



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

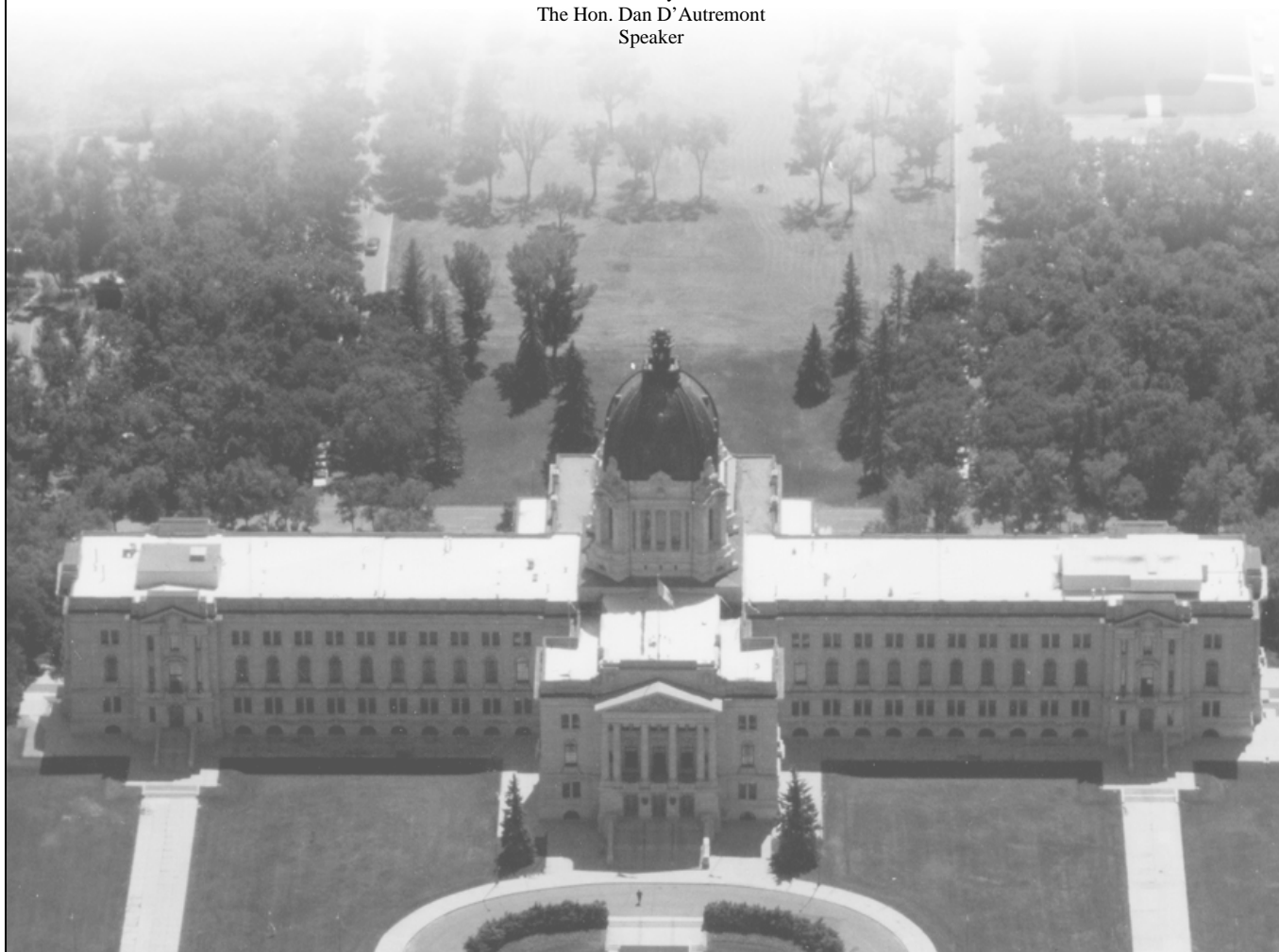
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce a group of students sitting in the west gallery from Walter W. Brown School from Langham. There are 27 grade 8 students. They're accompanied by their teacher, Julene Friesen, and teacher's assistant, Monica Neal. We hope you enjoy the proceedings today, and we'll meet later for a photo and a discussion in room 218. So please join me in welcoming this group of students from Langham to your legislature.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce someone in the east gallery. That's Mr. Chris Galloway, originally from Estevan and then Saskatoon and now Edmonton. Chris was very active in politics in my riding for many years, and he's now doing the good work at The Council of Canadians. So I'd like to welcome through you, Mr. Chris Galloway to his Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers who default on fixed-price contracts. And we know that in September 2014 this government walked away from a new 48-unit affordable housing project in Regina, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and then rent the units at full market price. This government allowed the private developer to back out of a fixed-price contract without any penalties, setting a dangerous precedent for this type of default. And further when asked to explain the government's decision, 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 reality 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: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens as it relates to the unsafe conditions created by that government on Dewdney Avenue with their failure to properly plan heavy-haul truck traffic that's now inundated Dewdney Avenue, causing damage and putting lives at risk. And certainly this is an issue for those that live in the area directly on Dewdney Avenue, but for all users of this residential artery because it's quite simply unsafe conditions.

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 here in Regina. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition for real action on climate change. And the petition reads as follows:

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in all of Canada. Saskatchewan's emissions have continued to grow to 74 million megatonnes and show no signs of decreasing. The Saskatchewan government has failed to tackle climate change, reduce emissions to the province's own targets, or put in any plan to protect the natural environment, and slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses energy efficiency program set the province on a backwards course.

So I'd like to read the prayer that reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by folks from the city of Prince Albert. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Aboriginal Storytelling Month

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my place today to bring attention to the Aboriginal Storytelling Month that was recognized over the month of February. We all know, Mr. Speaker, that storytelling is an essential part of Aboriginal cultures for First Nations and Métis peoples, and it's right across the province that telling of stories is what keeps our languages, identities, and communities strong. Our people's oral histories are preserved from generation to generation through the sharing of stories by elders and community leaders.

But storytelling isn't just about the past Aboriginal peoples, Mr. Speaker. Storytelling will be a critical part of unlocking a bright future for First Nations and Métis people everywhere. And every year our province loses out, when we don't engage the Aboriginal community to the extent we do, almost \$1 billion of potential economic activity because Aboriginal people are not as engaged as they should be. But before we can have a strong economy, we must have strong nations; and before we have strong nations, we need to have strong languages.

Storytelling is an essential part of rebuilding our nation and languages and so, Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to join me in recognizing Aboriginal Storytelling Month. I hope that all members will remember the importance of storytelling to the past, present, and future of our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Strong Performance of Saskatchewan Curlers at Canada Winter Games

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize the outstanding performance of Saskatchewan's men's curling team at the 2015 Canada Winter Games. The Canada Winter Games men's curling draws were held at the Prince George Golf and Curling Club in British Columbia from February 15th to 20th.

Saskatchewan was represented by a team that curls out of the state-of-the-art Moose Jaw Ford Curling Centre. The team, led by skip Carson Ackerman from Chamberlain, includes Brett Behm at lead, Kacey Rodland at second, Mitchell Dales at third, and coach Patrick Ackerman. They won all of their games during pool play, finishing with a perfect four win, zero loss record.

Thanks to this strong performance, the team obtained a bye into the semifinals. The semifinal game got off to a good start, with Saskatchewan taking three in the first end, but eventually the team from Ontario won 9 to 5. Ackerman and the team then moved on to the bronze medal game against hosts from British Columbia. While this game resulted in a loss, Team Saskatchewan's strong performance throughout the week earned them a fourth place finish.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating

Team Ackerman on their strong showing and congratulating all the athletes who proudly represented our province at the 2015 Canada Winter Games. Thank you.

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

Athletes Represent Saskatchewan at Canada Winter Games

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to recognize the remarkable accomplishments of another Saskatchewan athlete. Brittany Hudak is a cross-country skier from Prince Albert. She represented our province at the 2015 Canada Winter Games in Prince George where she took home three gold medals in the 1.2-, 2.5-, and the 5-kilometre Para-Nordic women's cross-country races. Given her impressive performance at the games, it was no surprise that she was chosen to be our province's flag-bearer in the closing ceremonies. This is in addition to the gold medal she won earlier this year at the International Paralympic Committee World Cup in Asahikawa, Japan.

What is even more remarkable about her success is that she has only been cross-country skiing for two years. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, as an average cross-country skier, that it takes most people years and years of continuous improvement in this sport to develop the type of mastery that Ms. Hudak has clearly attained.

In addition to her impressive performance at these Canada Winter Games, a number of other Saskatchewan athletes climbed to the top of the podium, including North Battleford's Matthew Hudec, Saskatoon's Lucas Morin, and Jeremy Ruddick of Martensville.

I'm sure that I speak for all members when I say that I am truly proud of all the athletes who represented our province's Saskatchewan spirit on the national stage. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating Brittany Hudak and all of the other athletes who represented our province with distinction in Prince George. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Saskatchewan an Attractive Jurisdiction for Mining Investment

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Fraser Institute annual survey of mining companies was released and, lo and behold, humble Saskatchewan was ranked the most attractive jurisdiction for mining investment in Canada. Yet even better than this, Saskatchewan was also recognized as being the second most attractive worldwide destination behind Finland. This ranking looked at many factors of 122 jurisdictions, including geological attractiveness and the extent to which government policies affected investment.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one more example of how Saskatchewan is continuing to be the best place to live as well as invest in. This government has worked hard to offer competitive resource royalty structures, reliable and transparent policies, as well as an overall wealth of resources for the companies that do choose to work here. This is a province that

is staying strong and able to compete with economies worldwide.

Even more so, policies such as the MARS [mineral administration registry Saskatchewan] staking system has allowed companies to bypass red tape and spend less on administration and more on exploration and development. These types of policies show Saskatchewan to be open for business and to continue to remain strong — something we can all be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, I would invite all members to join me in congratulating the hard-working men and women in our mining sector. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Rural Women's Month

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to announce that March has been proclaimed Rural Women's Month. This month recognizes the important contributions of Saskatchewan's rural women to the economic and social development of the province. This includes rural women of all ages and from all backgrounds.

Mr. Speaker, we are so very lucky to have all these amazing women working on farms, working in the community, and raising families. In addition to their jobs, many rural women serve their communities through involvement in schools, 4-H clubs, sports organizations, hospital boards, churches, agricultural societies, and other charity work.

Mr. Speaker, it is because of the hard work and dedication of these women that many of Saskatchewan's rural communities are thriving today. They continue to be resourceful, resilient, compassionate, and key agents of economic, political, and social development across Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, in my own community it isn't unusual to see women running and managing their own farms or out in the field working alongside their partners.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all rural women for their countless contributions to their communities, and I ask that all members join me in celebrating Rural Women's Month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Canadian Challenge International Sled Dog Race

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the 18th annual Canadian Challenge International Sled Dog Race kicked off in Prince Albert. Featuring mushers throughout the North, this event started February 23rd with teams crossing the finish line five days later. The competitors passed through many beautiful areas of our North, including Great Blue Heron Provincial Park, Anglin Lake, and the world-renowned Elk Ridge Resort.

This traditional race is run completely by volunteers and is the

longest sled dog race in Canada. It features 12-dog teams which run a 520 kilometre track, and 8-dog teams which run a 320 kilometre track. The Canadian Challenge also has junior teams and an open division.

This year's 8-dog sled race winner is local Earl Stobbe from Christopher Lake who completed the race in less than 48 hours. Rick Wannamaker won the 12-dog race. The race follows a very similar route used for years by trappers, the North West Mounted Police, as well as First Nations travelling between Prince Albert and La Ronge.

I would ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating all participants as well as thanking the efforts of all volunteers, especially the veterinarians and race marshals who keep this race running smooth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[13:45]

Grand Opening of Ability in Me

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 8th, I had the opportunity to attend a significant event in Saskatoon with the members from Saskatoon Silver Springs, Saskatoon Meewasin, Saskatoon Eastview, Minister of Social Services, Minister of Education, and the Premier.

This event celebrated the grand opening of the non-profit corporation Ability in Me, also known as AIM. AIM helps to provide affordable and effective services to family members who have Down Syndrome. AIM's goal is to create specialized education programming that will enable and support the inclusion of individuals with Down Syndrome in school and community life.

Our government has invested \$200,000 into the AIM program to help, support, and enhance those living with Down Syndrome. With AIM, several families are being provided with support and services they need. This includes teachers for speech language services for their classrooms.

I'd like to personally thank all those involved with the volunteer board and those made it possible for AIM to become a success. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating the AIM program. It will truly make a difference with the families and children who have Down Syndrome in Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Essential Travel

Mr. Broten: — A couple of weeks ago I attended a health summit in Stony Rapids. The northern health authority organized it, and many northern First Nations leaders and municipal and business leaders were there, and very important issues to this remote northern region of our province were addressed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they didn't expect the Premier to show up, and we know from the chamber of commerce report that the Premier has not once gone to the far remote North of the province since becoming Premier. But the folks in Stony Rapids, they were certainly disappointed that this government did not bother to send a single representative or official, claiming that it did not meet the criteria of essential travel.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. What exactly is his definition of essential travel?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. member for his question. Mr. Speaker, I have made trips to the North, two relatively recent tours to the North, and we plan to be getting into more remote parts of the North this spring. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we'll be discussing not just health care but issues around education and infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I can share with members of the House that over the last number of years, since our government was elected, we've invested an unprecedented amount of resources in health care for this province. Health care, yes for our cities and yes for rural areas of what we would refer to as southern Saskatchewan, but also those investments will of course have been deployed in northern Saskatchewan in terms of 2,600 additional nurses of every designation and over 400 doctors and capital deployment right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

When we took office in 2007, there was a considerable deficit in terms of human resources in health care in the northern part of the province and across Saskatchewan. There was a considerable deficit left behind by members opposite in terms of infrastructure as well right across the province. And we've been working over the last number of years to close the gap, to reduce that infrastructure deficit, to reduce the human resource deficit. We know there's more that's required, and our government's committed to continuing with that process, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — The question was, what is this Premier's definition of essential travel?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, in terms of the freeze and the discretion, the spending discretion we've asked government to deploy, whether it's third parties in the health regions, whether it's ministries themselves or Crowns, obviously we want to continue to provide the basic services for Saskatchewan people. There are certain meetings as well that are necessary in terms of economic development that are going to happen in various sectors, Mr. Speaker.

We would want . . . I remember, for example, in the bear-pit session at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], there was a question from the floor about how some, in terms of some social services casework, had understood that the freeze was impacting those who would be dealing with the casework. And, Mr. Speaker, the minister at

the time, on the occasion of the SUMA bear-pit, indicated that's not the intent of the freeze. Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to provide the basic services and, to the extent travel's necessary to do that, we'll do it. We want to continue to see the province grow. To the extent that travel's necessary for that to occur, we'll support that as well.

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

Travel and the Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Well, Mr. Speaker, no clear definition. And certainly it's puzzling why, Mr. Speaker, not a single representative from the government could go to such an important forum in the Far North. Mr. Speaker, the Premier talked about his visits to the North. A round of golf at Elk Ridge or a pit stop at La Ronge hardly constitutes getting to the North and understanding what the challenges are. And, Mr. Speaker, if that trip was there, there'd be a better understanding of what the needs are.

You know, I spoke with folks at the health forum at Stony Rapids and, when I said the government is spending \$1.3 million to send another 140 health care workers to the United States for a John Black lean field trip, they were absolutely outraged. Rightfully so, Mr. Speaker, because it is another example of this government's misplaced priorities. The forum at Stony Rapids brought leaders together to address very important issues to this remote region of the province, which is far, far more important, Mr. Speaker, than sending 140 health care workers to Seattle or Utah to tour an airbag factory, Mr. Speaker.

To the Premier: how exactly do these John Black lean field trips to the United States count as essential, but an important health forum in northern Saskatchewan does not?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, there would have been representation from the health system that would have attended this meeting in Stony Rapids. The focus of that was a partnership charter as well as developing an action plan, Mr. Speaker, and so certainly I know for a fact that the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Athabasca Health Authority had attended the meeting and is providing information to the ministry on how we may be able to help and facilitate the work that was done.

But I can say, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to support to health in northern Saskatchewan, this government, the record of this government is pretty clear. Athabasca Health Authority, in the last year of the NDP [New Democratic Party], received \$4.8 million as their budget; last year just over \$7 million, Mr. Speaker, a 46 per cent increase. Mamawetan Health Region, Mr. Speaker, 16.1 million under that government; under this government, 28.1 million, a 75 per cent increase. So, Mr. Speaker, this government certainly is working with all of our partners to improve health care all across this province, including the North.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, there were no government officials at this meeting. They were doing introductions and they talked about government officials, and there were crickets chirping, crickets chirping because no one could bother to send one individual to go pay attention. You had chiefs. You had private sector, Mr. Speaker. You had representatives from the health region. And they don't care, but they have \$1.3 million to send health care workers down to the States for an airbag factory, Mr. Speaker. Talk about misplaced priorities.

The Premier should listen to what senior health administrators have to say about these US [United States] field trips. If he did, he would see how absolutely non-essential they truly are. Here's what a senior health administrator has to say about these US tours, Mr. Speaker. "We will need to determine what it means to be a certified lean leader. Will we still require a North American tour? In general, how important are trips to Seattle?"

My question to the Premier: why does he call these trips, these John Black lean field trips essential when even senior health administrators question the value and the importance of these US tours?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the public will know that we have decided to end the contract early with JBA [John Black and Associates]. It'll be ending at the end of March, Mr. Speaker. We have a contractual obligation until that time, Mr. Speaker, and we will fulfill those, just the same as JBA has obligations to us, and they will fulfill those obligations, Mr. Speaker.

But I know that yesterday and today in fact, Mr. Speaker, when we talked about the savings and the quality improvement that we have seen from lean, the Leader of the Opposition in reference yesterday said, "I thought the spreadsheet was a good laugh."

Well, Mr. Speaker, because of the work of lean, because of the work that we've done with JBA, we are going to see, compared to last year where 24 per cent of babies at risk due to complications of a highly contagious respiratory virus, that will go from 24 per cent not getting their full course to 100 per cent getting their full course. That will save us \$240,000 in actual cash and 1.1 million in complications and hospitalizations, Mr. Speaker. What does the Leader of the Opposition find laughable about that?

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if they were serious about ending the John Black version of lean, they would cancel the 140 trips that are going ahead very soon to the States, but they're not. It's all about the optics here. They'll say they're ending early and then just send everyone on down to Seattle and Utah to tour the airbag factory. It makes absolutely no sense, especially when you have these needs here in the province.

I think these trips are a huge waste of time and a huge waste of money. I think they're another example of the misplaced priorities we've seen coming from this government, Mr. Speaker.

But the Premier doesn't have to listen to me if he doesn't want to. He can listen to senior health administrators who question the value and the importance of these trips. But this Premier thinks that these John Black lean field trips are so important, so awesome that he needs to spend taxpayers' dollars to send another 140 people down to the States. That's over and above about the 700 health care workers this government has already sent. No wonder, Mr. Speaker, more and more people in Saskatchewan are starting to question the bad choices being made by this Premier.

To the Premier: how can he justify spending \$1.3 million for another 140 people to go on a field trip to the US but not one, not a single government official could attend an important health forum in Saskatchewan's Far North? How on earth can he justify that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, an example I've given in this province, in northern Saskatchewan, as it relates to this particular respiratory virus. The children of northern Saskatchewan have been treated very well. Their full course of shots had been given 100 per cent of the time.

But in southern Saskatchewan, that was not the case. In fact, Mr. Speaker, while the course of shots were given while the child was still in the hospital before discharge, it was the follow-up that needed to be a part of that. We had families travelling a couple of hundred kilometres, Mr. Speaker. We were able to reduce that by streamlining and standardizing the process, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, this is the work that we are achieving through lean, what we're learning from JBA and what we had learned prior to JBA and what we've learned after that to the point where \$240,000 will be saved by not having to throw away medication and over \$1 million saved in reducing complications and hospitalizations, Mr. Speaker. This is why we're doing this, so that all of those kids, all of the kids in this province don't have to go through this, Mr. Speaker, or their families.

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

Costs and Benefits of the Lean Initiative

Ms. Chartier: — Yesterday the government tabled a document that listed minimal savings as a result of anything that could be remotely connected to lean. The actual savings achieved are incredibly meagre, and very few of those actual savings have anything whatsoever to do with John Black. So that document on its own is very unimpressive, but it's especially unimpressive in the context of the total cost of the lean pet project.

To the minister: when can we expect him to table a document that outlines all the costs related to this government's lean pet project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The savings that have been identified, Mr. Speaker, both the hard dollar amount as well as the things that we have been able to defer or avoid — cost avoidance into the future, which is the potential of a cost, Mr. Speaker — because of the work that we are doing is \$125 million.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, some of that predates the John Black and Associates contract signed in 2008, for example over \$50 million because of the fact that we have changed the way that we do blood inventory in this province. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the House though because the Leader of the Opposition has said . . . I think he agrees that that was a good thing to do, that we reduce the blood inventory, the discard that we're throwing, the blood we're throwing away, that that was a good thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, that was done by ministry staff and some of our front-line staff getting together with the support of Kaizen Institute lean advisers, Mr. Speaker. So there was in fact a consultant that was used that gave us that good work, Mr. Speaker, and that is a part of the 125 million that we have saved to date.

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

Ms. Chartier: — I didn't actually hear a total in that answer, Mr. Speaker. We know about many, we know about many of the lean costs. We know about consultants, senseis, workshops, Kaizen promotion offices, and all of that adds up to a massive amount of taxpayer money, but this government still won't disclose the total costs of all lean spending. In fact we asked the Ministry of Health for the lean-related travel expenses of just eight ministry officials, and we were told it would take 177 hours to figure out that, and we would have to pay \$5,400 for the staff time to do so, just for the Ministry of Health to calculate the lean-related travel costs for eight officials.

To the minister: why on earth would it take the government 177 hours to figure out the lean-related travel costs for just eight officials?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since 2008, April of 2008, we have saved \$125 million, Mr. Speaker, and improved quality in the health care system. I won't go into what was done in Five Hills Health Region under the NDP in lean, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to use the 2008 number. But, Mr. Speaker, it was \$125 million, and to date we've invested \$40.5 million in lean, so 40.5 million versus 125 million in savings.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, it's outrageous that this government doesn't even know how much it's spending on the John Black lean pet project. It can't even tell us how much has been spent on lean-related travel for just eight officials, just eight, Mr. Speaker. The government says it would take 177

hours to calculate that.

And here's the contrast. John Black has this government using stopwatches to track everything nurses do, right down to the second. "Nurse walks, 10 seconds; nurse checks, grabs, 4 seconds; nurse walks, 17 seconds; nurse turns around, 1 second." This government is actually following nurses around and timing everything they do down to the second. Yet this government isn't even keeping track of its own lean-related expenses.

To the minister: when will this government put down the stopwatches, pick up the calculators, and finally tell Saskatchewan people the truth about the full cost of its lean pet projects?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. I think the members were fairly supportive of Releasing Time to Care when that was first introduced to the province. If you look at Releasing Time to Care, the first thing that you need is a stopwatch, Mr. Speaker. So this has been a part of lean with JBA. It's been a part of lean prior to that. It's been a part of Releasing Time to Care.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear — \$40.5 million. That includes 1.5 million in travel for North American tours as of February 6th, 1.3 million paid to physicians as of February 11th, and \$195,000 for patient and family involvement because all of our events we ensure that we have a patient or family representative. We of course will pay some honorarium for them to be a part of that, Mr. Speaker. And so that was \$195,000, including the JBA contract and what we paid prior to that — \$40.5 million.

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

Maintenance of Educational Facilities

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Yesterday the Education minister was unable to answer the most basic questions about the state of our school buildings. No answers despite the fact that a special investigation into schools in just one school division found that five of those schools in that one division are deemed not structurally sound from a special engineer's investigation. There's now temporary posts, two-by-fours, two-by-sixes propping those schools up to ensure basic safety. This is more than alarming. That school division says that those structural problems would not have been identified with a routine inspection. They needed an engineer to come in and do a special inspection.

A very straightforward question to the Minister of Education: how many schools in other school divisions have undergone this sort of special inspection?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, thanks for the question. We don't assume responsibility for what takes place in each and every school in our province. We provide funding for capital, for operating. We provide emergent funding. We provide a

variety of other funding sources, but how those funds are to be allocated, how those things are, we respect the autonomy of the boards to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is referring specifically to Prairie Spirit School Division, and what I would like to do is point out for him some of the money that's gone to Prairie Spirit School Division in the 2014-15 year: preventative maintenance budget provided by the province, \$1.137 million; emergent funding for some of the emergency items that they identified, \$861,581; ongoing capital projects, \$6.7 million; relocatable classrooms, \$1.36 million — over \$10 million in this last year alone, Mr. Speaker, in that school division.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, in light of five schools being deemed structurally unsound from a special investigation, schools that weren't safe for kids, for the Minister of Education to brush off his responsibility is absolutely disgusting, Mr. Speaker.

He didn't answer the question, so I'll narrow it down just a little bit more. Could the minister clarify today if schools in Moose Jaw and Prince Albert have undergone the same sort of special investigation that found these schools to be unsafe? Can he assure parents here today that those schools in Prince Albert and Moose Jaw are safe?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the school divisions in our province work hard. They're competent and they're capable. With the resources they have, they do a good job. They do an effective job. When they find a problem such as they did in Prairie Spirit, they acted and they did the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to provide funding for them. Mr. Speaker, our total school infrastructure spending is up 268 per cent. In our first seven years in government, we spent \$700 million. In their entire previous seven years before that, they spent \$190 million. This is at the same time they closed 176 schools. Mr. Speaker, they have not got a good track record. If they're willing to stand up and say, this is what they're responsible for prior to us forming government, that would be a good thing. They should assume some responsibility for the shortfall that was in our province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's alarming that that minister is brushing off his responsibility. The school divisions of this province care about this deeply. They've been hamstrung by that government on this front who haven't supported them. And you would think that five schools that were found to be unsafe in one small review, one small review would be a wake-up call to that minister to work with school boards to make sure that every school in this province is safe for the kids that are entering into them.

My question to the Minister of Education: has there been a similar sort of special inspection supported by the ministry working with school divisions to make sure that schools in

Regina and Saskatoon are safe for kids?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say this to the members opposite, where some of the money has gone to. This is where some of the expenditure has gone to. To the member for Athabasca, we provided \$4 million towards a brand new school at Turnor Lake. Mr. Speaker, to the member from Cumberland, I would say this. We provided \$30 million, \$33 million in renovations at Churchill High School in La Ronge. To the member for Saskatoon Nutana: \$14 million for renovations for Nutana Collegiate.

Mr. Speaker, for the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre: two replacement schools, Sacred Heart and Seven Stones in progress and not yet gone to tender but under way. Mr. Speaker, to the member for Regina Lakeview: replacement school for Connaught now under way. Mr. Speaker, for the member for Saskatoon Riversdale: \$16 million for St. Mary School. Mr. Speaker, I will come back more after the next question because I've got more for the members opposite.

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

Trip Taken by Creative Saskatchewan Executive Officer

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough that this government pretends that it was essential to send the Creative Saskatchewan CEO to Hollywood for the Oscars, but it's especially bad that the Minister of Culture refuses to say why Saskatchewan people should have to pay for a big Canada Day party in Hollywood. Does the minister have an answer yet? Why should Saskatchewan people pay for this vanity project when there are huge unmet needs here at home?

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

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would refute the claim by the member opposite that this is a vanity project, but we're still under advisement with exactly what that's going to look like. But I'll remind the member opposite that Creative Saskatchewan was created to provide support for all the creative industries, and Creative Saskatchewan has a mandate to bolster the development of creative industries in realizing their economic potential within and outside the province through business, product development, and market access. This involves meeting with stakeholders within and outside the province to develop relationships and access markets.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that we go outside our boundaries to market our products. Mr. Speaker, it's absolutely vital that we don't sit back and wait for others to come to us. In relation to this, the Canada project will be beyond just the creative industries, Mr. Speaker. It will be to market Saskatchewan, period. I'd like to thank you.

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

Ms. Sproule: — With answers like that, it's no wonder that more and more Saskatchewan people are starting to question the choices that this government is making because of its wildly misplaced priorities and wasteful pet projects.

To the minister: why won't this government just scrap these plans for the big party in Hollywood paid for by Saskatchewan taxpayers?

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

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to talk about Creative Sask for a little bit here, just in relation to some of the positive things they've been involved in. Creative Saskatchewan has distributed over \$6.4 million in direct grant support to the creative industry sector and \$2.1 million to designated creative industry associations — significant dollars, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to talk about some of the creative sectors, what they've said about Creative Saskatchewan. Mary Lynn Podiluk used a market travel grant to attend the *NICHE* magazine awards where her piece won the engagement ring category. *WolfCop* received production and marketing funding for the project and has obtained international distribution deals, and high demand for the film led to a promised sequel, Mr. Speaker, currently in development.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have more examples, but I thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 152

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 152** — *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 152, *An Act to make a consequential amendment resulting from the enactment of The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*.

Mr. Speaker, this bill relates to the previous bill, *The Victims of Domestic Violence Amendment Act, 2014*, which we were dealing with yesterday. The effective name of the legislation is changed to "the victims of interpersonal violence." And, Mr. Speaker, it includes things under that legislation now, including some kinds of the electronic communications and others trying to deal with the types of violence and intimidation that are

present in our society today.

So now this particular bill goes into the Queen's Bench legislation, *The Queen's Bench Act*, which is *The Queen's Bench Act, 1992*, section 2, and basically says that a family law proceeding as defined in that legislation will include any application made under *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act*, which is a new name for *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this once again is important as it relates to having bilingual legislation in Saskatchewan, but more importantly I think it affirms and confirms that the Queen's Bench court of our province has the overall supervision of the procedure under *The Victims of Interpersonal Violence Act*, as it will soon be called. And the importance of that is that many of these cases involve defining a balance between the rights of individuals, whether they're the victims or the perpetrators, and also the community, to make sure that the community is protected. And we have traditionally relied on the Court of Queen's Bench as a place where some of these tough questions can be dealt with if they're not specifically cleared up in the procedures of the legislation.

[14:15]

And so, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we continue to make sure that we follow the direction of the courts around having bilingual legislation. It's also important that we affirm the role of the courts in being the final arbitrator or arbiter of many of the things that happen in these difficult situations that arise.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will be dealt with along with the main bill when it goes to committee, and I have no further comments at this time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 152, *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 152, *The Victims of Domestic Violence Consequential Amendment Act, 2014* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 150

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 150 — *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This particular piece of legislation, *The Residential Tenancies Act*, and a bill to amend *The Residential Tenancies Act* is legislation that attempts to modernize and update provisions of the legislation that has been in place for quite a number of years.

Now I think what it's important to recognize is that there are some fundamental changes that are being made here around eliminating the concept of social housing in the legislation, and we don't fully know the implications of that as it relates to this legislation and we don't necessarily understand why that is happening. We can take some educated guesses based on some of the activities of the government where they have been effectively backing away from any kind of investment in social housing that will provide low-income housing or income for special people in the way that traditionally has happened in Saskatchewan.

We know that the federal government has also moved out of this area, leaving it to the provinces, but unfortunately it appears that this whole area is being not necessarily abandoned but is very much being downplayed. And so here we have in this legislation this sense that the term social housing isn't even really part of the picture any more, and I'm not totally certain what the consequence of that is for the housing issues in Saskatchewan.

Now what we know is in a time like we have now where interest rates are low, where mortgages are relatively reasonable in cost, if you can put it that way, that there are opportunities for people who have money for down payments to purchase homes. And it also though is a time when people are looking to build residential tenancy, rental places, and getting money for that. But unfortunately, some of the length of time that some of the borrowing has been set up for does not go into the longer terms that we used to have in our social housing programs across the country. And so some of the questions around the ability to have effectively subsidized housing for lower income people, I think, are part and parcel of some of the protections here. But what this legislation itself deals with is the whole area of protection of renters, protection of landlords, in the residential tenancy arrangement. And we see, I think, a bit of a shift from more protection for tenants to perhaps a little better protection for some of the landlords.

Now I know that there will be people on both sides of that issue that will have strong opinions. I know that we don't know the full effect of what some of these changes are going to be in the legislation. It does appear that a number of issues are being delegated to the minister or to officials in the department. That is sometimes a reasonable thing to do. Other times it creates uncertainty for everybody because it's not always entirely clear what the policy decisions will be.

So we have pretty detailed legislation. We do have, continue to have the role of the Rentalsman who will end up being an arbiter in many of the situations involved with the legislation.

But we don't necessarily know, where some of these powers have been moved to the ministry, exactly what some of the long-term policies will be.

It's always interesting to look at legislation like this and see where the amendments are made to regulatory powers, and it's interesting to see that in section 81 there's an amendment made to the regulation-making section to add a clause (h) which ensures that regulations can prescribe exemptions from either the Act as a whole or a part of the Act. So all of a sudden we have the minister, and possibly with the assistance of the Premier and cabinet, creating exemptions from the Act which may or may not be discussed by the public in the legislature before they're made.

And so any time we see these kinds of clauses in legislation should give all of us pause as we look at them because these exemptions may or may not be favourable to tenants, or landlords for that matter.

I think everybody agrees that when laws are clear, when they have very clear ways of being understood and enforced, it's better for everyone. Every time you add a little bit of uncertainty into a law, it creates further problems for this, for the whole area. And so we end up maybe having some of this flexibility in the regulatory power helping certain simple procedural things, but it may . . . can also allow for exemptions from some of the clear, strong protections in the Act. And so I think that we need to be very careful as we move forward in looking at the legislation.

Now there are a number of updates to the legislation around how people get notice of various proceedings under the legislation. I think practically we know that options of delivering by registered mail or posting notice or doing some of these things need to be adjusted to take into account how we communicate in the 21st century. But once again, we need to make sure that people receive proper notice when the issue involves their home, the place where they live, and the concern that they have about making sure that their home can be protected.

Now there are some other changes to the legislation which I think come as a result of different incidents that have happened, different cases that the Rentalsman might have had, the different cases that might have gone to court. I think that we will get a chance to ask some of the officials about some of those kinds of questions, but I know that we'll be . . . won't be able to understand all of the different changes that are here. But ultimately what we want in legislation is we want legislation that's clear. We want legislation that protects the public, both the landlords and the tenants, and we want the rules to be understood by all. We're hoping that that's the ultimate result of this legislation. At this point we still have some questions, and so we will ask those questions when we get a chance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 150, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 150, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2014* be sent to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — The bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 155

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 155 — *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 sur les directives et les subrogés en matière de soins de santé*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had an opportunity already to speak to Bill No. 155, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act, 2014*. My remarks here will be very limited.

This bill in essence repeals and replaces *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act* with a new bilingual Act. And the minister points out that since the Supreme Court of Canada's 1988 decision in *R. v. Mercure*, the Government of Saskatchewan has enacted approximately 57 bilingual Acts. This translation program is designed to meet the needs of Saskatchewan's francophone community, Mr. Speaker. We've already, as I've said, I've spoken to this bill and my colleagues have as well and to put some things on the record, but we look forward to the opportunity in committee to ask more fulsome questions and have a more detailed discussion.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 155, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 155, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act, 2014* be sent to

the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — The bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 156

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 156 — *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the previous bill before, the accompanying bill, I've had the opportunity to speak to Bill 156, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014* as have most of my colleagues. Just to let you know, the general public know what this bill is about, it makes consequential amendments to four Acts that reference *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act* including *The Adult Guardianship and Co-decision-making Act*, *The Electronic Information and Documents Act*, *The Health Information Protection Act*, and *The Public Guardian And Trustee Act*.

And the minister went on to say that *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act* is being repealed and replaced with the bilingual version, which we just heard about previously with Bill 155. Again we've all had an opportunity to speak to this in the House, but we look forward to a more thorough conversation in committee. And with that, I will conclude my remarks.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 156, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill 156, *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014* be sent to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — The bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

[14:30]

Bill No. 159

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 159 — *The Family Farm Credit Repeal Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly my honour to rise in the Assembly today and have the opportunity to speak in these debates here in the House, and this bill is no exception to that. *The Family Farm Credit Act* that is being repealed is an important piece of our history. I think the minister pointed out in his opening remarks or introductory remarks when the bill was read a second time that this is dealing with a bit of our history that is no longer. And I think it speaks volumes about the evolution of farming in Saskatchewan and certainly my family history is no exception to that rule, Mr. Speaker.

What we see right now . . . Maybe to go back a little bit in time, *The Family Farm Credit Act* was enacted, I think he said, yes 1979. And at that point when you look at the history of farm financing in Saskatchewan, a number of farmers were having trouble accessing sufficient capital for farm acquisitions. I think we all remember, well those of us who can, 1979 interest rates were . . . Mr. Speaker is far too young I'm sure to remember 1979, but the rest of us who do remember — I was actually graduating from high school and I worked at the credit union for a couple of years after that at home — interest rates were skyrocketing.

And I know farmers were having trouble accessing capital to make farm purchases, and the credit union system of the time didn't have the local capacity to make those kinds of long-term loans. So I think it speaks volumes about where farming was in the late '70s and early '80s and the need for that kind of body. In this case it was Co-operative Trust Company of Canada, to be able to make those securities and do that kind of lending.

I believe that the minister indicated that times have changed. A review was done of the Act a couple years ago, and at this point in time there are no securities at all that are being issued under the Act. And of course, the Co-operative Trust Company of Canada has now been restructured and we have Concentra Trust and Concentra Financial which have their head office right here on Albert Street in Regina. I did read at the time that this Co-operative Trust Company of Canada was the only company, financing company like that with headquarters in Saskatchewan. So I think that's something we can be proud of and it's certainly an important part of our co-operative history here in the province.

I guess what's really telling though about this bill and the fact that this type of financing is no longer being used, I think is first of all other banks caught up. There was actually . . . Farmers were able to access more types of lending, and so this specific type of lending became redundant probably because it was successful. I mean it was something that worked, and I think the other financial institutions recognized an opportunity and were

able to adjust and make those kinds of changes so that producers had access to funding from different kinds of sources, in raising capital from different kinds of sources.

The other thing I think that this bill speaks to though is some of the challenges that farmers are facing here in Saskatchewan locally. Local farmers and young farm families are facing some problems accessing capital these days because of a different story. And what we know is happening here is although Saskatchewan farm land prices are still probably lower than other provinces because of recent changes to the farm land ownership Act, but what's happened is because those prices are still low, they're still very popular across the country for sure with all kinds of investment agencies including, we know, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board.

And so it's kind of a conundrum, Mr. Speaker, because the lower prices make them attractive, these kinds of lands attractive for purchase by outside investors and people that aren't actually farmers or producers. And I know that some studies are being done by third parties now so to determine who the new landowners look like, what they look like here in Saskatchewan.

But some interesting statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture were released. And this is Stats Canada results from the 2011 census, and what we see on one chart that they've prepared is the size of Saskatchewan farms, and this is the difference in only five years between 2006 and 2011. These numbers are very telling. In every category . . . They had several categories of farm size in this list. In every category, up to 3,500-acre farms — so anything under that: 10 acres, 10 to 70 acres, and all the way up — every single one of these categories saw a decrease, in some cases up to 20 or 30 per cent decrease in those types of farms.

So we see the number of farms dropping dramatically over five years. And I mean this is something that has continued since 2011 and certainly would have been a big change since 2003 when the law changed. So it would be very interesting to know what those numbers are today, four years later, and the total numbers from when the law changed. But at any rate, what we know is that the number of census farms that existed in Saskatchewan in May of 2011 was close to 37,000 farms. Within five years it had declined over 16 per cent, almost 17 per cent.

So what I'm hearing over and over again, Mr. Speaker — and this is from farm families, from communities, from young producers — is that this trend, which is what it appears to be, I mean when we see a decline in 16 per cent of the number of farms and also a percentage change of 15 per cent of farms over 3,500 acres have grown. So we have a 15 per cent increase in farms over the size of 3,500 acres. Now let me think. If I do the math, that's probably five sections of land because there's 640 acres in a section. So those farms that are over five sections have increased by 15 per cent in a five-year period, and we saw a decline in the number of farms by 16 per cent.

People are raising a number of alarm bells with this trend, and certainly some of the articles that are out there talk about things like food security. There's some concerns that as the farms get larger, it is actually a threat to food security. There's a think

tank in Oakland, California that describes this kind of land grab as a global phenomenon that threatens food security because we know that the smaller the farms are, the more local they are and the more the local food sources are protected. It's not so much an issue in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but it is certainly a global issue.

One of the things that we could see this government do is actually start collecting better data and have more available data on non-farmer investments because this attractive price of land in Saskatchewan, although it's very much out of the reach of young farmers and young individuals who'd like to start farming, but it is still very attractive to the large investment funds. And this one article is from a magazine called *trend* and it's the fall 2014 issue. This is page 7, and there's a quote there that says, "We need to start collecting data about non-farmer investments because right now we don't have a lot of information." This is a Mr. Ron Bonnett who's president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

He goes on to say, "We need to collect information that tells us how many of these investments are happening, where they're happening, and what type of investments they are. Are they intended, for example, [just] to supply capital to people who are farming, or to own the land and then rent it to farmers?"

And he says this is a responsibility of the governments to undertake that kind of information. Now I don't know if the minister is intending to start collecting that kind of information. We'll certainly want to ask him that question and a few more when we have the opportunity in the committee coming up soon.

I know Prince Edward Island has taken a very different approach and actually there is still a limit for, I think, 1,000 acres for individuals and 3,000 for corporations that don't actually live in Prince Edward Island. But that's certainly not the example or the situation here in Saskatchewan.

There's a woman named Bertha Campbell who's also a farmer from Prince Edward Island and a representative for the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and she also says that the Carver report — this was a PEI [Prince Edward Island] report — suggested that to prevent land grabbing you have to collect this data. And again I'm hoping that this is something the ministry will start collecting if they haven't already done so and certainly start providing it for people so that they understand these significant changes to farm land acquisition and certainly the way farming itself is being conducted here in Saskatchewan.

I guess this kind of bill really highlights for me the evolution of farming in Saskatchewan. I mean even in my own family, my grandfather homesteaded in 1909 and my brothers are two farmers that are third-generation on the farm, and now they're actually winding down their operations. And a lot of our farm land is being sold as well, and it's just part of the story, I think, of Saskatchewan farming.

But when you see a 15 or 16 per cent decline in the number of farms in five years and you see an increase in the number of large farms by 15 per cent in the same five-year period, these kinds of trends are concerning, not just to producers, but to local communities because, Mr. Speaker, what we see is that

there's the support and the local community networks that exist when producers actually own the land and live in the community that is being . . . People are concerned about that and are feeling that there's a bit of a threat to the safety and security and local autonomy of communities when the land is owned by someone that doesn't live in Saskatchewan.

I know the numbers, I think one of the numbers I heard most recently was about 8 per cent of farm land in Saskatchewan is now owned by outside-of-province investors. And that is a trend that will have a significant impact on farm life in Saskatchewan but also small communities and small towns and even some of our larger urban centres like Yorkton and Melville and Assiniboia and Humboldt and North Battleford. All of these communities will be affected by the decline in population and by the lack of local concern when land is owned by someone who lives far away.

So at this point I think we're looking forward to having questions for the minister and his officials in the committee structure here in the legislature. And I think I look forward to being able to ask some questions about the ministry's plans with respect to this situation that arises and as a result of *The Family Farm Credit Act* being repealed. I mean it's all part of the continuum, and I look forward to those questions. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 159, *The Family Farm Credit Repeal Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 159, *The Family Farm Credit Repeal Act* be sent to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 149

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 149 — *The Health Administration Amendment Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the discussion today about Bill No. 149, *The Health Administration Amendment Act, 2014*. In the minister's second reading speech, well just in a nutshell, what this bill does is it

allows for transfer of health registration functions from the ministry to eHealth Saskatchewan, and so that's why the necessary amendments to this bill.

The minister talks about the approximately 1.1 million people who hold health cards. Those health cards are our eligibility for our health benefits in the province because we are part of the health registration program.

So this bill, as I said, is very simple. It transfers health registration from the Ministry of Health to eHealth, and eHealth is now able to make decisions about how the data is stored without having to go to the ministry for permission, and reflecting the fact that eHealth is now responsible for health card registration, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's an interesting conversation around eHealth here in Saskatchewan in general, Mr. Speaker. More than \$500 million has been spent to date on getting electronic health records or eHealth up and running here, and the reality is we still don't have electronic health records, a fulsome set of records that we rely on, Mr. Speaker. That's in contrast to the government's news release that they had on January 20, 2015. If you read the headline and you would read the opening sentence, you would think that eHealth is a done deal, Mr. Speaker. The headline is, "Core electronic health record for Saskatchewan complete; access to electronic information benefits patients."

[14:45]

A comprehensive provincial electronic health record (EHR) for Saskatchewan residents is complete. Health providers with access to the EHR Viewer can now see their patients' diagnostic imaging results, completing the core components of an EHR for Saskatchewan residents [Mr. Speaker].

So that's the government's news release. So anybody, a lay person who reads this . . . Well we must have eHealth records. And there are some very good things. There is progress being made, Mr. Speaker, but what I have heard people say, with the amount of money that has been spent to date, the fact that we still don't have electronic health records is questionable, Mr. Speaker.

I want to tell you a little bit about what the viewer does and then I want to tell you about what is missing, Mr. Speaker. So the health viewer includes patient prescription and allergy information from community pharmacies — incredibly beneficial — immunization histories for people . . . And I could have this date wrong, but I recently had someone contact my office who was born in 1979, and was told that his records, his paper records, were not in existence anymore, and he was trying to track them down. We haven't connected again yet to figure out where that's at.

Immunization histories are incredibly important. I know I've really appreciated seeing with both my kids where they're at with their immunizations and where they need to be.

"Supports to help physicians better manage their patients' chronic disease, including diabetes and coronary artery disease." Again a very good thing and I know doctors have said

that's a very important thing.

"Standardized operative reporting for breast cancer surgeries; hospital admission, discharge and transfer summaries, providing family physicians with valuable patient information; and discharge summaries from hospitals in the Saskatoon Health Region . . ." Only in the Saskatoon Health Region, Mr. Speaker.

We have to point out that the government says that more than 90 per cent of laboratory results from health regions and the Saskatchewan Disease Control Laboratory are in eHealth viewer, Mr. Speaker, which is great, but we have to look at where some of the gaps are.

I understand that the Humboldt hospital, which is a big part of the Saskatoon Health Region, is not yet part of the eHealth viewer yet, Mr. Speaker, which is a problem. As I said, it's a big part of the Saskatoon Health Region and some people might not realize that.

When it comes to imaging, diagnostic imaging, Mr. Speaker, private clinics account for about . . . It's about 30 per cent of records that are not included in eHealth records, Mr. Speaker. All the health region records, diagnostic . . . All diagnostic images, Mr. Speaker, in health regions for the most part are included, but those private clinics, 30 per cent is a good chunk of people who aren't included in the eHealth records. And I know the government has said that they're working towards that, but we aren't there yet.

So to send out a press release saying, hey, core components finished and we have eHealth records, I think leads people to believe that they will go to their doctor's office and they'll see their doctor with electronic health records and think that their information can be found anywhere throughout the province. And that could not be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker.

My own doctor has been on the cutting edge of using eHealth records for a very long time. And I could go visit her today for something, and end up in the hospital tomorrow for that very condition that perhaps she was treating me and they would have no idea in the hospital that I'd ever seen my doctor the day before. There are huge disconnects in the information still.

I understand there's a working group, Mr. Speaker. And the one thing that I hear from physicians and other health care providers who have access to this information, Mr. Speaker, that they want to be able to have access to the information that will help them provide us better care, whether it's . . . They need access to that information, whether it's at the bedside, on their mobile device, or sitting in their offices to be able to again provide us with the best possible care. For more than half a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker, we are still so very far away from that. And so this government has much work to do on that front. I know there have been improvements, and it's great as we go along, Mr. Speaker, but to say that we have electronic health records or leave people with the impression that we're there, that we've arrived, is giving people information that isn't entirely the case, Mr. Speaker — well not the case at all, really.

So I would like to say electronic health records are very important. And another piece of this is ensuring that we protect

people's privacy, and that is a huge issue around electronic health records as well. The doctors and other health care professionals are trying to figure out . . . They don't want one giant repository where all the information will be kept. In the conversations that I've had with people, it's about pulling out essential pieces of information and having them in a particular repository. But it's not about every piece of information about me or you in that repository, Mr. Speaker, but those things that folks can come to consensus about. Those are the things that will make health care providers have the ability to treat us better. And I know that those are discussions that are ongoing.

But so Bill 149, *The Health Administration Act*, again is about transferring health registration from the ministry to eHealth, and of course you can't talk about eHealth without talking I think about this recent news release. But I know we'll have an opportunity in committee to ask some more specific questions and narrow that down a little bit and drill a little bit deeper as well.

I've got colleagues who would also like to speak to this bill, so with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 149, *The Health Administration Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 158

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 158 — *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into this debate on Bill No. 158, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act and to repeal The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*. And of course it is very timely as we are in the early days of March, and people are considering . . . This is probably the time of year most people are thinking about their retirement. Have they put money away? Have they put it into RRSPs [registered retirement savings plan], that type of thing, particularly young people? And you look at them and you say, so have you done what you should be doing, putting money aside?

Unfortunately though the reality — and we can look at the news stories that we have quoted — that unless you're in a retirement plan, either one that is a public sector type of plan or a private sector plan in your workplace, the odds are really high you haven't done that. In fact we heard on Monday when the RRSP season was closing that more than half of Canadians bought no RRSPs this past year. And we know the reason why. It's just simply unaffordable. It's simply unaffordable. It's a priority though but it is really unfortunate that we are in the circumstance that we have right across this country, but

probably even more highlighted here in Saskatchewan because we know the cost of living has gone up. And it would be interesting to know, over the last 8 or 10 years, how has the Saskatchewan Pension Plan done in terms of contributions.

And I'll talk a little bit about the minister's comments, about how he feels it is the answer, and it's an appropriate retirement tool. It may be for some. You know, savings are savings and it's a good thing and in particular if there are ways to enhance that. Fair enough. I think that's the thing. But we can't mislead people, particularly those who are vulnerable, into believing that that will help them in their senior years.

Seniors deserve a good, fair retirement that meets their needs, not to live excessively but to have one where they know that they can pay their rent, they know they'll be able to buy food, and they know they'll be able to buy their prescriptions as needed and to have some small amount so that they can enjoy the things that we all enjoy in life, and whether that be going to the movies, going out for the odd meal, or buying gifts for grandchildren or grandnieces or nephews, being part of a family. These are all the things that we expect in our senior years. But for too many, for too many that's a difficult, difficult choice. And we see that right across Canada.

And I would like to talk at length a bit about this because I think we have a real opportunity here in Saskatchewan where we have had pioneering initiatives around the kind of work that we've done with seniors.

And I would think at this point I just want to recognize the fact that, as seniors, you know, there are many resources they can draw on, whether it's Canadian pension plan if they were working; the old age security, a basic retirement fund; a Guaranteed Income Supplement that we see right across Canada; and here in Saskatchewan we have the Saskatchewan Income Plan that Allan Blakeney put into place in the '70s.

And you know, we've had a lot of talk about the Saskatchewan Income Plan and I would like to say, and I have said in this House, that while this government has done a good thing in terms of the increases to senior income plan, I do have concerns about that because the work that they've done may be undone by the fact that it's not managed very well. It's not managed very well at all. In fact, when we ask questions in estimates, it's hard to get a straight answer from the Minister of Social Services because apparently there's two people overlooking this pool of some 20-plus million dollars. They are not sure who in Saskatchewan is receiving it. And we know the impact it has every year where many actually fall off the senior income plan because of the way many seniors feel that they may not have to file for income tax and therefore they lose out on benefits.

They get back on. Some get back on, but the fact's that it's an interruption that doesn't need to happen. And we know that there's many folks out there, and my office often receives calls from seniors about making sure they have all the resources they are eligible for and they deserve — and they do deserve — and so we get a call and we say, well you know, it's actually quite simple to get on the plan because what you do is phone GIS, the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and therefore you will, if you're eligible, get on the Saskatchewan Income Plan. But it's not advertised. People aren't aware of that. And it's only by a

fluke that you do find the information out. And that is unfortunate because people should know that, should know that.

And the other really unfortunate thing about this is that, while people . . . And it really is a bit of a tragic thing. People do set aside money and they do save, and that's a good thing. That's a good thing that we should all, when we're looking at our . . . through our working lives that we budget our money and we are not going into debt. In fact it's kind of nice if you can put some money aside for savings, whether that's for retirement or for travel or for some special project. It's a wonderful thing if you can discipline yourself for savings. But the unfortunate fact that what happens when people turn 65 and they don't have a lot of money put aside?

In fact the number that we often hear is around \$50,000, that if you haven't saved more than 50,000 or 100,000, you should really talk to an adviser because you may be putting yourself in place of getting money clawed back that you would normally get through Guaranteed Income Supplement and other sources because you have just a little bit that throws you over the number that allows you to qualify. And in fact we have people who phone my office and say, you know, my GIS has gone down by 35 bucks or 50 bucks. And I say, do you have a small RRSP? Do you have about \$30,000 in savings? And they say, yes. Well that's why you've lost about 30 to \$50 on your GIS because they've taken that into account now, and your savings that's giving you a little bit of an allowance is also causing you lose out on your GIS.

[15:00]

So it's something that we should really be sure that we make sure our seniors are well advised about the implications of their savings, and that includes the Saskatchewan Income Plan, and it's one that while the minister . . . And I'll talk about his numbers in a few minutes. But we know that these are people who are putting a little bit aside and will have a little bit of retirement. But what are the implications for them for the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and will they be sheltered from that? Is there a way to say, hey, we recognize that you did the right thing? You were a good saver and now you have some resources, and you won't be penalized for doing that.

Unfortunately a lot of people don't realize that they will be. They won't be able to take full advantage of other federal programs and provincial programs because they've saved 25,000 or \$50,000, and it just isn't that worthwhile. You really need to be disciplined and put it over, put it over.

But you know, I look at some of the stats that we have, and this is from *The Telegram* in Victoria. I believe that's where *The Telegram* is at. It could be Halifax as well. I'm not sure. But *The Telegram* talks about "More and more Canadians . . ." This is Lana Payne, and this was from last November. "More and more Canadians believe they will never be able to retire, giving whole new meaning to the phrase 'work till you drop.'"

Usually we think work till you drop happens within a 24-hour period. We don't think of it literally, work till you drop. And this is really, this is really unfortunate. And you know, I remember these ads, and I think young people may not remember these ads, but we all remember the freedom 55 ads.

And that we don't see on TV anymore. We don't see that. And that's okay too, you know, because people who've reached 55 actually, there's always the option to work. And I think that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . TV black and white and it would be colour, the tropical scenes.

But you know, working after 55 is not a bad thing. And I think that many of us look forward to working many years, and it's a good thing. There's lots of good reasons to work. But it's when you have to work and you have to work, and the phrase that you're going to work till you drop really is something that is unfortunate.

She writes, "For [many people] . . . Freedom 55 is someone else's dream. They can't even imagine Freedom 75." And then she talks about a report that came out in the fall, the Conference Board of Canada's survey on non-retirees and retirees in Canada, and it talks about how people don't feel in Canada very secure about their retirement income. It would be really interesting, and maybe the government's done this, and if they haven't, it would be interesting to see the results of a survey here in Saskatchewan. How do Saskatchewan citizens feel about their retirement income?

She goes on to talk about:

. . . a full 60 per cent do not believe they have saved enough to retire in comfort. Not surprisingly, women and lower-income earners were even less likely to have saved enough.

Shockingly, one in five Canadians reported that they will never retire.

That's 20 per cent of Canadians feel that they will never retire, that they will work until they pass. "In addition [she writes], nearly one-third of those surveyed said they didn't know when they'd be able to retire. Stagnant wages are coming home to roost." So this is really, this is really, really something else when you're getting these kinds of results.

The survey also found that over 40 per cent of employers surveyed said that their employees are overly optimistic with respect to their assessment of when they will be able to retire.

So that's even more surprising. The bosses are saying, almost half of them are saying, you know, I think my employees are overly optimistic about their ability to retire, and that's something. So this really underlines what we really have to do here in Canada and in Saskatchewan.

So we have this bill before us, 158, and I know the Saskatchewan Pension Plan has been something that the Finance minister has raised many times at the federal level and in the federal arena as an option to address some of these concerns that we've been hearing about for many years, but clearly it's not enough. It really isn't. It's one, as I said, maybe a bit of a tool, but considering the size of the problem and in considering the size of the nut or the bolt that we're trying to work with, this just isn't going to be enough.

We know that in many ways, seniors who are the very bottom

of the income scales have been a priority for many governments now, and we know, as I said, in terms of whether it's the Canadian pension plan, the old age security, the Guaranteed Income Supplement, or the Saskatchewan Income Plan, and in fact Sask Housing.

And we know Sask Housing itself has nearly 11,000 seniors who are tenants and really actually appreciate the ability to have a landlord like Sask Housing, even though we see with *The Residential Tenancies Act* some of the language is changing around social housing, affordable housing. We're hearing more and more from seniors who are becoming alarmed about what is the change that maybe coming next from this government. Sask Housing used to be something that you could really count on in terms of stability and predictability, in terms of rent, and particularly seniors, some 11,000 seniors who are in the very low end, low end of income.

So all of these resources are in place, but they're being challenged. They're being challenged, and we have some real issues. We have something that we really have to deal with, and we have to make sure we do the right thing. When you hear the numbers that one in five really will plan not to retire but in fact will work for the rest of their lives, that's something else, and so we need to make sure we do the right thing.

Now many of us . . . I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we did all receive, I assume we all received the CARP [Canadian Association of Retired Persons] magazine, the *Canadian Association of Retired Persons Advocacy Annual Report*. I was reading through it yesterday. Now we all just got back yesterday, so I might have got it the week before. But it was very interesting because it gives a national perspective, and it really focuses on what Ontario is doing because of lack of action at the federal level around a Canadian approach to this. And Ontario and Quebec seem to be striking out on this.

But I thought it was very interesting to read because this is a non-partisan, this is a pretty level-headed organization who've really talked about . . . Now they've identified their top 10 issues that they advocate for seniors.

CARP takes the long view in advocating for social, financial, and health transformation in Canada . . .

As Canadians live longer and the population ages, governments will have to lengthen their time horizon in addressing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Here are CARP's top 10 advocacy issues that will require real political commitment and long term investments from governments.

(1) Support for caregivers. (2) Retirement income security.

And that's really what we're talking about here, for those who have not put money aside or enough money aside or have felt like they have, but really when it comes to . . . And this report, this gets back to the employer's . . . [inaudible] . . . who say, you know, 40 per cent of employers are people in the know about what their employees might be, feel that their employees are overly optimistic.

And this is what I worry about the Saskatchewan Pension Plan,

that in fact people are overly optimistic. It has a nice ring to it, but really I don't know if it meets the test. And this is something that we really need to talk about. We have to have a frank conversation, and we will when the bill comes.

Just for interest's sake, I'd like to go over some of the other issues: "(3) National dementia care strategy," "(4) Patient centred health care," "(5) Homecare," and "(6) Older workers," and on it goes. But we are here talking about retirement income security, and that's a major, major issue.

And you know, it was interesting that as we read through this, they feel what happened in Ontario a big win, but more work ahead. And this is what I would say in Saskatchewan is we have more work to do here and, you know, with plans that have been innovative in the past, like the Saskatchewan Income Plan.

But we need to really take a look at those folks who are at the low end who are the working poor. Those people who are making around minimum wage in a full-time. We know the average age for people making minimum wage is some 35 years, 35 years old. Those people who are making some 25,000, 30,000 up to maybe 50 or \$60,000, this is something that we really need to focus on, and so we have to take this challenge quite serious.

So you know, this what they talked about, and I just want to read a few things from this magazine that we all received, the annual report of CARP. And CARP, I will quote:

. . . has been advocating for pension reform since 2008, starting with a call for a national pension summit, a Universal Pension Plan [we call it a UPP] and a modest increase to the Canada Pension Plan as a first step to address the growing concern about retirement income security. This year, our efforts bore fruit with the first change to the public pension landscape in a generation.

Now they are referring to the Ontario retirement pension plans, so they are not really thinking about what happened, you know, with the Saskatchewan Pension Plan out here in Saskatchewan as a significant change. And in fact I think they would feel that it's a little too . . . not enough and it's too late, and I would agree with them. It talks about:

Six years ago, CARP's biggest advocacy challenge was getting governments to recognize the growing problem of retirement insecurity and to get them to do something about it.

And we see much the same here, that we need this province, we need this Finance minister recognize that retirement security is a major, major issue. And as I said, particularly for those, the working poor to the low, average income, those who are from the 20,000 to the 50,000, 60,000 income bracket who may not have put enough aside, who probably don't work in a workplace that has a pension plan, who are doing in many ways the right thing because they are putting some money aside but it clearly won't be enough and in fact actually be harmful to them because they will see much of it clawed back by the federal government because essentially they will be paying their own benefits through a GIS.

So this is a problem here. And so we need to do something about this. And they go on to talk about:

Six years ago, [their] . . . biggest advocacy challenge was getting governments to recognize the growing problem of retirement insecurity and to get them to do something about it.

By June 2010, finance ministers finally acknowledged that Canadians were not saving enough for their own retirement and that governments had a role to play. The federal government introduced the Pooled Registered Pension Plans as a solution to the savings gap and finance ministers committed to considering a “modest” CPP enhancement. It is now widely accepted by experts and governments that Canadians are not and cannot save adequately for their own retirement.

But recognition can be fleeting and government action can be slow to come. Keeping consistent attention on and driving pension reform for more than half a decade has been a challenge that paid off in 2014.

And what I’m really . . . What they’re referring to of course is the action that happened in Ontario, and we wait to see what happens in Quebec. But we know, we know, and coupled with a universal pension plan if we want to go down that road, but we know that as well the CPP [Canada Pension Plan] has been a very effective tool. But again we need to take a look at if it’s time to have a modest, reasonable increase to make sure that there is enough money aside for everyone.

There’s many benefits of a Canadian pension plan that has enhanced benefits. It’s one that we all pay into, no matter where you are in Canada, and it’s one that at the end of the day we’ll all remember that we’re part of. Now the Minister of Finance will say, well the Saskatchewan Pension Plan is portable. You can draw on it or contribute to it anywhere in Canada, and fair enough. Now I have to understand for sure. There’s a residency requirement at some point, but you know, if you’re . . . My colleague here from Regina . . .

An Hon. Member: — Regina Lakeview.

[15:15]

Mr. Forbes: — No, from Regina, talked about yesterday about how he has been a contributor way back in the ’80s, and that’s fair enough. That’s good. Good thing that he remembers, but if you don’t remember, that may be lost income. And I don’t know. I don’t know whether or not people . . . It’s funny, when you make a contribution of a couple of hundred dollars when you’re young, whether you will remember that. Hopefully most people do.

Interesting here, a little factoid in terms . . . I see the Minister of Education’s not here. One thing that was in the teachers’ contract that was interesting is those teachers who started working and, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you were a school board chairman I believe at one point or on school board. Sometimes the situation arises where teachers start and they don’t stay. Their very beginning career and they don’t stay a month. They don’t stay 20 days. But they’ve contributed to

their pension plan during that 15 days or 14 days or something like that. So fair enough. They were 21 or 22 when that happened and they decided, this is not for me. I have to find a different career, and it’s better for everyone involved if we call it a day right now. And they do, and they move on and find a different career. And they live and they have a reasonable life, and they have forgotten that they actually contributed to the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation] retirement plan.

So the situation is this. Under the old Act, a teacher who taught less than 20 days could not withdraw that money. Their estate could. After they passed away, you could get it. You could get it. But if you were alive and retired, you couldn’t get it. So this was brought to my attention by one of my constituents, and so for the last couple of years I’ve been writing letters and have been raising this. I wrote a written question about this.

Now would you imagine how many teachers, former teachers are in this situation? Fourteen hundred and ninety-two people. There are 1,492 contributors to the teachers’ pension plan that taught less than 20 days and cannot access that money. Their estate can. Now the crazy thing is that unless you put it in your will to make sure you go after the pension plan for your couple of hundred bucks, most people will have forgotten. Most people will have forgotten that they actually contributed to the STF plan.

But that’s changed now, and I’m glad to see that actually . . . I don’t know all the particulars but it was one correction. Because that’s not fair. That’s simply not fair. If you’ve retired, you should be able to draw on all the resources that you have in savings. But now you can. So one little battle for the little guy, you know. And it’s kind of nice when that happens. But I do have to pass that on to the constituent because she’s still with us, and she was thinking that that would never, that she’d never see her, and I think it’s like 3, maybe \$400. Because at that time it wasn’t a lot of money.

But it’s one of these things sort of, you know, when we think back and we were 20 or 21, we’ll think about all the places we remember. Well we know the stats of how many forgotten bank accounts there are in this country, people who’ve put money aside. They’ve worked in a small town. They started up a credit union account. They’ve taken most of their money out, but there’s maybe 50 bucks, 100 bucks left in and they’ve gone and moved on, you know. And they think they’ve closed everything up, you know, but they haven’t.

So there are some challenges here with portability. And this is one of the things we will never . . . Most of us, I hope, will never miss getting their CPP benefits. I hope that whoever works and whoever . . . that’s one of the first things you do. Make sure you get your CPP. But it is understandable if, as I’ve said, almost 1,500 members of the STF when they’ve taught less than 20 days, 20 days some 35 years ago . . . That’s, you know, that would be they would have taught in the 1970s. And so do they remember? I mean, and it probably wasn’t a positive experience either, you know. It’s one they will . . . that September of 1978, I would just rather forget about. But at any rate, it’s all something in the past, and I think that we have to make sure we make it as easy as possible. So having said that though, you know, as I said, portability is really important.

I want to take a minute to talk about the labour's plan for retirement security, and they have worked tirelessly. You know, you have CARP working on it. You have the CLC [Canadian Labour Congress] working on it, because this is something that they see and they advocate for working people. And they say, you know, a modest increase in contributions to CPP can go a long way, can really help in terms of making sure people do get a retirement that is something that you kind of look forward to, and you don't have to be the one in five who say that they'll work until they die. And that's just not the way we should be. In Canada, of all places, we should not be having that kind of thing.

I want to take a minute to refer to the minister's comments, and he talks about the CPP. This is back in November 17th, and that it's a unique . . .

SPP [Saskatchewan Pension Plan] . . . [is] a unique retirement savings vehicle for individuals with little or no access to occupational pensions . . . or other retirement savings arrangements. It is the only plan in Canada of its kind offering members professional investment management at institutional costs.

And of course, you know that would be interesting to make sure. We've heard horror stories from the States about their 401s, and what are the costs? But again, here we have a situation with little or no access to occupational pensions or retirement savings, and are they going to be penalized with a GIS or the Saskatchewan Income Plan because they've contributed not enough to make it really worthwhile.

So that's about 33,000 members with over 400 million in trusteeship. I'm not sure what that works out to, what each plan has, and what their expectations can be when they retire. That would be interesting.

And you know, he talks about three or four key aspects. Simple. You know, well that may be the fact that it's easy to join and understand. Paperwork is kept to a minimum. But you know, I think people expect more than just making sure it's simple. People want something that's durable, that's stable and predictable, and will make sure it's sustainable. Simple probably isn't the one thing that they're thinking about, but maybe it is simple.

Consistent talks about being cautious over the long term in terms of investment and making sure that . . . And we know that it's a difficult thing, up and down, in terms of investments, but fair enough. Consistent is fair. Flexible. You can make a contribution at any time during the year. Again, fair enough. But are people making contributions? It would be interesting to know. Have they done a study? Have people been consistent in terms of making contributions? Have they been there to make sure that they've been making contributions? That's really important. And portable — it's always your plan regardless of where you live, what you do.

So this is the question I would have is, so is there any, you know, what are the benefits? What are the contributions? Are there any contributions or any liabilities from the province of Saskatchewan for this? I know at one time there was, but I don't think there is anymore. But it would be interesting to know that.

And so can anybody in Canada subscribe or do they have to have had at some point some residency here in Saskatchewan? Clearly you should be able to withdraw wherever you live, but I'd be interested to know more about the contributions.

So this is something that's hugely interesting and compelling, because it's something that is on people's minds. We know the Ontario election, in many ways the outcome was determined in significant ways because of Premier Wynne's promise to create a universal pension plan in Ontario, to go it alone. And we know in Quebec there is a lot of interest in it, and they also made a plan, a promise to make a plan.

So we are really . . . I think that people are thinking about, do I have enough resources to retire and not be overly optimistic like many employers think that their employees are? We want to make sure that people can make contributions. That in fact they won't see them clawed back when they're 65 or 66 and wonder, why did I put this money into a plan that really doesn't really protect me? I mean it may be one thing to say I have professional advisers while I'm working, but what happens when you have to withdraw? What happens then? And what happens with the implications with the other plans?

So we have a lot of questions about this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is one that is on the radar, as I've said, for citizens. It's one on the radar right across Canada, right across the world. We see governments that are having to step up, and people are expecting them to make sure that people can retire, that this stat, that where we say one in five will continue to work . . . I mean it's one thing to say I have a choice to work when I'm older, but it's another to say I have to work. I have to work. And quite often we know those are people who are in low-income jobs.

So while this may target one kind of niche in terms of those who may not be working . . . And it'd be interesting to know, since the 80s when it was introduced, how much that market has shrunk. We know families now, it's very common to have both spouses working. In the 80s it wasn't as common, but now it is very much the situation. And so what has it done to bring this forward?

So there will be many, many questions with that, and I think this is one that many folks will want to talk about at length. It is one that we have in all our constituencies, seniors who are wanting to make sure they have money set aside. There's a segment that will do well — those who have pension plans or those who've done well through their work, whether through business — but there unfortunately will be those who will be struggling. And I think we owe it . . . This is who we are as Canadians, to make sure every senior is looked after in their senior years, that they can have a home, that they can afford groceries, and they can afford their medications and their health care and they can have a little bit of joy as well. That's a huge thing.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 158, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Act and to repeal The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 158, *The*

Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2014. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 161

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Moe that **Bill No. 161 — *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la faune*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To join in on Bill 161, *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014*. Before I make some comments on it — I know they're proposing some amendments here — I would just like to have an opportunity and just talk about I guess individuals that choose to go out and hunt. And many, and I think the member from Rosemont, you know, he talks about his passion of hunting with his dad, his family. He talks about that.

But you know, having said that, listening to some of the hunting stories that he talks about as young kids' stuff, it reminded me back when he was referring to the bill about the story he talked about, and no different than with my own father back in the day, with my family. And you have an opportunity; you want to go out. It does build relationships and give you an opportunity to spend time with individuals that you choose to go out and hunt. And I did that with my father, my brothers, and it was an opportunity. You had a lot of laughs and you had some good times doing it.

Of course learning from my father about how to handle and make sure you were following the laws that are, you know, put out there to make sure people are safe, make sure that you comply with the regulations that are put in place to protect, you know, our community members. Because sometimes we're talking about people going hunting in areas where you have a lot of I guess families, whether it's farm families. And I think about that.

[15:30]

You know, you had properties that had signs that . . . do not hunt, and you had to respect that and hunt with permission only. So there's been a lot of opportunities that you would go to those farms and you would ask if you could go out and, you know, hunt on their land with permission, and it was granted. And they asked you certain things to do. And that was good. I have to admit I had a lot of fun times and some good talks and, you know, just enjoyed it, you know. And at the end of it, you had some opportunity to have some good meat. That's good for all of us, you know.

You think about wild meat and some people really, that's part of their diet, whether you're talking about hunters who go moose, deer, many of them. But also now I think about the First Nations and Métis who harvest and it's part of their, you know,

their diet, and it's important to them and the culture and how they utilize the animals that, you know, they harvest when they're hunting.

And I know when I get into some of the changes, I'm going to talk about the proposed changes and making sure who was consulted, talked to, and who will be impacted. And I know sometimes we'll say some individuals will not be impacted — First Nations, Métis — when it comes to their traditional right to harvest for sustenance for their own use and, you know, make sure their elders have the wild meat because they're used to that and some of the elders cannot go. And I've seen that where they'll make sure they share their harvest with the elders and the ones that are used to that in their supplement. And when I think about that, we now have blended families and I'm going to get into this.

But it's interesting. I had a gentleman approach me. And I don't know, maybe in committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we'll have an opportunity to ask some of these questions because I know there's been some changes and we're going to find out. And these amendments may not impact, but I think in committee there's going to be opportunities, you know, to consult, for myself I know talking with individuals back home.

But there's been some changes, and if you're a non-Aboriginal, there are now ways — and that's what I'm hearing, you know — a different way that you can go hunting, harvesting with, whether your wife and your children are First Nations or Métis, and they do go out hunting together.

There's the rules. There's been some changes. So I know we're going to ask for some clarification and find out why and what's the reason. And maybe there's reasons why, but I think we need to make sure. And I know I will communicate it back to this individual when we get this information in committee. He's asking and we'll look at it and why the changes.

And I think sometimes it's frustration from some of the individuals that I've heard where they're saying, this is a part of my opportunity to go out hunting, but now it's changing and I don't know exactly what the regulations are. And we're going to ask some questions and get some clarification. I told the individual I would do that.

But having said that, I know there's many people who do go out and hunt and they follow the rules, regulations. And I realize there are some that obviously, you know, don't follow the rules and regulations. Obviously we have law enforcement. We have conservation officers who, you know, I guess make sure and do all they can do with catching poachers, turning in poachers, people that are breaking the rules, the regulations. I understand that they're there for a reason.

Let's make sure that those rules and regulations, if individuals have concerns, that they can come forward to the government and they can come forward to the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], whether it's in opposition or part of the government, to share their concerns and ask for clarification.

When I think about that, you know, I know there is Turn in Poachers. We see a lot of that going on right now, whether TV ads, whether you see the big billboards. It encourages

individuals, if you know someone who's poaching or committing an offence that's within the hunting, they encourage those individuals to call the 1-800 number and turn in poachers. I don't know how successful that program has been, and that's some of the questions we can ask. I know the critic from Saskatoon Nutana, the member will, as a critic, will ask some of those questions when we get this bill into committee.

But I know they're talking about some of the amendments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, scientists studying game that they have to get a licence. Now I don't know what the reason is and I, you know, there must be some reason why government's pursuing this. I'm hoping they've talked with the scientists, they've consulted widely. I'm hoping that's happened, and that's why it's coming forward.

I know in committee we'll ask some of those questions and find out, like what was the reason, and why are you asking them now to be licensed if they're going to study? And you know, not knowing and having any of the information when the government and the ministries make their recommendation and their changes and are asking us to look at these bills and make amendments, there must be a reason why. And we'll work through the committee and we'll get that. Having said that, you know, we can do that.

The other thing, a part of it reflects, you know, licensing. When we talk about . . . It's almost concerning to me, and again we'll get into committee and finding out. We're hearing a lot of whether those that are looking after the licensing and issuing are from out of province, out of Canada. And that's really concerning. And I know there's been problems with that process. And you know you've had some areas where we've seen that happen before, and those individuals using that service have not been happy as Saskatchewan residents, and are not pleased with the way the process is going. And I don't know with this one, and if that's the route they're going, and, you know, and how happy individuals are and how successful it has been. Again that will have to be worked out in committee and hopefully we can find out, you know, what's the reasoning. Why?

And why we keep outsourcing opportunities for people in our province for jobs. They're here, you know. We can't find somebody in our province to do that? So that's one of the changes that we see listed there, and we're concerned. And I know we'll ask those questions in committee and we can get more detail. And hopefully the minister and his officials can provide us and the people of this good province with some answers. And the critic.

The other area, you know, this is the area where they talk about getting . . . Right now currently if someone is, from my understanding, someone is charged with an offence when it's hunting, they can actually . . . The conservation officer will lay the charge, I guess, and they can wait to whether the government wants to proceed, or the Crown for whatever reason, whoever will make the final decision whether they're going to go ahead and, you know, stay the charges; whether they're going to move forward with them or they're going to drop them. They have up to a year, from my understanding, and they're now moving it to three years.

I've had, you know, individuals come forward who say, you know, Doyle, I was . . . I'm Métis. I was out hunting. My frustration is if I'm going to be taken and game taken from me, and for whatever reason verifying that they're Métis, there might be reasons why the conservation officer charges the individual. At the end of the day, the individual after one year is going to be either told, here's your gun back, or your vehicle, if it's, you know, if it's seized, whatever. Here's the game. Here's your rifle. We're not proceeding with charges, so here's your . . . At the end of a year, one year of them taking the game. And I know in committee we're going to ask some of the questions. We'll get some of the answers to this. Is that game that they seize, is it given back later or is it, you know, is the meat gone to waste or is it given to a food bank? I don't know what they do with it.

If someone has not been charged and later on, like I said, the charges are dropped and they're not going to go ahead with the charge after one year, then I assume . . . And you know, I guess I'm assuming, and we'll ask these questions. And we need to ask these questions, get some clarification so that if someone asks me about, does that game go back to the hunter that had been previously charged, but now those charges aren't . . . So there's issues with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we're going to want to find out about this. And does this implicate First Nations, Métis with this bill, changing it from one year to three, and will they be a part of that process? Because from my understanding, and some have asked back and forth, and we're wondering if First Nations, like I said, traditional Métis, will have to adhere to the policy, or this bill, this amendment will affect them in any way without consulting. I want to make sure they have been consulted, and rightfully they should be if it is going to affect their traditional right to harvest game of any sort.

So I'm wondering about that and, you know, in that area, where that will go. And I know we're going to have to get some clarification, and we will. Again it's like everything else. Sometimes it takes a while to ask the questions, the right way to answer the questions. Sometimes you don't always get the answers, so you've got to come a different way, and I understand that. For whatever reason, that's part of that process. But I know the individuals that have raised it with me and have the concern, they are individuals that harvest and use that for their traditional, within their culture and their treaty right to harvest game, and hunt and gather for sustenance, like I said before.

So you don't want to see regulations that are impacting them without consulting because I've had individuals come forward who have said, whether it's trappers . . . And all they're saying, and you know, they'll work. They're not saying that they don't want to have regulations and rules forward. What they would like to make sure is that they are consulted. Whether it's trappers, fishermen, whether it's First Nations, Métis, rural Saskatchewan residents, whether they live in the rural area, the urban, the South, they want to be consulted when issues government are bringing in that are affecting them. They want to do it. And I know in some of the minister's comments he talked about he's talked with the Wildlife Federation, different groups where he has said he has engaged a conversation with them if I'm correct on that, and we will look into that. And I know there's going to be individuals that we can approach and

see.

And sometimes amendments are simple things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that need to be done, and we call them housecleaning. Sometimes they're major. Sometimes we don't know exactly how this will affect certain groups — hunters, whoever. So you want to make sure you ask the questions in committee and work it out.

And then sometimes at the end of the day, powers are given to the minister and the ministry to come up with the regulations and how they're going to follow out. You can make amendments here but if it gives certain powers and there's concern, you want to make sure that those individuals that are being impacted are consulted, their view.

And they have some good ideas and we see many times our front-line workers, whether it's people out in the, you know, whether they're trappers, they're fishermen, those individuals who, you know, have the camps for hunting big game or bear hunting. You can go out to those camps. They have expertise that they can share with government when government's making these changes. And I think sometimes they want to feel like they're being heard.

And you know, sometimes government doesn't hear the people and, you know, obviously we've seen that yesterday. You're not hearing rural Saskatchewan. And they came to this legislature to voice their concern and to show this government. So that's the time where people will say, if you're not going to hear us when we have an opportunity for our representatives to bring them to the House, to ask questions in committee, or to write you as the ministry or government and not get a response, then they come to this House and they show the government. And they say a strong message and they carry a strong message saying, we want to be heard, we have a right to be heard, and that. So that happens as well and it's good that that happened yesterday.

So again I know there are many issues that individuals have, and on some of these we'll get clarification in committee. And we can ask the minister and his officials to clarify who was consulted and why are some of these changes coming forward. This just gives us an opportunity to initially just share some of the views that we're hearing and some of the concerns as some of us are looking at the bill in itself and moving forward.

I know there will be opportunity for us to ask a lot of questions. And like I said, looking at the South and the North and like I said before, we have an opportunity to make sure government hears individuals in our province. It is a right that individuals have, and I want to make sure and I hope the government has done the due diligence it's supposed to do. And we as representatives in this Legislative Assembly are supposed to make sure we govern all the province and we make sure we're hearing the concerns of Saskatchewan residents. And unfortunately we haven't seen some of that from this current government right now; there have been many challenges where the government is just not hearing the people. But having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time I'm prepared to adjourn debate on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has

moved to adjourn debate on Bill 161, *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 162

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 162** — *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in to Bill No. 162, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act*. And I've read through the comments of the minister at first reading. Certainly some of those comments seem to be reasonable and well placed, but we need to make sure we do our due diligence on this front and make sure we also understand all of the, I guess, pressures and what sort of forces, public or otherwise, have come to the minister to appeal for these changes. Certainly you want an efficient system on this front but, most importantly, you want to make sure you have a fair system. And we want to make sure that the consideration of making this an efficient system hasn't compromised its ability to be fair.

[15:45]

And you know, I think some of the measures that are brought forward seem to, as I say, be reasonable, but that's without some of the important consultation that we'll need to do with stakeholders on this front, those that are directly impacted by this legislation, and looking at certain examples as well because certainly it's an important environment to get right, in making sure that you're balancing off fairness, rights, and responsibilities. And if you think of this Act and how it relates to some of our constituents potentially who may find themselves in an environment where they may be rather vulnerable because of a predatory environment with a payday loan or a potential credit card structure or with sometimes a scheme that may come with some sort of product, Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that we recognize that not every commercial entity is operating necessarily in good faith with some of our constituents as well.

And when I think of some of the predatory lending that goes on to, in many cases, many of the most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, it's a real challenge, and I believe it's one that needs to certainly have the attention of the provincial government and also of the federal government to make sure that we're protecting citizens from across Saskatchewan. And when we look at this legislation, we then want to make sure that this allows fair mechanisms for those that may be caught up in some of those schemes and some of those predatory environments to make sure that they have rights and that they're treated with a lens of common sense and fairness, because otherwise we may, if government's not careful, government may be forfeiting some

of the fairness that certainly they deserve.

So in general there's various measures that have been brought forward. As I say, they seem to be reasonable. I would also want to understand from the government what lens has he come at this from. What has he listened to on the consumer end of the equation, and particularly those who may be in a vulnerable position to some of the sort of predatory structures that I've spoken of? But certainly we need to have a fair system. That's critically important and it's important for it to be effective as well. And if some of these measures bring forward practical improvements for the enforcement of money judgments, then that may be quite reasonable.

We know far too often though with this government that they really don't do their due diligence when they create legislation. I guess maybe in part that's evidenced by the fact that we see changes introduced again with this bill to a bill that had just recently been overhauled by government. So obviously when they introduced that bill, they recognized some gaps, or others in the public or private interests may have identified gaps. These are the kinds of questions that we want to put to the minister.

We're all for making improvements to legislation, but we need to make sure that all potential stakeholders and affected parties have been appropriately considered and that they've been engaged because the result of this government . . . We've seen it far too often. We've seen it waste millions of dollars. We've seen it put people's rights at risk. When they move forward with ramming forward their own ideological agenda without appropriate consultation, it's just a recipe for problems, Mr. Speaker. So there seems to be reasonable measures.

I'd be interested in hearing directly from the minister as to who's identifying the gaps that weren't addressed in this government's legislation two years prior. Who's coming to him with specific concerns? Which private interests? What public interests? And what's caused these specific changes and what sort of consideration has the minister and this government given to, as I say, individuals and families who may be subject or vulnerable to predatory structures, whether that be through payday loans or potential operations of certain credit cards or certain schemes with certain products. We need to make sure as well that we're balancing off a structure that makes sure we protect our constituents, the families across Saskatchewan, to make sure they are afforded a fair process.

So that's the kind of approach we'll take with this legislation. Certainly we'll be looking for more clarity from the minister. If in fact as we go through this process, these are deemed as specific improvements, then that's something certainly we wouldn't be standing in the way of. But certainly we need more clarity on that at this point in time.

So with that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak briefly here today and look forward to further work on our behalf with stakeholders and through processes of this legislature. But at this point in time I adjourn debate for Bill No. 162, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont

has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 162. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 163

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

The 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. 163, *An Act to amend The Education Act, 1995*.

Mr. Speaker, it's always interesting to see what types of issues arise that require amendments to *The Education Act*. And when I was looking through the four sort of main reasons for the amendment to the Act, it struck me that two of them have direct political implications and that they needed to be fixed if the Premier's whimsical comments or his comments different places were going to be put in place. And I'm going to start with those ones and then go and look at some of the other things that have been added into the Act that could have been done now or they could have been done some other time.

But I think the most immediate issue that's addressed in this amendment to *The Education Act* relates to the sort of bolt out of the blue that the Premier brought in the last election campaign when he said that school was always going to start after Labour Day. And I don't think anybody had asked the people in the Ministry of Education. They hadn't asked the school boards, hadn't asked the teachers. And I guess so the Premier just kind of came up with this one, and all of a sudden they were scrambling to figure out the rationale for it. And it was pointed out that this was not necessarily going to be a problem in 2012 or in 2013 or 2014, but when it got to this year, 2015, there were going to be some issues around the amendment that was there.

And so what we have is a fix. I think the Minister of Education described it not as a broken promise, a broken promise by the Premier, but it was fine-tuning the legislation. In other words, whoops, we made a mistake. We didn't talk to the people involved, and so we have to do something to fix this before September of 2015. And so I think that was the real trigger for this legislation coming forward when it does now.

And so what is the legislation actually doing? Well basically the Act goes into this whole question of the start of the school year and sets out some rationale on how this might be adjusted. And so what we have in the new legislation is a definition that says, for any school year . . . and I'll quote this directly:

For any school year in which Labour Day occurs on or after September 5, the minister may, by order, set a date in September that is earlier than Labour Day as the first

instructional day for the school year.

So, Mr. Speaker, this issue which was raised when the Premier's whims were out in the public in 2011 is now being or it looks like being addressed at this point. But I think the more, you know, fundamental question here was the intervention by the Premier into an area which had traditionally been the decision of school boards around when the instructional year should start and what kinds of adjustments should be made.

And so we have a sort of a stumble in the fall in setting up the original legislation. Now there's what the Minister of Education calls is not a broken promise but a fine tuning that allows us to, at least this year, set a different date than what the present law would dictate.

And so what we know is this legislation will have to pass and then, according to the legislation, the minister may by order set a date in September that is earlier than Labour Day as the first instructional date for the school year.

Now this gives the discretion to the minister. I suppose there is a possibility that those who like school to start after Labour Day can still argue that there should be no change to the present policy or the policy that was the whim of the Premier. And we may end up seeing that we'll have the legislation in place, but we'll have to see whether a decision is made that will change this.

Now the press release from the government says that this is what they plan to do, and we'll see whether that is there. So that I think was the triggering sort of change, the fixing of a mistake, the fine-tuning of an error, as the Minister of Education calls it, that brought this legislation forward.

But there's a second area which also has political consequences where the legislation is changed, and it relates to section 9 of the legislation, and I'll get to the section here. And effectively what the legislation talks about in section 9 is a long-standing rule in Saskatchewan that school boards can't borrow money without actually getting a clear idea of how much it's going to cost to borrow that money before they make a motion in their school board meeting to borrow the money. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a more difficult change to accept, perhaps, than some of the other changes that are here. Because what it does is it basically says that a school board can just borrow money without knowing how much it costs for them to actually, to borrow that money. And so what we end up having is situations where the whole school board is in a situation where they can do a blanket borrowing statement. And so the old legislation said something like this, and this was section 323. It says:

A resolution setting forth the intent to borrow pursuant to section 321 must be passed by a board of education or the conseil scolaire at a meeting that is called for that purpose, showing in detail:

- (a) the amount proposed to be borrowed;
- (b) the purposes for which the expenditure is to be made;
- (c) the term of the promissory note or other form of

security to be issued;

- (d) the rate of interest payable; and
- (e) the method of repayment.

After such a resolution is passed:

... the board of education or conseil scolaire shall immediately cause to be published in at least one issue of a newspaper that has general circulation in the school division or division scolaire francophone, as the case may be:

- (a) a copy of the resolution; and
- (b) a notice of its intention to apply to the minister pursuant to section 325 for authorization to borrow the proposed amount.

[16:00]

Now what we have in this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this whole provision is being repealed and basically it's going to allow a board of education to make a resolution outlining its intent to borrow money before acquiring quotes from financial institutions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is in an area where traditionally we have provided the public, the people who are involved with education, to have details about the approximate cost of the borrowing before the resolution is passed in the school board. And then if the resolution is passed, it has to be public.

So let me read the new section 323, which is called, "**Resolution setting forth intent to borrow** [and it says]:

If a board of education or the conseil scolaire intends to borrow money pursuant to section 321, the board of education or conseil scolaire shall pass a resolution showing in detail:

- (a) the amount proposed to be borrowed; and
- (b) the purposes for which the expenditure is to be made".

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where now money can be borrowed with just the information on how much is to be borrowed and what it's going to be used for rather than providing the public with the full details of the amounts borrowed, why it's going to be expended, how much it's going to cost, and the rate of interest and how it's going to be repaid.

So, Mr. Speaker, why, why is this change being made now? Well I think this directly relates to the Minister of Finance and the Premier and the Minister of Education being ... making their announcement about borrowing money for public-private partnerships for building schools in Saskatchewan.

And I think this particular change to this legislation is a direct attempt to hide from the public the true cost of the borrowing for building schools in Saskatchewan. And I think this is wrong.

I think that the government needs to be called on this because what they're doing is changing the rules that we've had for a long time, which allows for the public to know how much it costs to build the new schools.

We know that the P3 [public-private partnership] school proposals have, hidden within them, interest costs that are very difficult to discern. We know in British Columbia the auditor went into a number of the P3 school proposals and pointed out that they probably cost 3.5 per cent a year more in interest than it would cost for the government to borrow the money directly or for the school board to borrow the money with the assistance of the province.

We know that there have been similar reviews done in Alberta that point out the same question, the same issue. And, Mr. Speaker, to not have the information in an appropriate form when it relates to borrowing for schools I think is wrong.

Now our member from Regina Rosemont has proposed a bill around the true cost of borrowing when you're using a P3 method. And, Mr. Speaker, if we had a bill like that on the books, then maybe this kind of a change would be acceptable because we'd have another place where the true costs are going to be laid out for the public. But what we have here, Mr. Speaker, is a way of hiding how much the government is borrowing to build schools. We know now that when children enter kindergarten that they're looking at the fact that probably they'll still be paying for that school when they hit 35 years of age. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a very strange way for Saskatchewan people, who have been used to paying for things as they go along, to finance schools.

But I think the biggest issue is that the information is being hidden, and in this legislation, kind of hidden away is this change of saying, well schools don't have to tell anymore how much it's going to cost them to borrow. They can just say, we want to borrow the money and we don't have to tell the public how much money is being borrowed. This change has within it a number of difficult questions around how the cost of rebuilding schools is going to take place in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we heard today in question period that the Minister of Education doesn't even know how many schools need to be replaced. He doesn't know how many schools are safe or unsafe for children. And we are going to continue to ask questions about that because it goes once again to the fundamental question under *The Education Act*. *The Education Act* is set up in a way that the public will know that it's a provincial responsibility to do this and to do it in a clear and transparent fashion.

Every time legislation is changed to hide costs somewhere, I assume maybe in the Minister of Finance's world, then I think that's wrong. And when this particular legislation was introduced, it I think was triggered or the public sort of face, the government press release about this, was about Labour Day and about changing that. But hidden in there was this actual change to a clause about transparency in borrowing for education. And I think that's wrong.

Now there are a couple of other changes that the legislation makes which are I think sort of reasonable housekeeping things

that might have waited for another year but they're going to do it now.

One of them was to change some of the French terminology that's used in the Act, and that's reasonable. Another one was to set up an Education Scholarship Fund so that the Prince of Wales Scholarship Fund, which is in the Act, that fund of money plus other funds related to scholarships can all be held in one generic fund. That's not unreasonable.

But once again, that follows the Premier's announcement that sort of came out of the blue, thought up without actually thinking through what the consequences are of this.

But practically this legislation, on the face of it, the government says it's related to Labour Day. I think the real heart of what the government's trying to hide is the true cost of repairing schools. It would be better for all the people in the province if the Minister of Education and the Premier were upfront about the actual cost, 1.5 billion, 1.6 billion. We don't know how much money is needed to fix our schools.

But if we're going to borrow the money to fix some schools, tell us exactly how much it's going to cost to do that. Don't hide it in a P3 type proposal. Let's just do that. Because I think the public is willing to borrow money or to spend money or to have whatever way to get funds to fix schools. Because, Mr. Speaker, I hear members opposite sort of talking about, oh the cabinet should know about this but nobody else. Well there's too much of that going on now and these people are forgetting that the public are very interested in how things are funded and how things are done. And in this particular area, I think the legislation should probably be more aptly described as an Act to amend *The Education Act* to hide the true cost of borrowing to fix the problems in our schools across the province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this type of legislation, this type of change, is unfortunately what we've come to expect from this government. I think they're forgetting that the public really does want to know. They want to have clear, discernible legislation. They want to know how much it costs when things are being fixed. They want to know how much the long-term costs are. And every time we see something that hides the information, then we know that there is something wrong.

Now it's I think a difficult day for the school boards of Saskatchewan that here they are being asked to be part of something which they haven't done probably in the whole history of the province, which is borrow money without telling people how much it's actually costing to borrow the money. And I think that's wrong.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are some real difficulties with this legislation, but I think the difficulty of having the Premier and the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education hide the cost of borrowing for schools, I think that's wrong. But I know that some of my colleagues will have some comments to make on this and at this point I will ask to adjourn the debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 163, *The Education Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to

adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 164

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 164 — *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Glad to join debate this afternoon on Bill No. 164, *An Act to amend The Health Information Protection Act*.

The bill does a number of things but what it will hopefully accomplish when all is said and done, Mr. Speaker, is to provide the protection to health information that is richly deserved by the people of Saskatchewan. We know from a number of fronts, Mr. Speaker, that the situation around the security and the protection of health information is not anywhere near where it should be in the province of Saskatchewan, and it's been like that for a number of years now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So while on the one hand we're glad to see measures coming forward that will hopefully remedy that situation, it certainly underlines the fact that when it comes to the long, slow walk that this government likes to take when it comes to health information protection, it's unfortunate to say the least.

In terms of the actual bill itself, it relies in part on the good work of the health records protection working group and the 11 recommendations that they made the past spring, Mr. Speaker, spring 2014, I would believe. And hopefully it is informed as well by the Information and Privacy Commissioner's work that over years now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has been condemning, to say the least, of the inaction and the record of this government as it comes to the protection of health information.

Again this is a file on which we've seen this government do some bizarre things. We've seen them not do some things in terms of the inaction that has been there. And we've seen a stubborn penchant for ignoring the recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So you know it's . . . I'm an optimist, Mr. Speaker. Spring is coming. Perhaps this legislation will improve the situation. But the situation again over years has been notable for its poor quality, and they've got a lot of work to do.

[16:15]

In terms of the legislation itself, particular items, the replacing of the Saskatchewan Health Information Network with eHealth, again a cosmetic change, Mr. Speaker, keeping up with the name game that goes on with government in the rebranding of different things from time to time, and certainly this government likes to play that branding game more than most.

Section 6 allows the minister to appoint someone to take control of records that have been abandoned, and that is an important provision, Mr. Speaker, in terms of that appropriate transfer from the care of a health professional and the individuals that are . . . [inaudible] . . . those records, and making certain that they've got the safekeeping and security that they're due. And should they be found abandoned, Mr. Speaker, what would happen then? So again who that individual is, and the responsibilities that that individual will be shouldering, are significant to say the least.

In section 8, it makes abandoning health records a strict liability offence, making it easier to convict someone of the offence of abandoning records. We're glad to see that, Mr. Speaker. We'll be interested to see whether or not the penalties that are meted out in accordance with that are equal to the offences at hand. But certainly in the very recent history of this province, we've seen some incredibly egregious offences in that regard.

Section 8 makes "snooping" an offence to protect people from having their privacy breached by unnecessary searches into their personal information. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's not just . . . It's good to see that something like that is being included in this legislation because we know just from different instances again in the not-too-distant past of this province that there are some people that are very familiar with the whole question of snooping into other people's private information where they should not be entering, Mr. Speaker; moreover, where there are positions of trust that are being abused in the course of that snooping or that offence against an individual's right to privacy. So we'll be interested to see what use is made of that.

Again though on the whole, Mr. Speaker, we look to see how this stacks up, whether or not this will bring Saskatchewan's protection of personal information, at least as regards health information, into the 21st century. We are hopeful of that and certainly will be looking to see how this moves forward. We'll also be interested to see how different recommendations that have been made in the process of this long and winding road which has led to this legislation, we'll be interested to see how this Act does or does not satisfy the concerns of the folks from the National Association for Information Destruction. Again this is a group that comes together, making sure that what happens with health information once it has been gathered, or other sensitive information once it has been gathered, what are the disposal policies for that information and what is the oversight for the people such as the trustee or the individual in charge of, taking charge of abandoned records that I'd referenced earlier, how those responsibilities are discharged or not.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it's a brave new world where paper records which this province, or this provincial government, has demonstrated a lack of capacity to deal with as it is, let alone the whole question of electronic databases and how those might be protected, or not, appropriately. There are many again causes for concern that have arisen over the last while. And again whether or not this legislation does the job in terms of securing that protection that should be expected by the citizens of this province, we'll see whether or not this legislation in fact measures up.

I know that other of my colleagues have participated in this

debate already, Mr. Speaker. I know that others are interested to participate as well. So in regards to that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 164, *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 165

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 165** — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into discussion as it relates to Bill No. 165, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act* here today, Mr. Speaker, and to speak to some of the changes that have been brought forward and introduced by government. Certainly as reflected by the comments of the minister, this is a result of some bilateral work, some work with our jurisdictional partners across Canada, and some specific work with British Columbia on this front, Mr. Speaker. And certainly we think that this work here and this legislation that's come forward seems to be something very reasonable.

And when I look at the legislation itself, certainly we'll, you know, do some analysis to make sure we're understanding full consequences. But certainly the benefits that seem to be in place allow for purchase of product from another jurisdiction and allows SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] itself to engage with jurisdictions, other jurisdictions, other provinces, on product. And if you think of the incredible wineries of course of British Columbia, that's a really great market to be able to work with. And certainly as it relates to SLGA, it's nice to make sure that government is supporting SLGA to continue to expand product offering in line with consumer needs, consumer wants. And so this is a positive step. I believe it also allows for potential direct purchase of product and shipment back to consumers, and that seems very reasonable. Certainly the important structures of making sure that it's regulated and managed is going to be important pieces that will be put together by the government. You know, I'm supportive of building these sorts of partnerships and making sure that that product from other provinces can be available in a way that consumers desire here in Saskatchewan.

We need to make sure though that as we get into this discussion, that we're putting a lens to making sure that we're supporting the brewers and the distillers and the wineries here in Saskatchewan as well, that we make sure that they have full opportunity to grow their operations and to grow their market shares in our own province. And that, you know . . . I'm

someone who's, you know, I have a lot of pride in our local businesses, a lot of pride in our local brewers, distillers, and wineries, and I'm proud to buy local.

So it's important I think that we, as we see our government moving forward with building this sort of a relationship with a province like British Columbia, while we can be supportive of that, I think that this government needs to do a better job of recognizing some of the barriers and some of the pressures within the local distilling, brewing, and winery industry here in Saskatchewan. Because this is in many ways when I think of these operations, and whether it's the craft brewers or whether it's the distillers, they also, they're not only providing a very good product, high-quality product, they're doing so with Saskatchewan product. And they're in many ways points of pride for communities for which they're situated, and I'd like to think points of pride for our province as a whole as well.

They're good for economic development, of course. When we see a distillery fire up in Lumsden, as we've had, Mr. Speaker, in the case of Last Mountain, Mr. Speaker, putting together some fantastic array of product and creating local jobs and, you know, I think that this is something that we want to support. I know that the Schmidts out there have done a fantastic job with their operation. And certainly their product has been something that's become well recognized as quality but also as something that's in demand. And I think of their Dill Pickle Vodka that has become recognized by many, and it's a good product, Mr. Speaker. It makes an exceptional Caesar on a hot summer afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that's nice to see being distilled right in Lumsden, in Saskatchewan, in the Qu'Appelle Valley. And this is good economic activity that we should certainly be supportive of.

So while, as I say, we want to make sure that we're embracing other markets and connecting better to the products of British Columbia and the great wineries out there, this government really needs to do a better job of looking at the current structures that are direct impediments for fostering a real vibrant local brewing industry, distilling industry, and wineries across the province.

And I think of the ones that have recently invested across Saskatchewan. They certainly are great operations that are making great product and, like I say, making communities sort of proud along the way as well. You know, certainly we've seen some craft brewers and brewers in Saskatchewan for many years. We can think of Great Western on a larger brewer scale that, you know, certainly have an incredible story to tell and have provided good economic benefits and good employment. And then we can think of some of the craft brewers that have really brought about sort of a new experience for the type of product that Saskatchewan people can access, and I think of Paddock Wood in Saskatoon. I think of Bushwakker's here in Regina, and certainly there are others as well.

And I think of the many craft ale enthusiasts across Saskatchewan who have been award winning for years, Mr. Speaker, so we definitely have a wealth of talent of craft brewers in this province. We have some experience at this, Mr. Speaker, and we've seen other provinces, other jurisdictions, other parts of North America better support the growth of those industries, those local businesses. And I think that that needs to

be a focus of this government.

I know that, you know, in recent time we've seen operations like Prairie Sun up in Saskatoon or the Nokomis Craft Ale brewers out of Nokomis, Saskatchewan, with a pitch of great water and great barley and experience of bringing that product around. I know Jeff Allport there has a lot of pride in what they've put together there, and I know the community itself appreciates that operation as well and the story it tells to the rest of the province, sharing the story of Nokomis to many others, Mr. Speaker.

And I think of Regina. We've recently seen a new brewery by the way of Mūs Knuckle over the past few years. We've seen Rebellion brewers, Mr. Speaker, open their doors as craft brewers, and these guys really embody in many ways the craft ale enthusiast side of the equation. They're very proud of telling that story of the honey that they're sourcing from Tisdale or the malts that they're sourcing in different parts of the province, the barleys, the fruits from the Qu'Appelle Valley and in Lumsden. And this is a good story that they tell, but it's also good economic development and good vibrancy on the main streets of our province.

So I think these are really the kinds of operations that we need to be supporting. I think about into the southwest corner of the province in Swift Current where you've got Black Bridge Brewery and Bin Brewing that have fired up and that have created jobs and are creating a great product and sharing that with many others in this province. And certainly all of these companies, these small businesses are also providing a product that's high quality, that many across North America and many across Canada will look forward to enjoying. And it's important for this government to be directly listening and working with these entrepreneurs, these local brewers, distillers, and wineries, to make sure that the regulatory environment is one that allows them to grow and continue to be able to add to the Saskatchewan economy.

In many ways I think we're hopefully just at the start of a very robust period of growth within these markets because there is a nice vibrancy that comes with this, and I know it falls as well into, you know, recognizing the importance of supporting local.

And I know we put forward legislation to recognize a buy-local movement. I think this is something that Saskatchewan people appreciate and certainly the entrepreneurs across Saskatchewan who have skin in the game, who have pride in their product, who are toiling to share something with Saskatchewan and with the world, they deserve nothing less than for us to be supporting and recognizing that quality here. I think that we should have pride in Saskatchewan, as we do and we should buy in Saskatchewan and, when possible, in recognizing just the exceptional products that are available to us across Saskatchewan.

I know we've had a growth in the winery sector in Saskatchewan. And certainly I'm not speaking of a full inventory of all of the operators here today, but I mean, Cypress Hills has done a fine job. I know that Living Sky out of Perdue has built a very successful operation with great product, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it's past time that this government paid some attention to this industry and it's time that they start listening down with these operators. Whether it's Mark Heise and the crew over at Rebellion or whether it's the Schmidts out at Last Mountain in Lumsden, or whether it's Jeff Allport and some of the folks out of Nokomis, or whether it's the Craft Ale enthusiasts in this province, there's a lot of important discussions to be had with this sector, and to make sure that we set an environment that works well for the development of these companies and this industry.

[16:30]

I know that there's an important discussion to be had and improvements to be made around making sure that we're having a tax or markup structure that works for these operations. I've certainly heard the case made very solidly that the current structure allows, you know, basically keeps operations very small, and if they get to a certain threshold they're then taxed in really, to simplify it, in an absolute way that prevents many operations from being able to grow their businesses and their operations beyond that threshold without having a very difficult penalty, a cost that comes with it.

And I think that it should be in all of our interests here in this province to be supporting those local entrepreneurs, to be supporting those craft brewers and distillers and wineries that are using local product and telling that story with pride through their product, and that are creating employment here in Saskatchewan. We should be putting an effort forward, government should be putting an effort forward to make sure that their needs are heard, because it doesn't make sense to have a policy in place that limits the growth potential and keeps these operations as very small operations. We should have one that allows their progressive development as their business cases support, Mr. Speaker.

So there's a better environment around that, I know there's considerations about how we, you know, we could better support SLGA to connect with these craft brewers. I know there's different considerations about needs around refrigeration, and a whole host of other concerns that have been brought forward that I think we should be listening to, Mr. Speaker.

So with this piece of legislation here today, I think the changes are certainly reasonable. I know that many will appreciate access to product within other provinces. I know that in the case of British Columbia, they have some absolutely fantastic wineries, world-class wines that we can certainly allow Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan consumers to connect with. So those are all pieces that are certainly reasonable and for which we're supportive of, but what I'd really like to see is for Saskatchewan and this government to start to take a better focus to the local entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan and the operations here in Saskatchewan that are putting fine product out there for the people of the province.

And like I've said, you know, whether starting out in the southwest down at Cypress Hills Winery or Bin Brewing in Swift Current or Black Bridge brewing, Mr. Speaker, if you're looking at the host of folks in through Regina that have either been brewing for years or some of those new folks to the

market — Mr. Speaker, the folks up through Saskatoon and in Nokomis — we have some really great operations within this province. And it's past time that this government started to recognize the importance of those operations, their creativity, the investment that they've made and support them to be as successful as they can be within a reasonable, fair, regulatory environment that benefits all Saskatchewan people.

But I'm a big believer that Saskatchewan people are proud to support local, and I know that there's benefits that come with it. As I say, when you fire up a new brewery, comes with it the investment, the capital. From that you have the jobs and the taxes that flow from the income taxes from those that are working there, Mr. Speaker. You have products that are sourced from across the province — whether that be the barley, the malt, the fruit, the honey, Mr. Speaker — and these are products for which we as a province are world class in when you think of our agricultural products, and something that we should be very, very proud of, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm pleased to add some comments to the bill, and I'm pleased to add some urging to this government to stop neglecting the local brewers, distillers, and wineries in Saskatchewan and start to recognize their importance in our local economy and in our culture as a province and to start to make sure they improve a regulatory environment that respects those meaningful operations in this province. But at this point in time, I adjourn debate for Bill No. 165, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate of Bill No. 165, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 2014* (No. 2). Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 166

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 166 — *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon to enter into the debate on Bill No. 166, *An Act respecting Elections in Municipalities and School Divisions and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. And it's always interesting when we take a look at the very structure, the very heart of our democracy — the ability to vote, the ability to vote. And that's a huge responsibility, and it's important that we get this right. It's quite a thorough piece of legislation, and we just look at the table of contents and 194 parts. And I'd like to draw attention to a few of those parts; we won't go through all 194 this afternoon. But I do want to make sure we have some time to think about some of these.

I find it very interesting, for example, Mr. Speaker, that today of all days we receive our *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, and what's one of the issues that we've talked about is the Internet

and Internet voting. And they're taking a look at it in BC [British Columbia], and so we're trying to keep up with the times. We're always looking over the horizon to what might be the innovations that we're thinking will make voting more accessible and that we get more people to participate in democracy.

We see that it's just unfortunate that we've had a circumstance where voter turnout is going down. And we see that and ironically, you know, we talk about the fact that at the three levels of government, that we talk about the federal level, the provincial level, and the municipal level, that actually voter turnout . . . Now I'm not as sure about the rural municipalities, but I know urban municipalities voter turnout is something like in the 30's or 40's per cent. In provincial we talk about 60, 70 per cent. On a good day it's in the 70's, and federally it's higher.

But ironically the thing is that we feel more removed from federal politics, less removed from provincial politics. We drive on the highways, our kids go to the schools, we use provincial hospitals so we feel like we have something to say about that. But even more so, we are closer to municipalities where I know people . . . When we talk about the city councils or the RM councils, the town council where people will attend and be very active, and yet voter turnout is low.

And so this is something that we have to think about in terms of, are we creating or what are the barriers that we have in place to stop people from voting? We want to reduce those barriers. We want to get rid of barriers and in fact encourage people to be part of the democratic process, you know, because we often talk about taxes but what you want to do is make sure you participate. I mean it's the old saying: if you don't vote, then you don't have a right to complain. And so often that is true. But you know, at the municipality level, it is amazing that we have such low, low turnout. Now I don't know about the RM [rural municipality] level and that's something I'd like to know more about.

Interestingly I understand, you know, we've talked about and I've had an opportunity to talk to people about Aboriginal voting in urban settings, and we often are deeply concerned about the fact that First Nations folks don't vote much in federal politics or provincial politics when they live in the cities. But on reserves, there's a huge turnout and they say because there are huge stakes. And I think we have to remind people that that holds true, that holds very true at the provincial and federal level, that it is people's responsibilities to participate in the democratic process, and that's the elections.

Now we see here a very thorough list of items, as I said, some 194 parts. We think about this in terms of we've just changed our provincial election. And I want to talk about some of those commonalities and some of the differences that I see before us.

But I want to take a minute to refer to the minister's comments. And he had introduced this in December 1st, 2014, and he talks about how, that he has introduced . . . You know, this is second reading of Bill 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*, and it is the new Act. It's not been amended. It's not an amendment Act. It's a completely new Act. And so it talks about some background, that this new Act is a replacement for

the old rural municipality Act and *The Urban Municipality Act*, and:

At that time the provisions governing rural elections needed a new home and were tacked on to the end of *The Local Government Election Act* without any attempt of integration with those provisions governing urban elections.

So that created a lot of problems. So the new Act, completely a rewrite, language updated and simplified, and the pieces of legislation that are common between rural and urban are housed in the same sections, so that you have commonalities when they seem to make sense but you also recognize the difference between rural and urban if that makes sense. And I think that's obviously the case.

Some of the changes are relatively . . . It's straightforward. It introduces the idea that residence exceptions for students and members of Canadian Armed Forces, because students and members in the Armed Forces are likely to temporarily live in a place other than your usual place of residence. They may vote in a municipality in which they reside regardless of how long they have lived there. And so this is an important feature. And of course we recognize the whole provincial aspect for Armed Forces members when we amended *The Election Act* that will guide the provincial election that's coming up.

And so I think this is interesting. It talks about the "Consultation on this bill started with a follow-up survey after the 2012 municipal elections, canvassing municipalities for any issues they may have encountered and . . . areas for clarification and possible amendments." So that was all taken into account. And they heard from SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA and the Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks. New North and school board associations were also consulted, but apparently they did not request any amendments. So again though, this is interesting that while they did these consultations with very important stakeholders, there may be an oversight to, why were there, why is it that there's a low voter turnout, and what is the implication?

[16:45]

So it would have been interesting to do, and we'll ask about it when he talks about the survey. They surveyed municipalities, but did they survey actual voters and about how they perceive voting in Saskatchewan? That would be an interesting survey to do. What are the challenges? What are the barriers? Why don't people vote, particularly at that level when so many of the issues they face are so close to home?

You know, I think about in Saskatoon, you know, the number one issue, conditions of streets and snow removal, that type of thing. People should get out and vote about those issues but they choose not to, but choose to make a lot of noise after the fact. I think the time to make the noise is during the campaign and participate in the election. And this is something that is so unfortunate that we see time and again, that people prefer to not participate but then to raise concerns after the fact. So I would have liked to have seen, and we'll ask this question in committee to the minister, what is it, what were the results of

the survey and why they chose not to do an overall survey that would be reflective of Saskatchewan population in municipalities, but how they perceive their election.

I just want to take a moment and talk about some of the parts in the bill that I think are interesting and I think that make a lot of sense. Part III about polling places, it talks about agreement with the Chief Electoral Officer. I'm very happy to see that we're coordinating between the federal, provincial, and municipal levels for elections. Prior to this, they were really separated out. The feds did whatever they want to do. We're seeing a little problem in the fall, when there's an overlap of fixed election dates. If we can get around that, that would be nice. But we will deal with that as it comes. But it is good to see that there is some coordination between the Chief Electoral Officer and those at the municipal levels, if they choose to use some of the services, and in fact actually have some service agreements in place. I think that's really important.

As well, I found that interestingly in part VI, the voters list, the contents of the voters list, and I would have to follow up a bit more on this. We've raised this issue. You know, we've come a long way in terms of human rights and the right to know, and what you need to know and what you'd like to know, and the privacy issues. And one of the issues is the information that's on a voters list. And it seems to me that maybe this bill has got it right because it just says you just need to know the name and the address of the voter, and you leave it at that. You don't need to know other parts of information that may not be applicable. And I'm thinking about gender markers here. That's not going to be part of the requirements for municipalities. Now that will be interesting to know if that's the case.

We will double-check what the implication is. I know that when we were looking at our own election bill, that was something we raised as concerns. But they felt that they needed to have that. The Ministry of Justice felt it was critical to have that, and as likewise, the Chief Electoral Officer.

And so that's that part as well. I've talked a little bit about polling and voting and the idea around voting machines and whether we will ever evolve to the idea of Internet voting.

It appears that in BC, the panel on Internet voting has come back with limited enthusiasm, that it's not quite arrived yet. It's not quite as cost effective. The proof that it will increase voter turnout isn't quite there, but we want to see that for sure.

The one that I think that will continue to be a bit of an issue, and actually a significant issue, is around the evidence of identity, division 4, "Procedures While Poll is Open." And we've seen this now and it's a concern that many have around voter suppression and the idea that voters need to have identity and whether it's one piece of picture ID [identification] or two other pieces, whether or not that has an impact on suppressing people, particularly low-income people, people who may not have picture ID. If you don't have a reason for having picture ID, it can be expensive and it's an expense that it's maybe a barrier to voting.

So we have questions about that. How will this be enforced? We know at the provincial level and federal level we've seen people turned away. And it continues to be an issue particularly

in low-income neighbourhoods or communities that, again as I say, have been used to not having the same level of ID requests. And whether it's people who are low-income or whether it's seniors or people who've just not felt the need to go out and get a picture ID, who've always gone down to the town hall, who've always been able to vote, I think that clearly this is an issue, and it's one that we need to make sure that we're not creating barriers.

I mean it's interesting. On one hand, you have the Internet which allows us to do innovative, creative things to make sure people in the new age can access the right to vote, and access and use their franchise which is hugely important to a democracy like Canada. But on the other hand, we have taken a step back decades by introducing barriers where people must bring ID, and when we're talking about small communities where everybody knows everybody. And this becomes a problem in a place where that same visual recognition doesn't exist, what are we going to do about that? So it's a real, real challenge. So I think this is one area that we're really going to be asking a lot about and saying, so why is it that they must produce photo ID or some other ID, especially in small communities where people may actually know who they are?

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues will have a lot to say about many of these aspects of this bill. As I say, it's a very significant one. Whether you live in an urban community or a rural community, a northern community, we all want to make sure we have the right to vote and when we show up on polling day that we're not turned away by some regulation that we thought, where did that come from? It doesn't make any sense. But we want to make sure the voting is fair and reasonable.

So with Bill No. 166, I would like to now adjourn debate on that. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 167

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 167** — *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Local Government Election Act, 2014* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on the companion piece, Bill No. 167, the local government consequential amendments Act, 2014. I won't attempt the French title. But this is an important bill. It is. Sometimes when we think about these consequential amendment things that we don't pay enough attention to them. And it's important as we realize that we are a bilingual country,

and it's important that the rules and the legislation, particularly when it comes to local government elections and particularly when we have francophone communities in the province, that this legislation be in both languages.

So when the minister got up and introduced this at the same time, he says:

This Act makes an amendment to one bilingual Act, *The Education Act, 1995*, because that Act refers to *The Local Government Election Act* and the provisions dealing with the election of school board members. *The Local Government Election Act* governs all municipal elections throughout the province as well as school board elections.

No changes [apparently, according to the minister] are being made to how school board elections are run. The amendments only change the name of the Act and the section number being referred to so that the references remain accurate.

So accordingly he moved this forward, and I would think that . . . Obviously we don't want to get ahead of the game by moving this one to committee. It should follow afterwards. But I think it's important that as we look at these pieces of legislation, again as I said, that it is an important part on the floor of this House that we do all that we can to make sure we get people out to vote. You know, as I said, it seems rather paradoxical that people will vote federally — hugely important, hugely important that they feel that responsibility — but things seem farther away, but huge, still very critical. But then when it comes to municipal elections, they don't quite seem to be quite as driven to get out on polling day to make an X on the ballot.

And I think this is something that when we think about these two pieces of legislation, they work together in tandem, but it's an important piece of our work. And as the minister talked about, he consulted with SARM and SUMA and the school boards and New North about making sure that the barriers were diminished as much as possible. But still, we think we need to have those conversations in committee. I'd be curious to know why. Why not take the opportunity to consult with the public to say, why is it you choose not to come out and vote in municipal elections but you come out for federal? I know that federal folks are concerned about their turnout, particularly when it comes to young people. And I don't know what the turnout is in a municipal election for young people, but clearly it's an important issue that we take a look at.

And we raise, on this side of the House — we know that it's a phenomena right across North America — the impact of picture ID, photo ID, or other ID requirements, particularly in communities where people are known, how relevant that is. We have a lot of questions about whether that's needed. It could be an important tool, but is it one that . . . You know, it's a pretty big hammer to be solving some other issues. And so what can we do to make sure people feel connected, that when their name is on the voters list, they do have a responsibility?

It's the time to step up and make a difference, and really that's what our democracy is all about. You know, we look at other parts of the world, whether it's Ukraine, other communities, other countries where they are fighting for democracy, and we

have things so well in hand here in Saskatchewan that we do have, we do have an onerous responsibility to participate.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure other people have a lot to say about this particular bill, because it is relatively straightforward. But as I said, we don't want to put the donkey before the cart and put this small bill into committee. We'll hold this back and we'll allow other people to have comments.

So I would like to at this time move adjournment of Bill No. 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. It now being near the hour of 5 o'clock this House stands recessed to 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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