’t know about other tribunals, so there may be some more work to do there, but it appears that we’ve substantially covered that. So that’s the whole availability of fee waivers. There were five recommendations and it looks like they’re mostly covered. Although some parts we don’t know yet until we get the regulations.

Then we go into the whole list of recommendations around the qualifying for a fee waiver. Recommendation no. 6 says, “Fee waiver eligibility should be determined with reference to the Low Income Cut Off [or LICO is the shorthand], with flexibility to consider an applicant’s extraordinary circumstances.” Mr. Speaker, we can’t tell if that recommendation has been dealt with because that’s probably going to be put in the regulations rather than in the Act itself. There’s maybe a debate about whether that should have been more directly here.

Recommendation no. 7 is, “No merit or ‘reasonable grounds’ test should be included in the fee waiver application process.” Once again, we don’t know whether that recommendation has been responded to, because we don’t have the regulations. Although it appears with some of the wording that this point may be respected. But we don’t know for sure because we don’t have the actual regulation around the fee waiver application process.

No. 8, the recommendation is, “A fee waiver application should be easy to use, clear and in plain language.” Once again, Mr. Speaker, we don’t know if that recommendation has been responded to because we don’t have the regulations. We’re assuming that that’s part of the plan, but we don’t know that at this stage.

Recommendation no. 9 is that “A litigant who has qualified for Legal Aid or met the income testing requirements of a Saskatchewan-based pro bono organization such as Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan or Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc. (CLASSIC), should automatically qualify for a fee waiver without further application.” Those things aren’t spelled out directly in the legislation, so once again we’ll have to look at the regulations when they’re here to see whether that recommendation has been dealt with.

No. 10, “A fee waiver application should be made directly to a court official or officer of a tribunal.” Mr. Speaker, that recommendation has been met because that’s right in the legislation.

No. 11 is, “A fee waiver application form should require a declaration of receipt of social assistance or a simple financial statement, with additional proof to be provided only upon request.” Mr. Speaker, we can’t tell if that particular recommendation has been met because it will be part of the application process which will be in the regulations, and we don’t have the regulations yet to look at.

No. 12:

An applicant for a fee waiver who does not meet the financial eligibility requirement should be entitled to apply for a fee waiver on the basis of extraordinary circumstances to a court official or officer of a tribunal and the application may be referred to the court or tribunal for decision.

Mr. Speaker, this particular recommendation has been met because, quite clearly, in the Act it says that the official can refer the matter to the court or to the public body for review. So that one has been met in the legislation.

Then we get to their recommendations around consistency of fee waivers. Recommendation no. 13 is that “Courts and tribunals should be responsible for issuing fee waivers for the fees they charge.” Well clearly this legislation has the application going to the courts or tribunals themselves, so that recommendation has been met.

Recommendation no. 14 is that “Court and tribunal staff should be trained about the process and be willing to assist people to fill out the application form.” Mr. Speaker, we don’t know whether that recommendation has been met because the process is to be dealt with in the regulations.

Recommendation no. 15 is that “All courts and tribunals should name their fee waiver.” We don’t know about that as well, as it will be part of the regulations.

And the final recommendation is no. 16: “Education programs and materials should be available to inform people on the availability of, and application process for, fee waivers in Saskatchewan courts and tribunals.” Mr. Speaker, we’re assuming that that one may come, but in the legislation itself it’s not directly there. And as a matter of fact, it probably does relate to some of the budgets for the different tribunals and courts that are involved.

So, Mr. Speaker, that’s a good report from the Law Reform Commission, and I think a pretty good effort from the Ministry of Justice in responding to all of these things. We very much look forward to seeing the regulations.

**The Speaker:** — The time now being 5 o’clock, this House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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