



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

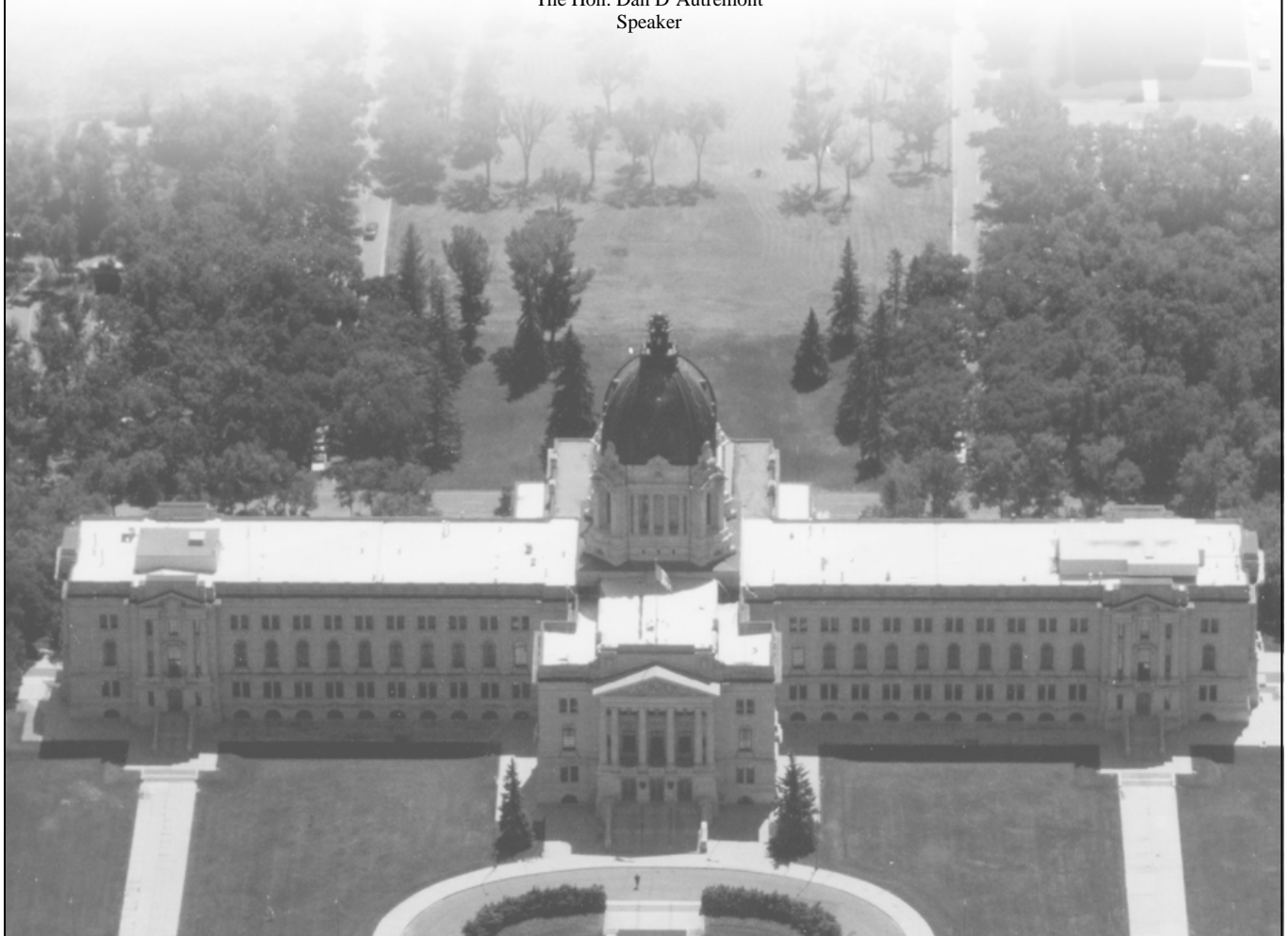
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

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



## MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D'Autremont

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers who default on fixed-price contracts. And we know that in September of 2014, this government walked away from a new 48-unit affordable housing project in Regina here, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and then rent the units at full market price. This government allowed private developers 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 realities within our communities.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to recognize that there are indeed desperate homeless people in our province, and to immediately reverse its policy of now allowing private developers with whom the government has close relationships to default on fixed-price contracts for affordable housing projects.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens as it relates to the unsafe conditions created on Dewdney Avenue by actions of that government, Mr. Speaker. Dewdney Avenue has been inundated with heavy-haul truck traffic because of that government's failure to adequately plan and make sure that a safe route was in place. Of course this impacts all residents on this residential artery but also all users, Mr. Speaker. 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 of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition for real action on climate change. The undersigned people who have signed this from Saskatchewan want to bring to the attention of the Assembly the following: that Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in all of Canada; that Saskatchewan's emissions have continued to grow to 74 million megatonnes as reported by Environment Canada in October 2013, and show no signs of decreasing; that the Saskatchewan government has failed to tackle climate change, reduce emissions to the province's own targets, or put in a real plan to protect the natural environment; and that slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses energy-efficiency program set the province on a backwards course; and that since 2009, the Government of Saskatchewan has reduced climate change funding by 83 per cent, including another 35 per cent cut in the '14-15 budget:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, 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 is submitted by folks from the good city of Prince Albert. I so submit.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

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

**Prince Albert Citizen of the Year**

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to recognize a truly outstanding citizen, Jeanette Eddolls. On February 13th, Ms. Eddolls was celebrated as the 2014 Prince Albert Citizen of the Year during a ceremony held at the Prince Albert Inn. My colleague from Saskatchewan Rivers recognized Jeanette's tireless contributions over the past 30 years through a wonderful letter which she then presented to Jeanette at the end of the evening.

This honour, awarded annually by the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* and the P.A. [Prince Albert] Kinsmen Club, recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to make our city a better place. More than 20 letters were written in support of Jeanette's nomination reflecting the wide reach on her endless generosity.

She has also contributed to the youth of the community as an educator, principal, and administrator in the Saskatchewan

Rivers School Division. Jeanette also works actively with Catholic Family Services, serving as board Chair. Other groups she contributes to include the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], Our House shelter, the P.A. food bank, SUNTEP [Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program], St. Michael's Parish, and many more.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Jeanette Eddolls on being named the 2014 Prince Albert Citizen of the Year and thanking her for her selfless contributions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### How Saskatoon Eats

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 28th I attended a very unique dinner hosted by Engineers Without Borders, University of Saskatchewan chapter. Unfortunately I was only served a can of pop, a cold corn dog, and a bag of chips. The event was entitled How Saskatoon Eats, and it was centred around the concept of food deserts — areas of the city where good food is difficult to access.

The purpose of the poverty dinner was to give participants a hands-on understanding of how citizens in Saskatoon may eat by assigning each person in attendance with a particular neighbourhood and lifestyle. I was set up to live in the neighbourhood of Pleasant Hill in a low-income family without a personal vehicle. Because of these circumstances, it can take over 40 minutes to reach a supermarket by bus, and restaurants are also few and far between.

I only had to live in this situation for a couple of hours, but for many of the constituents in my riding, this is their everyday reality. Because there are so few grocery stores nearby, many buy their food at corner stores where the food is marked up 30 to 60 per cent. This often leads to diabetes and other serious health concerns, which then puts a tremendous strain on our health system.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating Madeline Berezowski, Alyssa Kimber, and Angela Howell and other members of EWB [Engineers Without Borders], U of S [University of Saskatchewan] chapter, on this very successful initiative, and I ask that we all consider the serious costs that food deserts have for our citizens and for vulnerable people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Annual Bridges Awards in Saskatoon

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of February, I had the great opportunity to judge at the 23rd Annual Bridges Awards in Saskatoon. The Minister of Education was able to attend the evening gala.

Mr. Speaker, the awards ceremony is hosted by the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association and celebrates the best of the best in Saskatoon's residential construction industry. Awards are given out to companies who advance the goals of

the industry and offer affordability and choice to their consumers. It was a great honour to be one of the judges for this prestigious awards gala ceremony.

Mr. Speaker, many home builders, renovators, and designers were nominated for the ceremony's numerous awards. I would like to mention the names of some of the more notable award winners. Salesperson of the Year was awarded to Sarah Gerow of Montana Homes. The Renovator of the Year was awarded to Delonix Construction, and Home Builder of the Year was awarded to Maison Fine Homes and Interior Design.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association for putting on this amazing awards ceremony. I would like to ask all members to join me in congratulating all the winners of the evening and the association for hosting such a successful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Recognition for Regina Community Leader

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, some 18 years ago Regina's YWCA was in the market for a new executive director. At the time the organization was experiencing some significant challenges. Staff was underpaid, the main YWCA building was in disrepair, and the organization was in debt. Fortunately the YWCA board of the day had the wisdom and foresight to hire one Deanna Elias-Henry to take over the top position, and with her arrival the YWCA was soon back on track.

The organization stabilized and began offering a wider range of much needed services: child care, a permanent homeless shelter, and a place for children in emergency situations.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to Deanna Elias-Henry, and as she would be the first to acknowledge, the people she worked with over the years, the YWCA is now well positioned to respond to the changing and increasingly complex needs facing our community.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of four decades, with all of her strength and compassion, Deanna Elias-Henry has worked to alleviate the suffering that results from domestic violence. We are all better off for her efforts, Mr. Speaker.

I want to congratulate Deanna Elias-Henry for her excellent work at the YWCA over the last 18 years, and I ask all members to join me in sending our thanks to her for her unwavering commitment and lifelong dedication to serving our community. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Improvement in Joint Replacement Wait Times

**Mr. Toth:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday, CBC's [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] Peter Mansbridge, on *The National* highlighted the frustration of family members and patients awaiting hip replacement surgery.

I'm proud to say that Saskatchewan was singled out as the only province to make significant progress in joint replacement wait

times. The Fraser Institute's annual report on patient wait times, released in November, confirmed that our patients are getting surgeries sooner.

Statistics show that the wait-list for joint replacement at other provinces continues to skyrocket. From 2009 to '14, BC [British Columbia] patient wait times increased by 30 weeks, Alberta's by 10 weeks, and Ontario's by 10 weeks. Saskatchewan wait times dropped from 78 weeks in 2009 to 24 weeks. That's a 69 per cent reduction in our wait times for joint replacement. Across all categories of surgery, more than 89 per cent of patients now receive surgery within three months. Compare that to the NDP [New Democratic Party] record, who in 2007 had the longest wait times in the country, according to the Fraser Institute's surgical wait times report.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the front-line orthopedic specialists, surgical teams, therapists, home workers, and other health care providers in Saskatchewan who work so diligently to provide the best possible care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Regina Pats Qualify for Conference Playoffs**

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sunday night was an exciting night at the Brandt Centre in Regina. The Regina Pats once again defeated their rivals, the Moose Jaw Warriors, in another instalment of the Trans-Canada clash.

On Sunday the Pats got the game going when Padakin scored on a penalty shot at the end of the first period. Mr. Speaker, thanks to their 6 to 2 win, the Pats booked themselves a trip to the post-season with just nine regular season games remaining, becoming the first Saskatchewan team to clinch one of the eight eastern conference firsts for this year's WHL [Western Hockey League] playoffs.

This was a big night for the Queen City Sport and Entertainment Group, who purchased the Pats earlier this year. The more than 4,200 fans who took in Sunday night's game can now look forward to watching the Pats compete in the playoffs for the Ed Chynoweth Cup and the right to represent the WHL at the MasterCard Memorial Cup being held in Quebec City. With Sunday night's big win, the Pats are one step closer to a first-round playoff matchup that will likely see them travel further down the No. 1 Highway to take on the Swift Current Broncos.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating the Regina Pats on a terrific season and in wishing them the best of luck in the playoffs.

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

#### **Food Park Facility for Nipawin**

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, on February 24th I had the privilege of attending the announcement of Hanfood, a new Canadian agriculture and food company, on their plans to build an innovative, 100-acre agriculture food park facility for

Nipawin.

Mr. Speaker, this new investment into rural Saskatchewan is a result of municipal collaboration between the rural municipality of Nipawin, the rural municipality of Torch River, and the town of Nipawin on economic and social sustainable development. By working together, this not only brings in new jobs during and post construction, but provides another option for producers to export more of their high-quality products. This will add to their value many diverse and niche products grown in this province, and allow them to export into the Asian and North American markets. This region of Saskatchewan has the potential to supply the demand through the Hanfood marketing network.

Hanfood plans to be in business March 1st and to be actively trading before their first project is completed in Nipawin. The Nipawin project's first phase will consist of a 46 000 tonne grain and oilseed terminal with a 134-railcar spot loop, the second of its kind in Western Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the work of those municipalities and their MOU [memorandum of understanding] on revenue sharing to grow their tax base by attracting new investors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Ambulance Service Fees**

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Catherine Olund had terminal cancer. The Melville hospital sent her by ambulance to Regina. She spent 8 hours on a stretcher in the hallway at the Pasqua ER [emergency room] before she was seen by a doctor. The doctor said the trip to the Regina ER was unnecessary and sent her straight back to Melville by ambulance.

Catherine's husband, Dave Carr, believes that this nightmare ambulance and ER experience contributed to her early death, which is heartbreaking. And to make it all worse, Mr. Speaker, Dave was billed thousands of dollars for that round-trip ambulance. Dave is here today because he doesn't want another family to have to go through what he and Catherine experienced. Will the Premier agree to meet with Dave today, to hear Catherine's story, and to look at options to start fixing this?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — First of all, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, we'd extend our deepest sympathies on the loss of Mr. Carr's wife and commit to look into this particular case.

Mr. Speaker, it has been the effort of this government over the last number of years to make some unprecedented new investments in health care in Saskatchewan: investments in human resources, so over 2,600 more nurses of every designation practising; and investments in new doctors for this province, in new facilities and different ways of ambulance care

as well, including STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society], Mr. Speaker.

But obviously when cases like this are brought forward it's heartbreaking for everyone, most of all for the family involved. Mr. Speaker, if I'm for whatever reason not available to meet today, I know the Minister of Health will, to see if we can't get to the bottom of this particular case and see if we can be of some help to Mr. Carr here today.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know Mr. Carr's not asking for a long meeting, but a few minutes even to share the story would be very appreciated, to speak with the Premier.

Over the course of about a month, Catherine was transferred six times between three hospitals. For those six transfers, Dave was billed \$5,045.74. He arranged to pay \$30 per month. It would have taken him 14 years to pay off that ambulance bill, but that's all that he was able to afford. But then they started charging him interest of \$60 per month so Dave couldn't even keep up. Now thanks to the generosity of Canadians and Saskatchewan people, Catherine's ambulance bills have been paid off. But Dave is very worried about other families, and he wants this fixed for all Saskatchewan people.

You know it's especially ironic, Mr. Speaker, that the daily amount, the daily amount that this government gives to each sensei and interpreter for the wasteful John Black lean project, Mr. Speaker, could have wiped out the sky-high ambulance bills that Dave had. My question to the Premier: does he think that this is acceptable?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly I think members opposite will know that ambulance fees in this province are heavily subsidized by the taxpayers of this province. I think it's over 70 per cent of ambulance fees are actually borne by the taxpayers, by the Government of Saskatchewan.

We do have programs that are available, Mr. Speaker. For instance we have our seniors' program that does cap that cost. We also have, as the Premier has mentioned, we have invested into the ambulance system through now having STARS. That fee is capped, Mr. Speaker, thanks to generous fundraising from the private sector and from individual donors as well, Mr. Speaker, as a \$10.5 million investment each and every year by the Government of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to meet with the gentleman to understand the specifics of his case, Mr. Speaker, but I think people will know in this province that fees are heavily subsidized already.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, there were no programs available to Dave and Catherine. And, Mr. Speaker, this wasn't a car crash at the side of a road for STARS. These were transfers between health care centres at the recommendations of doctors.

It's not just seniors, Mr. Speaker, affected by this. Leandra Bucsis-Gunn was just 7 years old when she died. She was born with a congenital condition, had a compromised immune system, and she had endured awful seizures. Leandra's mom, Sara, has many frustrations with what this government has done to health care, including cuts to pediatric services here in Regina, but she is especially frustrated with the concerns around the cost of ambulances. Sara talks about, she talks about how she and her husband started to drive Leandra on their own instead of calling an ambulance, even though they desperately needed an ambulance.

Mr. Speaker, I find it hugely concerning that a family would not feel free to call an ambulance when their little child is sick, facing death, that they would instead be forced to transport them in their own vehicle. It's wrong and it's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: does this concern him, and what is he doing about it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think members will know that this government has invested significantly in our regional health authorities that do operate, own and operate their own EMS [emergency medical services] services or that do contract with the private sector to provide ambulance services. Mr. Speaker, provincial funding for ground EMS in this province has increased 50 per cent in the last seven years from \$49 million in 2007 to \$73.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, we do have a number of programs for those that are on supplementary health benefits. For those seniors, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly hope that people that feel that there is an emergency situation, that they do call for an ambulance, call 911, make that determination whether or not an ambulance is needed, Mr. Speaker. And certainly we encourage our health regions to work with their clients, with their residents, and with those that do use the ambulance to make whatever accommodations are necessary for them to use the service and pay their bill afterward, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, these bills that the families are receiving are real, and the struggle and the decisions that they are making are real, Mr. Speaker. They're not imaginary. When Leandra died, when the little girl died, Sara still owed over \$7,000 in ambulance service. And get this — she's says the interest that they kept adding on to the bill was worse than that on her credit card. Sara begged this government for help and the only thing she got, Mr. Speaker, was an email showing programs that she did not qualify for.

When asked about these types of heartbreaking cases, when presented with facts that show many Saskatchewan people are afraid to call an ambulance because of the bills that they will receive, a government official had this to say: "We as a health system need to do a little better job in terms of looking at our coverage programs."

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Is this happening? Is the government reviewing coverage on programs so no other family has to go through what Catherine and Dave went through?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we continually do evaluate the programs that we offer in the province of Saskatchewan. We compare where we are at in terms of other provinces, Mr. Speaker, because ambulance fees are subsidized to the tune of 71 per cent of the ambulance service in this province. That has allowed us to do things like cap the cost for seniors in this province where they do need an ambulance, Mr. Speaker, where I note that British Columbia doesn't have a seniors' program. Manitoba doesn't have a capped seniors' program. So these are some of the choices that we have to make in terms of the allocation that we do have for EMS services, Mr. Speaker.

We also do look to what services we want to augment the services that already exist. That's why we did make the decision to invest not an insignificant amount, \$10.5 million last year, Mr. Speaker, and in this current budget year for something like STARS to offer the people of this province that live in rural and remote areas. Those are the decisions that we've had to make, that we have made, Mr. Speaker. But we will continually evaluate the programs to see whether they are effective and whether they are in comparison with other provinces.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, these two examples of these families that we're speaking about today, this is Ituna. This is Regina. This is part of the necessary medical treatment that their families required. And for the minister to use these examples from across the country really shows a failure to recognize where Saskatchewan sits in this, where we are one of the worst when it comes to coverage for ambulances.

Despite record windfall revenues, this government has not improved ambulance fees one bit. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was this government that jacked up ambulance fees despite record provincial revenues — Saskatchewan. The minister was talking about examples in the country. Saskatchewan is the only province, the only province that charges a patient for medically necessary transfers between health centres. That needs to stop.

Saskatchewan is one of only two provinces without a cap on ambulance fees. We need to start fixing that. There are many people who need an ambulance other than those who are 65 and up. And this whole thing about charging huge interest rates on ambulance bills is absolutely obscene, and that needs to stop.

My question to the Premier: will he listen to Dave and Sara and a majority of Saskatchewan people? Will he commit to start fixing our broken ambulance fee system now?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will look to work with the regional health authorities on the specific question of the interest fees that they're charging.

The Leader of the Opposition has said here in the House that in this one case the interest rate that was charged to that family was higher than a credit card interest rate, Mr. Speaker. I think that that's something that obviously I'll want to look into to see what exactly the region's policy is when it comes to charging interest and the cases that they do decide to either waive the interest or in fact waive the fees. Because we do know that that has happened in some cases where fees are waived.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'll say that this government has invested in ground EMS — leaving aside air ambulance, leaving aside the \$10.5 million in STARS — in seven years a 50 per cent increase in what we fund in terms of EMS, both in terms of ensuring that we have coverage in communities, in the cities across this province, meaning adding cars, adding ambulances to the system, Mr. Speaker, as well as ensuring that we have trained professionals to operate those ambulances, Mr. Speaker. But this is, as with all of our programs, something that we continually monitor.

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

#### Release of Third Quarter Financial Report

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Finance minister confirm today on the public record that he is actually delaying the release of the financial third quarter until budget day?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I mean for the record, this very conversation took place yesterday between the member for the New Democratic Party and myself at which time I indicated to him yesterday, because of the change to the summary financial statements and the preparation of that report for the first time, it is a bit delayed. And we are going to ensure that the accuracy of that is completed, and I will present that on the day of budget, which is the exact answer I gave him yesterday.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Just too complicated, he says, Mr. Speaker. Last year the financial third quarter was tabled on February 14th. In 2013 it was tabled on February 15th. In 2012 it was tabled on February 10th. But this year we won't see the financial third quarter report until budget day when it'll be buried deep in all the budget documents because this government supposedly just isn't ready to report the true state of our finances. To the Finance minister: how can he justify this total lack of accountability and transparency?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite and everyone in the province of Saskatchewan that there will be nothing buried deep except for maybe the NDP.

Now the real situation, Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the Provincial Auditor has been asking the Government of Saskatchewan to produce one system, one financial recording,

and that is the summary financial statement, Mr. Speaker. The auditor asked for it. The NDP asked for it. And we're doing it, Mr. Speaker. We are going to ensure that we're going to prepare a Q3 [third quarter].

And, Mr. Speaker, of the five provinces that prepare Q3 — the others don't at all — Mr. Speaker, they also present them just very near to budget day. In fact four of them do that; four of the provinces, they do it just before. Mr. Speaker, this is the first year of the conversion to a summary financial budget. We're going to do it, Mr. Speaker, at budget day, and we hope to ensure that the system is in place for subsequent years.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, those excuses are utter nonsense. The Saskatchewan people will recognize it as such. What the Finance minister is basically saying is that it's just way too difficult to properly report the true state of our finances to Saskatchewan people, that he just can't figure it out, so they're not going to issue the third quarter report this year. Saskatchewan people deserve so much better than that. This is nothing more than a government trying to bury important information that it's trying to hide. To the minister: how on earth is this acceptable?

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated back a number of months ago when we produced the mid-year based on both the summaries, we introduced that at the last budget. We're going to continue to follow that practice. Mr. Speaker, I can also tell him that he should stay tuned to the fact that last year's summaries are indeed going to be balanced, Mr. Speaker, something that that government is not familiar with.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's only, it's only two weeks from today. I'm sure the member opposite will be able to look into the records of the budget from last year, the mid-year, and he will understand that this government is about balanced budgets. It's about economic growth, and we're going to continue to move forward.

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

### Occupational Health and Safety Inspections

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, since 2012 the number of occupational health and safety inspections has dropped by 69 per cent. In 2012 there was an average of 385 OHS [occupational health and safety] inspections every month. This year that has dropped in number to 120 inspections per month, and the OHS unit no longer does proactive inspections. They wait for something to happen and then they go inspect. To the minister: how does this make any sense?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I want to correct something that he stated, it was that there was no proactive inspections or no random inspections

taking place. That simply is not in fact correct. They've got a method now where they choose to target inspections where they feel they will have the most success at reducing the injury rate.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this: that our injury rate in our province is simply too high. One injury is simply one too many. We're now trying through the ministry to try targeted inspections. We support that. We're going to watch and see how that works. The injury rate has come down under that system, obviously not as fast as we would like it to, but it is coming down and continuing to come down. So what appears to be effective, Mr. Speaker, is putting our resources where we think it will have the most effect.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, along with the big drop in OHS inspections, this government is also issuing 94 per cent fewer violation notices. To the minister: why has this government so dramatically scaled back OHS inspections and enforcement?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I've got a quote that I would like to read. It makes reference to the injury rate reaching a high of 4.95 per cent under the NDP in 2002. Mr. Speaker, this is the quote:

I agree totally with the minister in terms of occupational health and safety. It's one that we should just really do as much as we can. It was one that as a government we . . . struggled with and we hoped that we could do much more. So I believe we should talk about it specifically and it's really something we can get behind."

That was the member for Saskatoon Centre at a College of Law event in 2002. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to read from a briefing note prepared, Mr. Speaker, this is a briefing note prepared for the NDP during the time they were in office:

Particular priority will be given to the 10 employers who top the list — that is those with the highest number of injuries over the last three years. Using an injury assessment formula, these 10 large employers account for over 10 per cent of the total time-loss injuries in the province, but only 5 per cent of the WCB-covered workforce.

So, Mr. Speaker, that was something that started under the NDP, continued under this administration. If it works, I don't care where the idea came from.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much. And if he's quoting me, it probably was 2012, not 2002.

Mr. Speaker, this would be like the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] announcing that they'll only enforce a speed limit on a certain portion of Highway No. 1 because that's the road on which people speed the most. And that gives free rein to drivers on every other road because they know no one else is paying attention. Saskatchewan has the second highest injury



rate in the entire country and this government should be taking it seriously. To the minister: will he restore random inspections and reinstate proper enforcement for occupational health and safety here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I have another briefing note from 2006:

The OHS division targets inspections to those employers with the highest percentage of time loss injuries in the province. The OHS division will continue to conduct inspections and investigations in the workplace based on specific incidents.

Mr. Speaker, that was what happened when the NDP were in office and, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do that as well as having random inspections. Random inspections have some significant benefit. They have always been done; they will continue to be done. And, Mr. Speaker, in fact we gave a direction earlier today that we want to do more random inspections.

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

#### **Creative Saskatchewan Expenditures and Support for the Film Industry**

**Ms. Sproule:** — Yesterday the Culture minister was asked about the likely cost of this government's plan for a big Canada Day party in Hollywood: "Any ballpark? Is it like something that costs a 100 grand or is it something that costs 10 million?"

The minister said, "I have absolutely no idea at this point." So he admits the government is planning a big party in Hollywood, yet he has no idea how much it might cost, and he doesn't even dispute a figure as ludicrous as \$10 million. To the minister: when can we expect him to take some responsibility for his portfolio, and when will he finally have some answers?

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

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As per usual, I'd like to set the record straight, as our government has had to do far too often regarding comments made by the member from Saskatoon Nutana with the Saskatchewan film industries yesterday. We can start with the fact that CEO [chief executive officer] of Creative Saskatchewan didn't attend the Oscars. That was on a Sunday. The CEO of Creative Saskatchewan returned on a Friday. So he wasn't even there for the Oscars.

Yesterday, yesterday this member from Saskatoon Nutana said, we have to really wonder why we're going down there when we don't have a film industry to represent. I would direct the member opposite to page 13 of the Creative Sask annual report, where she will see that today Creative Sask has provided \$4 million for screen-based media alone.

I have numerous quotes from various people across the creative industries who were pleased with the opportunity . . . progress

made available by this agency. But I'd like to share just one quote with everyone here today: "It's our job to be out promoting the province every time you can and not to miss an opportunity which is national, international." Do you know who said that, Mr. Speaker? Former premier Lorne Calvert.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Still no answer, Mr. Speaker. But we've also learned that Creative Saskatchewan sponsored the after-party at the Canadian Screen Awards in Toronto this past weekend. This government killed the film industry in our province and drove hundreds of families out. Yet this government apparently has no end of money to host parties in Hollywood and at film events in Toronto. Where is the sense in that?

To the minister: how much did Saskatchewan taxpayers pay for this big party at the Toronto film event?

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

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite also talked about the lack of a film tax credit. We're the only jurisdiction that doesn't have a film tax credit. Well, Mr. Speaker, several provinces and states don't have a film tax credit. Alberta, PEI [Prince Edward Island], Yukon, and Nunavut do not have film tax credits, but they do have a grant for films. And in other states, four states — Tennessee, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina — have a grant for films. Fourteen states don't even have any incentives at all.

Here in Saskatchewan, we support the film industry as well as the creative industries. We've invested \$4 million in screen-based media since the inception of Creative Saskatchewan. That includes 56 different development and production projects. This includes films such as *WolfCop* and *Corner Gas*, 17 market and export development grants, six business capacity research grants, 31 market travel grants. In regard to the member from Saskatoon Nutana's comments yesterday regarding the film industry, I would like her to apologize for her misleading statement.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, there's still no answer. The inability of this minister to answer the most basic questions is appalling. Saskatchewan people expect cabinet ministers to take responsibility for their portfolios. Saskatchewan people deserve to know how much money this government is wasting on its misplaced priorities. To the minister: when will he finally take responsibility for his portfolio and start providing some answers?

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

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — I do nothing but take responsibility for my portfolio, as we do in government, period. We will stand behind this portfolio and we will stand behind the creative industries as we have always — all of the creative industries,

not just film, all of the creative industries. We'll continue to do that, not like the NDP that absolutely threw the rest of the creative industries under the bus. Thank you.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### 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 am pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 149, *The Health Administration Act*. Just last night actually I had the opportunity to put some remarks on the record on this particular bill. This bill transfers health registration responsibility from the ministry to eHealth, Mr. Speaker. I know when this bill moves into committee we'll have many, many comments and questions to ask of the minister. For right now though, at this point in time I would like to conclude my remarks.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 149, *The Health Administration 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. 149, *The Health Administration Amendment Act, 2014* be sent to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

#### 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 Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into a brief debate here today of Bill No. 158, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act*. We will be dealing with this bill very . . . Well we'll be referring here today to committee because I think that that's the best forum for us to have some of the answers provided to the questions that we have at this point in time. We certainly continue to invite any feedback from the public at large as it relates to this bill.

Certainly the Saskatchewan Pension Plan has a solid track record. It has flexibility to it, has portability to it, and it's a tool for Saskatchewan people. And so it's a plan that certainly we want to make sure is managed in an appropriate way, that decisions that govern it and legislation that governs it ensures that it's in good stead well into the future.

[14:15]

I know we'll be interested in knowing specifically who's been asking for the specific changes. We want to make sure that we have a full understanding of who's been consulted in this process. It's critically important that this government hasn't done what it often does and just rams forward without any consultation with the impacted stakeholders because this plan is certainly a very important plan, and it's important for it to be viable. It's important for those members who have invested within it. It's important for those that will enter into the plan in future years.

But certainly I'd like to recognize and thank those individuals who have directly governed, who have administered this plan here in this province. They've done a fine job of that, and it's certainly an important tool available to Saskatchewan people.

With that being said, it's important for us to note that voluntary plans like this — while being important and while being a tool for Saskatchewan people to consider — are a good option, we need much more meaningful focus from this provincial government and the federal government around income security as a whole. We've seen a real . . . We see a challenge for far too many, Mr. Speaker, who are hoping to retire, that have retired. And if you look at the pressures on many of the next generation that are working right now in their 20s and their 30s and their 40s and their 50s, Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure there's broad expansion for retirement solutions for those potential retirees. This is why it's so important that this government reverse its position on not supporting the expansion of the Canada Pension Plan. The Canada Pension Plan is a very important tool. It's a very important plan. It's universal. It's portable. It's incredibly efficient, and it, you know, it serves all workers. And it's something that can provide broad-based support to every retiree, Mr. Speaker.

So it's been disappointing. While we've been watching other premiers, other Finance ministers from other provinces stand up and speak to this important issue, urging the very affordable expansion of this very efficient and important Canada Pension Plan, this Premier and this Finance minister haven't been willing to stand up for Saskatchewan people and ensure that we can secure a future that ensures income security for all, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll certainly engage in committee as it relates to the

changes to this bill, or the changes brought forward within this bill, make sure we have a full understanding of all consequences intended and potentially unintended. Certainly I recognize good value in the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. It's an important tool. I thank all of those that are a part of its management and its governance, Mr. Speaker. They do a fine job.

But really, Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that we take the opportunity to make the point that the current income security environment for Canadians and for Saskatchewan people isn't adequate. Without an adequate response, it's a crisis that's awaiting far too many households, and us as a province, to be frank, Mr. Speaker. And it's the kind of issue that can be addressed in a very affordable, common sense sort of a way, allowing Saskatchewan people to be a part of securing their financial futures, Mr. Speaker.

So with that being said, I will move Bill No. 158, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2014* to committee.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 158, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan 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. 158, *The Saskatchewan Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2014* be sent to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise again to speak to Bill No. 161, *An Act to amend The Wildlife Act, 1998*. On November 24th, the minister gave his second reading speech and set out in fairly comprehensive fashion the reason for this particular legislation. And I think that that information there has outlined clearly where and why this legislation has been presented.

Practically, we've had a chance to look at a number of the different issues. It's interesting. Some of the clauses relate to some very specific things. But I think ultimately everybody agrees, especially those who are involved with hunting animals in Saskatchewan, that basically the message is we'll make sure the laws are fair, make sure that they treat everybody appropriately, and do it in a way that's enforceable.

We know that we'll end up having some more questions as this bill proceeds to committee, but practically there are quite a number of things here. It's important also to note that one of the parts of the legislation which is new relates to the fact that the government has contracted out the issuing of hunting licences to an organization outside of Canada. And so they had to change the legislation to make sure that that particular agreement was within the law.

Now we'll still have some questions about this, as it may not always be the best practice to send all the private information of our Saskatchewan residents out somewhere else, but I think we can ask those questions in committee.

Another area which is interesting, but I think we don't necessarily disagree with it, is the whole issue of requiring wildlife research people to apply for licences for scientific permits. And so they're basically, they're setting up a form of scientific permits. And what's interesting about this is that practically permits were only issued for harvesting of animals or killing of animals, and when you actually end up with a situation where you're just observing the animals but disrupting their activity in their habitat, that also can cause difficulty for the wildlife.

And so in this legislation we now have a proposal whereby there will be special permits for scientific research. I think the ultimate purpose in that is to make sure that the research is publicly available for individuals, but also for the resource officers within the Ministry of the Environment.

But, Mr. Speaker, the one area where we think that everything seems to be going in the right direction, but still we'll have some questions, and we'll be asking more questions about this, does relate to how these amendments can be implemented without causing difficulties for existing First Nations and Métis hunting rights in our province.

So we will have some questions about that, and we'll want further explanation about that as this bill proceeds through the further process. But practically, it's legislation that appears to have been relatively well explained and it raises some questions. Those questions can be more fully understood in the committee process. I have no further comments, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister for the Environment that Bill No. 162, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Amendment Act, 2014* — 161, sorry — 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. 161, *The Wildlife Amendment Act, 2014* be sent to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

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

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise once again to speak to Bill No. 162, *An Act to amend The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act*. This legislation is, as described by the Minister of Justice on November 24th, 2014, this legislation is presented to make some minor adjustments to legislation that will correct some issues that arose, and deal with some other matters that have come up with the previous major revision to *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act*.

Now I think we need to make it clear that this legislation is about using sheriffs or other remedies to enforce judgments that one gets for a cash amount, and quite often it relates to civil disputes and often it also includes issues around the enforcement of maintenance payments, child support payments. And so those kinds of changes are often looked at with a great deal of sort of clarity or looked at very carefully because we want to make sure that the interests of individuals are protected at the same time as we want to make sure that people appropriately pay money that's owing by them.

Some of the things in this legislation streamline the process allowing for the sheriff to move a little bit more quickly or to do things in a much more expedited manner. We always need to look carefully at that because sometimes the traditional debt enforcement process, the money judgment enforcement processes, have always allowed a bit of extra time to give people a chance to clear up their debts because practically I would say 99.9 per cent of the people who owe money legitimately want to pay it back. And this particular kind of a bill assists in making sure that they make those payments in a timely fashion, but we want to make sure that for those people who are in sometimes quite difficult spots, that they do have that little bit of extra time to get all of their affairs in order so they can pay off their debts.

Mr. Speaker, I think that some of the very practical technical questions around the legislation can be answered in committee and, as the minister said before, it's about tweaking or clarifying the process, and I think practically we'll be able to get those answers very quickly. So, Mr. Speaker, I have no further comments.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 162, *The Enforcement of Money Judgments 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. 162, the enforcement of money judgments 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. 163

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

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into debate as it relates to Bill No. 163, *An Act to amend the Education Act*, Mr. Speaker. You know, I guess it's awfully frustrating that we see this as being the contribution from this government again in education when we see this going back and fixing mistakes made by this government that had they only had the respect for the education sector when they were making these knee-jerk announcements, they would have been able to get it right in the first place, Mr. Speaker.

We see a government that has had no willingness, no respect, no time for the education sector in this province, not the teachers, not the school boards, not the educational administrators. And they jump off with simplistic announcements that have a whole host of unintended consequences, Mr. Speaker, and this very much embodies this government's record in education, one that's been marred in failing the students of Saskatchewan, one that has a heavy price to the future of Saskatchewan without addressing it, and it's one that I know many Saskatchewan people are incredibly upset about, Mr. Speaker.

During this time of unprecedented opportunity in Saskatchewan, this government has failed students in this province and has failed the education sector, Mr. Speaker. We've seen class complexity across Saskatchewan grow. We've seen class size grow. We've seen no recognition for the important roles of supports. We've seen failed response as it relates to the real supports for learning that boards and that

students need and deserve, Mr. Speaker. And this unfortunately has large consequences for all of us, Mr. Speaker. The education of each and every child in this province is critically important to each and every child that's entering into those classrooms, but it's critically important for all of us, Mr. Speaker.

In this bill here we see, you know, the government going back and fixing up its flub-up from an election, the last election, Mr. Speaker, but we've seen as well this government fail to listen to educators and to school boards on so many other fronts, Mr. Speaker. We've seen them go off and monkey around with things like the school day and number of hours while not doing their due diligence, Mr. Speaker, and not reflecting best practice or the evidence that would truly support better engagement and better outcomes, Mr. Speaker. And it's that sort of single-mindedness that we've seen from this government that frustrates so many parents and fails so many students and certainly frustrates the teachers of this province who have really received outright disrespect from this government, Mr. Speaker.

We see the conditions of our schools across Saskatchewan not being improved and, in far too many cases, we see the conditions of those schools becoming ever more critical. And this is evidenced by the example of one school division, Mr. Speaker, that engaged in a special inspection. When they did that, Mr. Speaker, and they studied the degradation to the beams and structural supports of the school, they learned, Mr. Speaker, that five of those schools within their division were actually unsafe, unfit for students, and they had to barricade off parts of the schools.

And as we speak, Mr. Speaker, as we sit in this beautiful, glorious building, students in those communities are sitting there with portions of their buildings blocked off with two-by-sixes and two-by-fours propped up in other places. This is absolutely unacceptable for a province as well off as we've been, and it certainly embodies a government that has been unwilling to work with the school boards of this province, the elected trustees, the teachers of this province, or parents in addressing what is most likely the most important priority that every government should be focusing in on, that being the education of the next generation.

So you know, we certainly . . . And government members can heckle and make noise if they want. They'd be better off though, Mr. Speaker, to go listen to some parents. They'd be better off to go listen to some teachers. They'd be better off to sit down with some of the hard-working trustees across this province who recognize that this government's agenda in education has been a failed one, a failed one for which the students are paying the price and for which we all pay the price, economically, socially, culturally, Mr. Speaker. So it's an area that's critically important for us to see meaningful action on. It's past time that education became a priority.

We see in this bill as well some changes around lending with school boards, but we still see the lack of common sense when it comes to the fact that this government controls all the purse strings for education but yet they're still forcing school divisions to go out and borrow money at a higher interest rate, only to then be paid off by the direct transfer from the provincial government, Mr. Speaker. This policy itself defies

common sense. It's cumbersome for school divisions. It's time consuming for school divisions, and it wastes money needlessly on a high-interest scheme for education, Mr. Speaker. So this is just another example of something that needs to be addressed.

Maybe there's going to be opportunities through the committee process to address some of these facts, Mr. Speaker, but you know, there's no way to sugar-coat the record of this government when it comes to education, when it comes to the treatment of students across Saskatchewan. And we'll be proud as New Democrats to stand strong for the hard-working educators, the devoted school board members and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, the incredible students that deserve nothing less, all across Saskatchewan. But at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, I'll adjourn debate of Bill No. 163, *The Education Amendment Act, 2014*.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate here this afternoon as it relates to Bill No. 164, *An Act to amend The Health Information Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker.

As I understand, this bill replaces Saskatchewan Health Information Network with eHealth, Mr. Speaker. That may, you know, be practical and make sense. What we need to really press on this government though is they need to manage with the resources they have and start to deliver for Saskatchewan people. eHealth is a very important initiative and program, but what we've seen is a lot of money flowing out the door from this government but a failure to get the job done on this very important file despite many years and despite untold hundreds of thousands of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

We know from this bill as well that section 6 I believe allows the minister to appoint someone to take control of records that have been abandoned. We'll want to just maybe have a full understanding of that provision.

We'll be looking to other aspects such as section 8 which makes abandoning health records a strict liability, a.k.a. [also known as] puts a reverse onus on. You know, it's a reverse-onus offence, which makes it easier to convict somebody of abandoning records. Certainly this seems more than reasonable. We've just got to make sure that it's practical in nature, but protecting the private health information of Saskatchewan people is critically important. We've seen this government

certainly be reckless on this front and have far too many breaches of that private health information.

And you know, we know as well that this bill seems to respond to some of the stories of medical records being dumped, Mr. Speaker. I believe that was back in 2011 and so, you know, we want to make sure that these changes brought forward are as effective as they can be to making sure that Saskatchewan people's health information is protected — something that should be paramount, something that shouldn't be compromised, something that shouldn't be breached, something that unfortunately has, far too often under this Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

We'll be following up with broad consultation with Saskatchewan people and experts in analyzing best practice on this front, and we'll certainly be coming forward to committee to engage with the minister to ensure that this bill is as strong and effective as it can be, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to the personal health information, the private personal health information of Saskatchewan people, there's little more important than that, and we need to make sure that we take every opportunity to get it right when it comes to all aspects that legislate and impact its keeping.

So with that being said, at this point in time I will adjourn debate for Bill No. 164, *An Act to amend The Health Information Protection Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on 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 Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 165, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*. This legislation was introduced by the minister in late November, and he provided his second reading speech on December 1st. And at that time, he set out what the purpose for this legislation is.

We know that *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act* is a fairly large piece of legislation. These amendments relate to some very specific purposes that relate to an announcement by the Premier last August, and the announcement is around the question of whether Saskatchewan residents can have alcohol shipped directly to them from out of the province. And this sounds like a simple statement. It sounds like a simple thing

that one can do, but practically it has all kinds of interesting twists and turns to actually implement this.

I think what we have in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is the first attempt at trying to sort out how this is going to happen for Saskatchewan residents, and I guess what I would say is that the detail of the regulations that are made pursuant to this legislation will be the part that tells us exactly how this is supposed to work. Because as we can see from the explanation given by the minister and by the officials, this legislation will allow for direct-to-consumer shipments of certain alcohol products, but to get to that point, you end up having to enter into agreements with the federal government and/or provinces and I assume territories as well.

And so we will look forward to exactly how this is going to be done. I think we'll have a chance when we meet with the minister and officials in the committee to get a bit more of an idea, but I think practically even they are not totally certain how this is going to work.

But we have the announcement from the Premier last August. We now have the legislation put forward by the minister. We don't have the regulations themselves yet, but we know that there are all kinds of thorny issues related to delivery, collection of appropriate taxes both in the producing province, a producing province of the alcohol product, and obviously Saskatchewan which . . . People here in our province want to make sure that the appropriate taxes are collected here that are part of the system. And so the legislation itself is quite straightforward, but the actual implementation of this, I think, is going to be very interesting as we move forward.

The key probably is the amendment to section 185 which is the regulatory section of *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act* and they've added into this regulatory clause the ability for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations prescribing beverage alcohol or classes of beverage alcohol for the purposes of subsection 7(4)(ii), which effectively is the clause which allows for people to bring the product directly to them from outside of the province.

[14:45]

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is, I think, something that's done to enhance the ability of our local producers in Saskatchewan to also ship outside of the province because clearly other provinces are not going to allow for products from Cypress Hills wineries or some of the brew pubs out to other places, to go to other provinces if in turn their products can't come here. And it's clear that many of the wines from British Columbia, for example, are an important Canadian commodity which also has a world market. And basically we're trying to figure out how those producers in those provinces can deliver products directly to our citizens in Saskatchewan.

Now the legislation itself we think will allow for the first steps in doing that. I know we're going to have a number of questions about the actual process. I know some of my colleagues also have some further comments to make about this particular legislation, so at this point I'll move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 165, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment 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 Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in briefly on Bill No. 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*. Certainly I look forward to the committee process with the minister as well to expand on some of the remarks and to be more specific in some of the actual questions.

This is important legislation, important to make sure that it's balancing the needs of the sector. When you think of the locally elected leaders across Saskatchewan from a rural municipality perspective, and from an urban municipality perspective, I always think we have such a fine group of committed, devoted, common sense leaders that stand up within their respective community, whether that be a town, a village, a city, or a rural municipality, Mr. Speaker, and put their name forward and then serve their community. And many, many, Mr. Speaker, have served for many years, Mr. Speaker.

And it's a service that's valued I know by their members of their direct community but it's one I don't know that they get thanked for enough, Mr. Speaker. And certainly running for local government isn't one that brings financial reward, Mr. Speaker; it's a very modest payment for what is so often very significant service and leadership.

So at this point at time I would want to thank and recognize the leaders within SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], the leaders within SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], Mr. Speaker, the leaders within New North who, you know, across this province put their names forward to represent their community, and as well to represent broader interests around the needs of municipalities and rural municipalities in this province, which is why this bill is critically important to make sure that it's doing all that it can to support their very important work, Mr. Speaker, to do all it can to support the engagement with the public at large, to do all it can to allow Saskatchewan citizens to get out to the polls and be engaged in those elections as well, Mr. Speaker.

I know there's a few practical changes that have been brought forward that certainly seem to make sense, such as the extension of the term that will now be extended to rural municipality or rural municipal councillors and Reeves as well, the same extension that's occurred with urban municipalities, Mr. Speaker. That seems to make sense, just the same as some of the changes that might be of a modernization or a

housekeeping nature brought forward by this minister which would, I guess, be in many ways a harmonization with some of the changes that the urban municipalities experience, Mr. Speaker.

So I know I will be interested in hearing directly from rural municipal leaders, from SARM delegates, Mr. Speaker, on any of the changes made within this bill. I invite that dialogue, that discussion. I invite their submissions as to the specific changes and if there's specific concerns to note, those concerns, I've always valued those discussions, Mr. Speaker.

I see as well that this does address potentially extending residency exemptions for voting for members of the Canadian Armed Forces who may not be directly in their home community during voting time. That only makes sense, Mr. Speaker. These individuals are likely in service to us as a province and a country potentially in another location. We need to make sure that we are supportive of that opportunity for them to cast their vote back in their respective home community.

And I know that there's a few other changes that have been brought forward here that we'll want to — around advanced polls and other pieces — that we want to make sure are as robust as they can be. When you're given the opportunity to open up an Act, it's important that a government fully surveys the opportunities to strengthen that Act and strengthen the opportunity in this case for, of course, locally elected individuals to be effective in their roles but also for communities and for citizens to engage in that voting process, one that's really important. I know sometimes we see lower turnouts at the polls in municipal processes. That's not always the case, Mr. Speaker, but I hope that the opportunity has been taken to work with rural municipal leaders, with urban municipal leaders, and with stakeholders from other perspectives that have a body of work around encouraging that sort of turnout.

We know that some of the changes brought forward by this government in its election Act of 2012 changed rules around provincial elections and tightened rules around voter ID [identification]. These changes in many ways were baseless, Mr. Speaker, and without evidence. They very much were in line with what we've seen with really sort of right wing initiatives throughout parts of the United States, Mr. Speaker, that have been more intended to suppress the vote of certain groups of people, Mr. Speaker, those that may be struggling in poverty, Mr. Speaker, different people from across the province, Mr. Speaker.

And so when we look at those changes that we stood opposed to when this government brought forward that very much sort of emulated some of what was happening out of the right wing in the United States and some of the stuff endorsed by folks like the Tea Party and certainly aspects of the Republican Party, Mr. Speaker, we believe there's a better approach here in Canada. And we need not let government do what it's doing on this and to fearmonger and to pretend that there's some sort of an issue with an outlier that's really not a reality, Mr. Speaker. What government should be doing is serving all Saskatchewan people and doing so based on evidence, doing so based in a body of practice that has brought about better engagement from our citizens. And you know, as was noted at that point, it was

disappointing that this government undertook the initiatives they did to disenfranchise far too many across Saskatchewan from voting.

But as it relates to the specific pieces of this bill, those are all aspects that were brought forward in *The Election Act* of 2012. This bill here, we look forward to spending some time with the minister and getting a greater understanding of the consultation process that they engaged with. It's our full expectation that they've worked directly with the fine rural leaders in this province, the fine urban leaders in this province, with New North, with the city clerks, with all the folks that are stakeholders in this sector to make sure that they've built legislation that will serve municipal representation and municipal governments well into the future.

So with that being said, Mr. Speaker, I will adjourn debate on Bill No. 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*.

**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 Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As it relates to Bill No. 167, these are simply the consequential amendments. And you know, I've put the comments that I have onto the record, put my thanks to the local leaders across Saskatchewan — rural, urban, and the North, Mr. Speaker — and I've referenced the important role of government to ensure that legislation serves the best interests of Saskatchewan municipalities, rural and urban and the North, Mr. Speaker. So I know we'll seek some clarity on various fronts in committee with the minister and draw upon some of his consultations that we've expected have occurred.

We thank all of those that have been a part of this process to date, Mr. Speaker, but at this point in time this is simply the consequential amendment to Bill No. 166, so I'll adjourn debate on Bill No. 167.

**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.

#### Bill No. 168

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 168 — *The Government Relations Administration Act*** 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. 168, *An Act respecting Government Relations and making consequential amendments to certain Acts*, other Acts. Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is legislation that, for legislation in the whole municipal area, is actually quite short. But it has some fairly significant consequences for the whole area of government relations between provincial government and the various municipalities, whether they're urban or rural or villages and others.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the good thing to note from the minister's second reading speech on December 1st is that there appears to have been substantial consultation within the provincial government and various departments, and also with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and New North.

And so let's take a look and see what kinds of things are being proposed in the legislation. I think the most substantial part of this is the fact that this legislation is going to replace four Acts that we have had as our friends for many years here in this legislature. So we will now have one Act that will consolidate responsibility of legislation which was previously under *The Urban Affairs Act*, *The Rural Affairs Act*, *The Rural Development Act*, and *The Northern Affairs Act*. So now all of those particular pieces of legislation will be subsumed in this particular bill, No. 168, which is *An Act respecting Government Relations*.

Now we all know that for the legislative drafters of those four previous Acts, they were always trying to make sure that they didn't do something in one piece of legislation that wasn't happening in the other. This will eliminate that problem, and I think as legislators we appreciate that, but even more so I'm sure the lawyers who have been involved with this appreciate that as well. So what this will do is make sure that there's a consistent perspective from the minister and from the ministry, and I think that's a good thing.

Now also there's a whole area related to this which is the fact that as the ministry is currently organized, virtually all of the responsibilities of the Minister of Government Relations will be in this particular legislation because it includes references to a whole number of the responsibilities of the minister.

[15:00]

The second area that this legislation gets at is to provide some fairly specific powers to the minister to make sure that the appropriate rules and regulations are followed by the various organizations that are under the Act. And so we're assured by the minister that there aren't any dramatic new powers being given to the minister, but at the same time we're also assured



that local governments will continue with most of the powers that they have right now, or perhaps all of them. But we know that's not always quite the case as we move forward in dealing with this, but I think the important thing is that they'll be consistent right across all of the various types of local governments in Saskatchewan.

The next aspect of the bill which is interesting and I think important relates to the changes that were made in the Ministry of Education. As we all know, the Ministry of Education took over the financial management of the boards of education in the province in the sense of the central collection of the finances from local education taxes, but they've done it in a way that continues to have municipalities give the money directly to the local boards.

And so what this legislation I think is trying to do, and we'll see whether it actually accomplished that, is to make sure that if there are any delinquent municipalities who hold on to the tax money they've collected on behalf of a school board a little longer than they should, that the minister actually has some power to step in and make sure that the amounts are paid to the appropriate school boards. And I think that's obviously a good administrative practice. It's also good to have the ultimate hammer available to the minister to make sure that the appropriate amounts are remitted to the school boards. Now clearly that type of a power given to the Ministry of Government Relations is one that you would rarely if ever use, but ultimately it's one that you want to know that somebody has the ability to force a recalcitrant municipality to pay the school taxes to the appropriate school board.

Now the final area of changes in this legislation relates to the whole issue involving disputes between municipalities where there aren't dispute resolution mechanisms already in place. And there are some provisions already in these previous Acts which are being consolidated that relate to voluntary dispute resolution, but sometimes there's a necessity to actually have a directed form of a resolution of a dispute, and it appears that this legislation is going to put in place something like that. I think this is an area where we will probably have some questions as the matter goes to committee because I think we would like to know exactly how and when this might be implemented. And more importantly, I think local municipalities would be quite interested to know when the boundary or when they've made the mistake that's such that the minister would step in.

We know that there have been a number of issues in the last while that have involved the Minister of Government Relations getting involved in reviewing various things that have happened within municipalities, and we know that there may be some enhancement of that ability for the minister to do that.

We're basically I think interested to see exactly what's intended by the legislation. We know that, like all kinds of legislation, there will be probably certain regulatory functions that are attached to this. But practically, you know, the legislation appears to be coming forth as a result of consultation. It appears to be coming forth with the intention of having harmonious relations between the provincial government and local municipalities, between local municipalities with each other, and obviously with the citizens of the province.

So we're happy to continue to look at this. I know some of my colleagues have some comments on some other aspects of this legislation, and so at this point I will move to adjourn debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 170

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

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act*. I've reviewed the minister's comments when he introduced the bill and reviewed the legislation. I'll keep my comments brief here today because I know we'll be able to follow up in a more substantive way and constructive way through the committee process.

Certainly fire safety in Saskatchewan is of critical importance. You know, we have a recent example, a very tragic example that is just so incredibly sad at the loss of two young babies, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen that far too often in communities all across our province.

That being said, there are very good people and very good processes in place in some areas for fire safety. We certainly see really strong and impressive efforts from many small municipalities, Mr. Speaker, working together to ensure the best they can around fire safety. And we see of course our exceptional professional firefighters in our urban centres, Mr. Speaker, that we just couldn't thank enough for what they do every single day to give us some peace of mind and some needed protection in facing a potential crisis, Mr. Speaker. So this is an important bill.

We see gaps as well in this province. We see inadequate fire protection in many parts of Saskatchewan. We certainly see that on First Nations, Mr. Speaker. And it's going to be a requirement for a thoughtful, respectful, balanced discussion with all in this province, recognizing that every single child and every single person is a Saskatchewan citizen and making sure that they're afforded the protection they deserve, and working with an entire province to come up with earnest, common sense types of solutions that we know are there, Mr. Speaker, to address some of these gaps, Mr. Speaker.

I know when I look at the minister's bill, he speaks to that it's going to do a few different things. It's going to replace the current Act and "will update powers, definitions, and . . . terminology to better reflect the current realities and requirements of the full scope of modern fire departments, and

better support fire safety and response across the province.”

We’ll get the minister to expand on those comments, but that in many ways reflects that he’s modernizing language and potentially not making substantive changes with that statement. But we’ll follow up to make sure we have full understanding.

The minister goes on to say, “it will provide local authorities, their firefighters and fire inspectors with more transparent rules regarding entry in situations involving fire, along with . . . measures to prevent the risks of fires and other emergencies.”

You know, we’ll be looking forward to what specific measures are in place here, what sort of resources are flowing as well, Mr. Speaker, but certainly that’s an important statement. Then the question is, what’s the actual plan and what are the consequences, intended and unintended, Mr. Speaker?

And third, that the new Act will provide the province, through the fire commissioner, with clear authority and greater ability to assist and support communities and local fire departments when requested or required by a fire situation or emergency event.

And that’s an important statement again, Mr. Speaker, the objective of that. What we’ll want to make sure is we have an understanding of how this is going to be practically applied and how this will ensure that there’s improvements brought to ensure fire safety, fire protection is in place for all across Saskatchewan who certainly deserve a level of fire safety.

I know as well we sit down every year with the professional firefighters of Saskatchewan. They bring forward some very important recommendations. I will, you know, be interested in hearing from the minister as well. They’re not contained, I believe, within this legislation, and I’d be interested in understanding why he chose not to work with some of those important submissions. Certainly we’re ever thankful for the leadership and the service, the selflessness of that service, of the firefighters across Saskatchewan, volunteer and professional, Mr. Speaker. And when we look at some of the recommendations that have been brought forward, they’re ones we should be looking directly to.

I know that there’s an incredibly solid case that has been brought forward about the need for additional funding for fire service in Saskatchewan, and laying out the risks and the costs and the impacts and the lives that are at risk, Mr. Speaker, without doing so. And I think that it’s this sort of common sense proposal in this case that we’ve seen from the Saskatchewan Professional Fire Fighters Association that we need to be listening to and that we need to be responding to, Mr. Speaker.

We know as well that firefighters subject themselves to all sorts of toxins and risks that simply are outside the realm of what many other professions are subjected to, Mr. Speaker, and the health consequences are potentially huge. They’re potentially fatal, Mr. Speaker. When we look at some of the recommendations around breast cancer considerations and prostate cancer and skin cancer and some of the other illnesses that have been identified, it’s critically important that government look to that submission and look to what’s going

on in the rest of Canada but also not be afraid to lead here in Saskatchewan, as we’ve done before, in providing some of the coverages for those who give so selflessly to provide each and every one of us peace of mind, Mr. Speaker.

And I know we need to look at the case that’s been brought forward by professional firefighters of sort of the smaller communities or smaller cities, Mr. Speaker, where this government with Bill 85 a few years back, Mr. Speaker, that this government rammed forward with, took away some important rights, collective bargaining rights and binding arbitration of firefighters in communities like North Battleford, communities like Moose Jaw, communities like Yorkton, communities like Swift Current. And this is important.

What I recognize when I’ve met with firefighters from Swift Current and met with firefighters from Weyburn and met with firefighters from North Battleford and Yorkton is that in fact, in many of those cases, they’re amongst the lowest paid in Canada, Mr. Speaker — in Canada — not just lower paid in Saskatchewan.

If you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, having these individuals that are so critical to protecting our families and our property and providing peace of mind, protecting lives, Mr. Speaker, in a community like Weyburn — let’s just use the example of Weyburn, Mr. Speaker — trying to keep up with the rising cost of living. We know the inflationary pressures that those in that region have been subjected to. We know the challenge to find affordable housing, Mr. Speaker. And the fact that in a community like Weyburn, right on the cusp of the incredible Bakken oil play, Mr. Speaker, that’s seen an unprecedented run of prosperity, Mr. Speaker, that we would think, deem it acceptable or that government would deem it acceptable that they be of the lowest paid firefighters in all of Canada just defies common sense, Mr. Speaker.

And it speaks to a real set of misplaced priorities, and I believe you can take that same argument directly over to Swift Current and the other communities that are impacted, Mr. Speaker. And this is an area that really is about ensuring that you’re going to have people retained and attracted and in place to ensure the safety of communities, and it’s ensuring some dignity and quality of life to those that are serving our communities.

And I just find it to be such disrespect for these very important roles, Mr. Speaker, that this government would’ve rammed forward with measures to have taken away the ability for those firefighters to be effective through their collective bargaining processes, Mr. Speaker, taken away fair processes and are relegating them, Mr. Speaker, to the lowest paid, as the lowest paid firefighters in Canada, Mr. Speaker. And this is an area that certainly should have been addressed by this minister and this government with this legislation.

[15:15]

I know there’s a discussion as well about the role of the fire service in emergency medical services. And these are the kinds of earnest discussions that government should be open to having, to understand what sort of proposals are possible, to understand what sort of solutions are potentially there, to make sure, quite simply, that emergency services and fire protection

is able to be as effective as it can be to all of us, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll look forward to committee to follow up directly with the minister on some of the changes that have been brought forward. I'm disappointed, when I've highlighted some of these other areas, that this bill doesn't go at addressing some of these issues in a more substantive way. And as I've said, when you look at the disparity in fire service protection for many across the province, we have to, we have to do a better job, and this government has to do a better job in providing leadership to make sure that all communities are protected.

And it can't become a divisive political game of the government, Mr. Speaker. It has to be one of earnestness and common sense, to go out and work with communities across Saskatchewan, rural and urban and First Nations, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that fire protection is available in an effective way, in a reasonable way, for communities moving forward. And you know, the galling lack of fire service protection on so many First Nations and the funding challenges with the federal government are simply matters that need to be resolved. And what they don't need is political games and divisiveness from a governing party, Mr. Speaker. What they require is an aim towards addressing this in a substantive way, in a common-sense way, and working with all in good faith, Mr. Speaker, to do just that.

And it's one of these examples again, Mr. Speaker, where we see sort of an approach of this government that far too often wants to play sort of divisive political games with very important issues, as opposed to providing real leadership that can provide solutions for all, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, unify this province on very important issues as well. So with that being said, Mr. Speaker, I adjourn debate on Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act*.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 172

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 172** — *The Naturopathic Medicine Act* 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 for me to enter into this debate this afternoon on Bill No. 172, *An Act respecting the Practice of Naturopathic Medicine and the College of Naturopathic Doctors of Saskatchewan*. And it's a relatively straightforward bill. We've seen this kind of bill come before the House many times when we were talking about recognizing the professional attributes and qualities of a certain group of people in our society. And today we're going to be talking about naturopathic doctors and the practice of naturopathic medicine.

And as the Minister of Health has recognized in his opening comments for the second reading, he talked about how this has had an established history here in Saskatchewan, well over 60-some years, going back to the '50s. And so we're not talking about a new field in medicine. This is one that has been alive and is present in Saskatchewan here. And so it's only fair and reasonable that they have their own piece of legislation that will guide them in their creation of their college and their council.

Of course we always want to make sure that there has been appropriate consultation and that we're not back fixing some of these things up at a later date, and that there has been appropriate and sufficient consultation, that the folks involved feel like it is the right fit, it's the proper way to go forward.

And of course I assume, and I'll be looking at section 18 that talks about membership and people on the board, that there are . . . Actually it's section 9, the public appointees. Always very important to have, particularly in the health councils, that we do have an eye on the affairs and that it's a professional approach to it — but still a public approach, that it doesn't become a silo and there's no connection to the real world, but there's a sense of common sense, because when we get into these professional colleges and councils, that in fact they are professional and they should be acting professionally. But we need to make sure they have their . . . [inaudible] . . . grounded in some common sense too, and I hope that's what the public eye brings, and the public appointees bring to the table.

So we'll have some questions to make sure this is a reasonable framework. It's probably a typical template in terms of how this professional organization is organized. We do recognize that it's unique and very special. They offer a unique and alternate approach to medicine but one that is very legitimate and one that has been successful. And it has been successful for many decades here in the province, and therefore they do deserve the recognition of a professional college and council.

And so this is important, particularly when it comes to protection of the title and protection, doctor of . . . a naturopathic doctor, and that there is some protection. And we know that if you see some advertisement or some notice around that, you know that they have a way of making sure they are certified, that they've trained according to standards and that there are processes in place in terms of discipline and that again, as I say, it's not totally internal but there is some public scrutiny through the public appointees. It's very, very important to have this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that many others will want to speak on this for sure. It's one of those pieces of legislation that we will all want to think at some length on. But clearly, as I said, it's probably a framework piece of legislation that's applied to professional organizations. And we do want to make sure that that's pretty rigorously followed too, because you don't want too many organizations having a unique approach to it, that we understand that there is a training aspect to it, recognition of that training, protection of title and what that means, and a disciplinary aspect of it as well.

So that's laid out in the Act. And so with that, at this point, I think with Bill No. 172, *An Act respecting the Practice of Naturopathic Medicine and the College of Naturopathic*

*Doctors of Saskatchewan*, I would move that we adjourn the debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 172, the naturopathy Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 174

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 174** — *The Registered Teachers Act* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 174, *An Act respecting the Regulation of Teachers and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. And I think this is a very significant Act, being one that is certified as a teacher today, and so this is one that I feel that I have a few comments to make and I appreciate the opportunity to enter into this debate here before us. And it's quite . . . It is a significant Act because it has changed . . . it will be changing the way we do things here in Saskatchewan and we want to make sure that we get it right, that there are no unintentional consequences, that we take . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Will the member for Athabasca please return behind the Sergeant. Do not pass between the mace and the Sergeant, and bow when you cross the centre line. Please do so. Thank you. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity again to enter into the debate here. But, Mr. Speaker, this is a very significant Act and I will be talking a bit about the events that led us to this.

I do want to recognize though that this has been . . . will be a significant change in the way we've done this for many decades, I think going back to the '30s or '40s when the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] was first created. And the changes that happened . . . I'm not sure how long the previous process was in place but . . . and I will be talking about some of the comments I made a few years ago and what got us to this point, some of the concerns, and why we are where we're at the point we are today. And I think it's an important one to take some time to get my comments on record, and I'll elaborate why that is so critical in a few minutes. But this is a significant piece of legislation, and I will talk more specifically about some of the parts as we get going further.

But I do want to take a minute right off the bat to talk briefly about the minister's comments. I always like to do that, because it's an important way to frame the conversation. First, what does the minister say in the second reading? People may, at home who are watching this, may not know what the minister said in his second reading speech. It's very, very important, because the second reading speech by a minister really sets the tone.

And from my own experience, I was instructed that my comments were to be as straightforward and to the point and mean what I say, because they could be later used in either a court setting or some setting. Because these are the things that people will use for further interpretation of what the bill is. It's an interpretive tool for the bill.

So Bill 174, the minister — and this was back on December 8th — got up and talked about *The Registered Teachers Act*, and it will create a new regulatory body for teachers in Saskatchewan. And he says, I quote, "I think it's safe to say that the government has done its homework on this file."

Well I do have some questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we will find out whether it's done its homework when we get to committee. Because as I will go through my points here, this is not just a . . . We were worried when this was first launched that it was a knee-jerk reaction to a news story, and the government wanted to get it off its plate as quickly as possible. Some time has passed, and I think a lot of people have done their homework, but the proof will be in the pudding in committee when we ask some questions about what's the future of this, what's the future of that. So I will talk more about that in a minute when we talk about the context going back to the spring of 2013, two years ago.

So he talks about how the minister is responsible for certifying all Saskatchewan teachers. Fair enough. And then he talks about how the STF is responsible for disciplinary matters and how this is something that needs to be looked after.

Disciplinary processes concerning administrators, such as directors of education, superintendents, are held by the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents. Meanwhile teachers at independent schools, custody care facilities, and post-secondary institutions fall under disciplinary responsibility of the ministry.

So it'll be interesting to see when we talk about post-secondary institutions, are teachers there . . . Now quite often we might refer to them as sessional lecturers. We might refer to them as professors. Are they part of this? I'm not sure. So he's sort of implying that maybe they might be, you know.

[15:30]

But I guess this is the thing. This is the thing. And I've always been very clear about this, you know, and very proud of it, that many people will call themselves educators, many people will call themselves an educator, but you need to have a licence to teach. You need to have a licence to teach, and that licence is the one that you get after completing your training and you apply to the Government of Saskatchewan and the Minister of Education — very, very, important difference. So to be a professor or a sessional lecturer, you don't need a licence; you don't need to be registered. So there will be some questions about that comment that he has there. Who does he see at post-secondary institutions? What does that mean?

[So] *The Registered Teachers Act* will consolidate the responsibilities for teacher certification and discipline within one legislative framework by which the new

Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board . . .

And that will be governed. Now it talks about the overview first; the establishment of the board, second; the establishment of the nine-person board of directors, including seven registered teachers and two members of the public. And now it will be interesting, and I may come back to this, but right off the start, I think this is interesting that we have a board, a nine-person board of directors, and there are seven registered teachers and two members of the public. But you know, when we take a look at who makes up the seven, there is no mention of the universities. And I'm curious about why, why that is, what was the reasoning for that. And we'll talk more when we get into the Act, who is on the board and who makes up the board.

But I'm curious about why is there not . . . There used to be a really strong relationship between the University of Saskatchewan, and it used to be sort of the group that would help a minister or lead change in education for teachers, School Boards Association, the government. Those were the three key ones. But there was also the universities very much involved in the whole thing. And now we see the universities not being included in the development, or in this board. So I'm just wondering, how do they feel? Have we talked to the deans of Education to say, so even if you are providing the service, and we'll tell you what service we need, the deans have no role. They cannot appoint anybody to this board. So I'm wondering how . . . Maybe they'll be on some committees. Maybe they're happy with this. But the minister's unclear about this for sure.

Thirdly, it prescribes the duty of the SPTRB [Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board] to serve and protect the public and to exercise its powers and to discharge its responsibility in the public interest.

Now I just want to stop there for a minute, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He talked about, "to serve and protect the public." You know, one of the things, and I'll be quoted here later, and I do appreciate that the minister does take a look at what I say. Even in question period today, he quoted me but he had the wrong year. He was out by a decade. The quote was from 2012, not 2002. But at any rate it was a good quote and he was accurate, just the timing. But at any rate, he quotes me.

The question is this, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker: when he quoted me, I talked about how the children were number one, that they were what we were really wanting to make sure. And he says, it prescribes the duties to serve and protect the public. Yes, that's important. The public interest is very much present; it's paramount. But the very most important issue is safety of the student and the child. And he doesn't really talk about that in his comments. He talks about the public interest. So I have to say I have some concerns about that, because where are the children in this debate? Now he'll quote me later on in his comments, and well I'll continue this discussion.

Fourthly, it prescribes the objectives of SPTRB, which are to establish and administer the professional certification and standards of professional conduct and competence of teachers for the purpose of serving and protecting the public.

This is what I was getting at earlier, and I'll read from a

comment, an article from *The StarPhoenix* on May 31st, 2013, "Province will change teacher training." Now it was one of the many things that were put on hold, and I'll get back to that because some of the professors at the University of Saskatchewan were contacting me. At the time I was critic for Education. I am no longer; I am the associate critic for Education. But I had been approached about some alarming changes that were coming down the line. And this is why I think it's really important to have people from the university on this board, but I see that they're omitted and so I'm curious about that. And that will be one of our questions in committee: what is the role of the teacher colleges, the Faculty of Education, the College of Education, when it comes to the SPTRB? What's their role?

**An Hon. Member:** — We have an answer.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well I'm waiting for committee. If it's not here, it's not here. It's not here, but we will get into that. A debate may break out on the floor here. And this is the question I have. And I will quote from the article, and if the minister does want a copy of the article, I'll make sure he will get the article. Because it is a couple of years old, and I know the professor will appreciate the review of that.

But he goes on to talk about, fifthly, it grants the board the authority to issue teachers' certificates. And as I said, that's a hugely significant piece in terms of, you know, when you've gone to college and you've taken your teacher training, and when you get your certificate, it's a pretty, pretty special day. And when I received mine in I guess it would have been in the spring of 1982 . . . It was 1982, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm proud to say that on our side of the House, one-third of our caucus are teachers and have a teacher's licence, and are active. And that's really important. I think that's hugely important. So we really appreciate the fact that we've known what it's like to get that teacher's certificate in the mail, and what it really means.

Sixth, it grants the regulatory board responsibility for intake, investigation, hearing on the professional misconduct and incompetence, and that's hugely, hugely significant. And that really was in many ways the driving force of what happened in the spring of 2013 that caused the minister at the time to start these changes.

Now it's interesting. It talks about the transition committee and it was interesting that you did have on people from the ministry, from the administrators and superintendents, the School Boards Association, FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations]. And again I don't see the universities. Not that I'm . . . You know what happens when you get nitpicky on this. You tend to focus on some things that are glaring in their omission, but I don't see the universities. I don't see the college or the faculties of Education. And we'll have to talk to them and say, so what do you think about this because you're an active participant? They're going to be the groups who are going to be delivering the training of teachers. They're the ones who are going to be working in the field to make sure teachers are great teachers. And yet for some strange reason, they're not part of the conversation at this point.

Now it's interesting. And this I do have to share with the House here, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, we also know that members opposite have taken a keen interest in this. I'm going to quote from *The StarPhoenix* article dated June 29th, 2013. The article stated that the member for Saskatoon Centre would, and I quote, "... also spend the summer doing extra homework on teacher regulation practices across Canada." Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from the members opposite about everything they found. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite also stated in the . . .

Well I just want to stop there, that I did actually do some homework here and I'm going to be quoting extensively from that today because when I have the invitation to talk about educational matters, I do take it up . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We'll be looking forward to that. We'll be looking forward to that. Will it be random? I hope it's not just a random inspection but he's listening fully and completely to every word I'm saying. But he also says, and this is what I want to get back to earlier. He's quoting me:

We want to make sure that the public and parents and colleagues in the profession, everyone has full confidence in the system and the process. That means it's transparent, it's accountable, but it's also fair, and that student safety is the No. 1 issue here.

And he goes on and says he couldn't agree more, and I couldn't agree more. I stand by those words quite . . . I have absolutely no problem, and I appreciate people quote me here because that I really mean what I said, and that's really, truly the case.

And this was what we get back to the public interest. Clearly when you have public schools, there is a huge public interest to serve. But when it comes to safety in our schools, it's really important that we make sure safety of the child, the student is number one, and we are all, we are all on the same base of that. So I just find it interesting that when the minister talked about public interest he didn't put, didn't state the issue about student safety. And I think that's hugely, hugely important.

This is a interesting quote from the minister, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He goes on and he says, "We know that the member from Saskatoon Centre has admitted to doing a bit of nitpicking at times when he tries to find a reason to criticize some government bills." Now I do have to say it's passing strange that a lawyer would say to a teacher that I'm being nitpicky. I find this really odd, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'm the nitpicky person, and he's the lawyer and he's the minister. Hey, it's just me doing my job, and this is what I get paid to be, paid to do, and so I will be nitpicky today. So bear with me as I go through these issues. But I had to say that it was an odd comment that I would be . . . A lawyer calling a teacher nitpicky — now that is something else.

So anyways he goes on and he talks about . . . But you know what? And he talks about the different supports and different things like that. And I think that's fair enough, but as I said though the . . . And it's good to see that he's got momentum behind this Act. We're glad to see that the STF is saying positive things about this and we're glad to see the

Saskatchewan School Boards Association is, as the quote says, "... encouraged by the movement toward increased transparency and clarity." And that's strong, and I think that's fair enough.

But as I said, that the thing that I thought rather odd is where are, where are the universities on this? What are the universities saying about this? And I don't have an expectation either way that they would be either positive or negative. I'd just be very interested in hearing what their comments are, and so we'll be asking them for that. And as I said, I'll refer to one of their articles that they had that talked about some of the concerns.

But I do want to say that the minister was quoting from an article in *The StarPhoenix* when he was quoting me, and that's fair enough. The article was from June 29, 2013. I don't know why they assigned myself homework on the very last day of school. It sounds like summer school to me, and I don't think that's always a great idea. But it was an important thing to be doing.

And the article is "Regulation of Saskatchewan teachers to undergo changes." And that was by the previous minister at the time. And I was quoted:

NDP Opposition education critic David Forbes said that the party will also spend the summer doing extra homework on teacher regulation practices across Canada.

"We want to make sure that the public and parents, and colleagues in the profession, everyone has full confidence in the system and the process," Forbes said.

[But this is important.] "That means it's transparent, it's accountable, but it's also fair, and that student safety is the No. 1 issue here."

[15:45]

So that's that. But then the article goes on, and I think this is very important for the minister to hear and others who thought I may be repeating myself. I haven't said this, but I will say it probably a few times before the end of the day because this is the irony. This is the problem with this government. And I go on to say, and I quote, I quote the article:

The questions the ministry documents raised [and what I say] "have really highlighted some areas that we really need to take a look at," Forbes said. "I think that's a good thing. I think in terms of transparency and accountability, there are real questions. We're going to take a good look at this. Clearly, it needs to be reviewed."

What worries Forbes is the government making any changes in haste.

The Saskatchewan Party government "has a penchant for making announcements that catch everybody off guard," Forbes said. He pointed to changes made with little consultation, such as a required minimum number of instruction hours in the school year, mandating classes begin after Labour Day and introducing a new standardized testing program.

And I'm quoted as saying:

"What I also see happening in Saskatchewan is a real situation where we see relationships between the educational partners becoming very fractured. I don't think that's helpful to anybody, said Forbes, who worked as a teacher for 18 years.

So, Mr. Speaker, here we are. Here we are in this House debating. Just before me in the House, we were debating another bill that was *The Education Amendment Act*, talking about the school year calendar and how they rushed into that. Oops, now here we are getting that fixed up after those folks over there couldn't figure out the calendar. And here we have, we've just resolved a contract that has left many teachers with a lot of questions because they couldn't vote on it, but one of the things that they're working on is a number of instructional hours that came out of . . . Where'd that come out of? And now we're resolving that problem.

So we have a whole list of problems in education. And of course, and we can make light of the fact of standardized testing, but I tell you in the spring of 2013, there was a lot of, a lot of concerns. And maybe I'm being nitpicky but I remember one question in estimates — that wasn't this minister, but the former minister — when I asked for a list of books of what proved the worth of standardized testing. And they gave me a list, and then I asked the obvious question that any teacher would ask: did you read the books? And the resounding answer was no, we haven't read the books. We hadn't read them. And I was looking at these . . . the minister, I couldn't believe this. They had a list of 10 books that I should read but I said, well you've brought them to me. Have you read them? No they hadn't.

And so the government backing off of standardized testing and for very good reason and particularly, and I have to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I actually have read them. That was the summer. I have read them. I have read them. It has been a couple of years. I won't take the test on them today, but I did want to read them because I wanted to understand, and I wanted to understand what their thinking was. And of course that was the irony, that was the irony. You don't go there because you never know when you go down that kind of rabbit hole what will happen.

But you know, it was interesting when I shared that list, when I shared that list with some university professors who were familiar with the literature on standardized testing and appropriate measurement, that they were saying, well these books, I mean, they don't even support standardized testing. Many of them don't. And so I had to have a good look through them, but clearly if I'm being nitpicky when I ask questions like, have you read the books, have you read the material, I think that's really important.

Again I am going to back to the universities on this and saying, so where are they on all of this. Because you know, I do have to thank the university and some of the faculty members who've brought forward their concerns about standardized testing and clearly outlined the problems that they saw. And that's their role in our community, and we look forward to working with those folks because they're the academics and they know.

They're the ones who are writing these books, these articles on how to test children, how to measure academic growth. And yet I see them not being included. I see them not being included.

So this article that I'm quoting from was June of 2013, but that wasn't the only thing that was happening in that spring. Of course the whole standardized testing fiasco was happening, and the government at that time was still hanging on tight. And it wasn't until the next year that we heard the brakes were being put on on that change.

But the one that I think, and this is the one that I will, after I'm finished speaking, send over to the minister because I'm not sure if he's aware of this, if he's done his homework on this one. But this is the debate and the article is from Friday, May 31st, 2013. And this is why we do debates like this. And I know the professor will be . . . I hope she'll appreciate the opportunity to have this quote on the record because she had written me several times and had felt really stonewalled in 2013 about the process.

The professor was Bev Brenna, and the article is "Province will change teacher training." And this again was by Janet French who was doing an outstanding job of reporting on educational matters. And unfortunately, you know, it's one of the things I do miss in our newspapers when people do get into detail, do get into detail of subject matters and really bring up all the points. So she talks about, Janet French writes:

The debate about whether school teachers should be generalists or specialists is resurfacing as the Saskatchewan government moves to change the education requirements for teachers.

Now I understand this has been put on hold, but as soon as this Act is put into place and put into action, that this will start up again. And I would really encourage and will be talking in committee about what are the plans around teacher certification. And I will go back to talk about this in the parts of the Act that empower different bylaws.

But I do want to read some significant parts of this:

After years of discussion and consultation with the four . . . postsecondary institutions that train teachers, a provincial board has drafted new requirements for teachers to be certified in the province.

So this is back in the spring of 2013 that there were new requirements that were drafted. And I quote:

"The argument of generalists versus specialists has been going in education circles for years," says Prof. James McNinch, dean of education at the University of Regina. "This is the one hot spot in these recommendations."

So it talks about:

In charge of setting the requirements for teachers to teach in Saskatchewan is a Teacher Education, Certification and Classification board. Members of that board had earlier commissioned a report which recommended changes to the education requirements for Saskatchewan teachers, said

Trevor Smith, the board's secretariat and the man who oversees individual teachers' certification.

The TECC board is now in its fifth draft of recommendations, which Smith says he hopes will go to the Minister of Education this fall for approval.

And of course all things went off the rails when they decided to get Dr. Kendel involved and his report. And so this is really important. You know, and when he talks about if the minister does approve them, it could be four years before the changes take effect because there are current students who are already enrolled in the teacher education programs and they need to finish their classes. But it does take time to implement the new certification requirements.

Now this is what is interesting: "Although the TECC board did talk to the universities, McNinch said it wasn't soon or thorough enough."

And so that's why I'm flagging the universities. They play an integral part because if they're the foundation. They're the foundation. If you're not talking to the universities or having them involved in an integral way . . . maybe they are, but I haven't evidence of that.

It goes on and I quote the article:

Changing certification requirements, like the government's decision to start school after Labour Day [Here we are again talking about that.] and expand standardized testing, "have all been pushed without the kind of dialogue I think we would expect," McNinch said.

So here we are two years later, we're still talking about standardized testing and starting school after Labour Day. And we have that amendment, that Act before us that is clearing that up.

He goes on to say, "There's a sense of them listening to their constituents rather than the educational stakeholders. It's a shift in how things are done, and I regret that."

So this is the thing. Now maybe they have been consulting, and we'll find out in committee, but we want to make sure that circle of stakeholders include the universities. It's very important that we have strong faculty, a strong Faculty of Education, a strong College of Education. I'm a product of that at the University of Regina. My colleague is a product of the University of Saskatchewan, I believe the College of Education there. And so we were well grounded in this and we really do think this is an important thing.

It goes on to talk about:

The board wants to extend teacher candidates' minimum time spent as a student teacher to 10 from eight weeks. [That might be fair enough.] It would also require both elementary and high school teachers to amass 24 credits in teaching instruction — like lesson planning, the use of technology [that type of stuff] . . .

Instead of a "major" and "minor" teaching area [and that's

probably what we're all familiar with] high school teachers would [now] be asked to take classes in three teaching areas.

So it goes on to talk about how the rationale behind this, and why this might be a good idea. But again what we really need to do is make sure that we're involving all the stakeholders. Now McNinch, and I quote again:

McNinch said some high school teachers will argue knowledge of a subject is critical to success. However, good teaching is also about engaging and encouraging students and sparking their interest, he said.

So this is really, really interesting. Now he also points out — and I think this is Trevor Smith, I think that's who is saying this — talks about some of the issues when we have people coming from Ontario who want to teach in Saskatchewan, but they have spent less time in the classroom than we have. I'm not sure how that works out.

But I do want to get to the point that professor Beverley Brenna . . . and I met with her and this is why I'm bringing this up, because I think it is a critical piece and one that we will be following very closely:

Teachers will have to study how to teach English, math, science, social studies but not for a set number of credits . . .

That suggestion troubles Beverley Brenna, a curriculum studies professor in the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education. Brenna points to studies that demonstrate the benefits teachers get from two university-level classes in methods of teaching language arts as compared to one . . .

So what they're saying is they want to go from two classes of language arts instruction down to one, and she's really worried about that because we know, we know — and I'm from the Saskatoon Public board, and we've done an awful lot of work in literacy — that if we start to weaken our language arts component then we have a real problem.

So this is a quote from Bev Brenna:

"I challenge the government to provide evidence supporting the opposite — that offering no fully developed courses explicitly designed to teach ELA is a practice somehow beneficial in terms of a teacher education . . . [program]," Brenna said in an email.

And it goes on to talk about, "Brenna is encouraging people to contact their MLA and the minister of education before the changes take . . . [place]." And I would finish with this:

"I would advise that the Ministry of Education consider fully all potential challenges that might emerge as a result of not delineating a minimum number of semester hours in English language arts methods training," she writes.

Clearly here's somebody who knows a little bit about teacher training and what works in our classrooms and how we can



make sure they continue to achieve success. And we know one of the areas we have great concern about is really around literacy, and this is one that I really hope . . . And I will get it to the minister when I'm finished teaching because I think it's a very important article that talks about what happens next. What happens next?

We can all agree to this Act, and we all recognize that within the Act there are bylaws, and the power's the bylaws. But we see that the universities may not be as actively involved as they once were, and what does it mean in terms of . . . We know that the spring of 2013, there were many, many things afoot, many things afoot that caused teachers a lot of concerns.

One of the things I was surprised that the minister did not refer to was . . . And I just want to thank Dr. Dennis Kendel for his work. His report was very thorough, helped a lot, I think it helped a lot of people and I think helped the department. It was a good foundation for people to start to have a conversation about where do we want to go, and he did an outstanding job on this. And I was surprised that . . . And I will acknowledge the good work that Dr. Dennis Kendel did on this. I was concerned that how, you know, as a teacher that we often think only a teacher understands, but I think that he really grasped the issues at hand.

I just want to read a couple lines from the introduction because I think this is really, really important. What he writes, and I quote:

You might then assume that this report is all about teachers. It's not. While it refers to teachers many times, it's really all about students. How we regulate teachers is critically important to students. The decision that the Government of Saskatchewan ultimately makes about the best way to regulate teachers must, above all else, protect and advance the interests of students. Simply put, it must work for students.

[16:00]

I think this is the gist of the whole thing, isn't it? It must work for students so students can reach their full potential, but they can do it in a safe, safe environment. He wrote a very thorough review, and I do want to thank Dr. Kendel for his work because while . . . And it's always a hard thing when change is driven by newspaper articles or it appears to be, that people do feel threatened, do feel misunderstood, and we know that. We've all had experience in this House, on both sides of the House, where we felt our points weren't as well taken in the media as they might have been, and our points may lead us to be misunderstood. But the fact of the matter is — as we both agree, and I think everybody has a common thing — that this must work for students. And that's hugely, hugely important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course the STF did their work, and they talked about public assurance, professional commitment, teacher quality, and it talks about their work and how this is important. And you know, one of the things about the STF is that they always do such thorough, thorough work in terms of understanding how we can support teachers so that they can do the best for students and how deeply committed they are for student success. But they know one thing. If you're going to

have great students, great kids, you've got to have great teachers and great schools. They go together hand in glove; you can't have one without the other. And so an investment in teachers really pays off with our children, and I think that's what we all look for. And I appreciate the frame about public assurance, and I think that's really important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, the minister did challenge me to share my homework, and this is what I . . . I won't read my whole report here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I did ask. I wanted to get a sense, an environmental scan of what were the issues. What were the concerns and emerging issues in public education in Saskatchewan?

And of course, you know, it was interesting because when we've talked about education, it's hugely important we recognize the changing nature of our schools — very, very different. Of course we've talked at length, and we'll wait. The Finance minister, as he said, just a couple more weeks until budget time, and we'll find out if in fact these folks on the government side will step up and support schools or really what are their priorities.

And so we talk about how, you know, we think this is really important, and yet we know schools are crowded, overcrowded. We've seen, we've heard, and I know that the whole cabinet were there at SUMA to hear from a parent in Gerald, and I think if they're . . . It's just representative of more and more schools in Saskatchewan where we know there's a \$1.5 billion infrastructure deficit that this government is putting off to local boards and saying, you deal with it; it's not our problem.

And I know for example in my own school division, I know they like to brag it up, but you know, in Gerald their school was right at the top of the list and now they find it down at the bottom, no. 100. And I think of a school in my own neighbourhood — and if I'm not mistaken the Minister of Education may have attended it at one time but grew up close to it — Pleasant Hill School who's dealing with asbestos. I had the privilege of being there last fall for their 100th birthday. Still it's great to have a birthday, but they're dealing with asbestos and that's the issue.

So we talk about students from:

. . . the most connected generation in history with remarkable access to information. They are growing up in an interconnected world and with a keen awareness of global issues including: climate change, poverty and a wide variety of political and social issues.

The current generation of students is also characterized by the disparity . . . [by] those who have access to financial resources, technology and post-secondary education and those who [simply] do not.

And this is the situation we have. "Tapscott (2009) described this as two generations of the same age, 'one thriving and one failing.'"

And we see this in Saskatchewan where:

. . . this disparity is most visible between the province's

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. In both Saskatoon and Regina almost half of all Aboriginal people are living below the low income cut off as reported by Statistics Canada in 2006.

This is our world. We can say somewhere else there's a generation growing up with two worlds, one thriving and one failing. It's the reality unfortunately here in Saskatchewan, and we know this government has commissioned many reports on this and yet the action is just not there, just not there. We need to make sure that we step up to the plate on this. We cannot have a situation where we have a generation where one-half . . . where there's one group failing and one group thriving.

Our population is experiencing incredible growth, and we often hear this. We'll talk about the baby boom that's happening in our communities with the new immigrants coming to Saskatchewan. This is all a good thing, but this brings new challenges. And yet we see a government that's unprepared to really make the investments that are necessary so kids have a great start. And that's all kids. That's all kids. And so when we have a report like this and leading to Bill No. 174, yes, when we think about this, we have to think about the context in terms of what's happening in our province here.

This really talks about what we have to do in terms of how we move forward. One of the things I want to talk a little bit about, and this is one of the things I did that spring is I asked kids, so what are their concerns? What are kids worried about? What are kids worried about at school? You know, as I said, it's a great, wonderful thing. It's a wonderful thing . . . And I appreciate that the members over there probably don't want to hear what kids want to talk about. They don't want to hear, especially that member from Moose Jaw who probably hasn't talked to a kid in a long, long time. I don't know if that's . . . But I've got to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they get loud when they don't want to hear what kids want to talk about.

You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Let me read the first line of my report: "More and more young people are choosing to remain in Saskatchewan." And yet those guys are ready to shout and shout as if . . . We think that's a good thing. Now he thinks that he just wants to yell from his seat, the member from Moose Jaw, ready to jump up. He should listen. He should just sit back and listen. He should just relax a bit and listen to the speech at hand, and watch his heckling. He can heckle afterwards. I always enjoy a good heckle, but maybe after the fact because I'd like to do my speech.

But here we are. We agree and kids agree that they want to remain here in Saskatchewan. That's a wonderful thing. That's a wonderful thing. But they have some concerns and hopes for their future that are important to consider in terms of any educational reform. Students are concerned about their choices and the accessibility of quality education at both the secondary and post-secondary level and the availability of quality employment once they leave the education system. So here you have . . . They're very wise. They're saying yes, we want to stay here but we want to make sure we have the best schools, the best high schools, the best universities, the post-secondary learning situations, and they want to have a good job. They want to have good jobs.

Here are some of the concerns that they've talked about. Their concerns were about the cost of housing. They have a concern about that. They are very aware of what the cost of housing is in Saskatchewan and what an impact that has on their choice to stay here in Saskatchewan. Now this is a challenge because we know rents are unaffordable. They are high and high school kids know that. They know that, and they want to make sure post-secondary schooling is affordable.

But many students have also expressed concerns about social equity within their community and identified specific concerns about the level of gang activity and crime as a product of social inequality and systemic racism. And, Mr. Speaker, no truer words. This is exactly their concerns that they see in their schools and on their streets, in the malls and main streets. They're worried about gangs. They are worried about systemic racism. These are real concerns, and we have to make sure we step up to the plate as a government.

The students raised concerns about the infrastructure within their community including access to reliable public transit, and they also raised concerns regarding the environment and access to sport and leisure facilities. It's great that they're concerned about the environment as well because as a generation, we're not doing a great job of how we're leaving this world. And I think that we should listen to these kids and what they hope for.

You know, I asked them, and this is something I would do, is what are your hopes? What are your fears? What are your positives? What are your negatives? What are the positive things that they felt about their community? They were positive about the social fabric of their community. They enjoyed its freedoms, opportunities, and cultural diversity, which is a great thing when you think about how diverse our communities are getting to be here in Saskatchewan. They see that as a positive. They don't see that as a negative. And they worry about the systemic racism that may be a hangover from our generation, but from their generation they're willing to embrace cultural diversity. So that's really important.

Several students reference their strong family connections and hope they continue to live and eventually work in their communities, and how they would like to meet their future aspirations and remain in Saskatchewan. And the challenge though is for us to, as legislators and policy-makers, to capitalize on that positive sentiment. They want to be here, but we have to make sure we have the best schools for them. And these are the kind of hopes and fears they have.

So what are the trends affecting teachers? We talked about teacher qualifications and salary. I talked at length about teacher qualifications; that's a huge issue. This was done in the spring of 2013 when they were just about to go into contract negotiations. Here we are in March of 2015, when that contract is just actually wrapping up. So it'd be interesting to have . . . as we look back on the past two years for that.

Now interestingly, this is what was written at the time:

The Ministry of Education must also work with the professional organization of teachers in Saskatchewan, the STF and the provincial teacher education programs based out of both the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and

the University of Regina (U of R) to develop high quality programs for teacher training that recruit the best possible teacher candidates.

And that's why I'm concerned about this, this piece of legislation. And where are the universities in this? We used to have them as a key stakeholder, particularly when we came to teacher training and teacher recruitment, and we're kind of leaving that out. So now, "A provincial round table on teacher training and professionalism may be useful to create a public dialogue on this topic."

[16:15]

Go on to talk . . . another teacher concerned with student contact time which talked of retention of new teachers, and of course that would have an impact on this bill before us at hand. Standardized testing, again we continue to talk at length about that. And curricular changes, and again this is the one that we come back and we talk about the changes to the curriculum and how the rolling out . . . and I just quote:

The rolling out of new curriculum in Saskatchewan has been done without the required attention to teacher training and professional development. While each subject curriculum is unique and exceptions are bound to appear, overall the new Saskatchewan curriculum has been well developed so far.

But what we need to do is make sure we engage teachers and make sure we engage those who have . . . that are professional and the academic world in this area as well.

So my report writes:

Saskatchewanians believe that great teachers make for great schools. This belief can sometimes be translated into the . . . [belief] that if we can just get rid of the "bad teachers" we can "fix" the schools. What is more important is creating an educational environment that encourages collaboration and improved teaching by all teachers. While strong teachers are important to the success of any educational system, greater equity for their students will ultimately have a greater impact on the individual outcomes [for] . . . students . . .

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on, and I don't mean to read the whole report. But the ministers did challenge me when I said I was going to do my homework this summer, and I hope I demonstrated that I did do some homework that summer.

And so I just want to say that this is an important piece of legislation, and I think that when we look at the Act itself and we look at the . . . I just want to look at section 6 when we talk about the directors and who will be on the board. Section 6:

(2) The board of directors consists of:

(a) the following members appointed or elected in accordance with the bylaws:

(i) three members appointed or elected by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation;

(ii) one member appointed or elected by the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents;

(b) three members appointed by the minister, only one . . . may be a member of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation; and

(c) two members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council pursuant to section 7.

So again just to be clear that there's no reference to the two universities, and I feel that's a big gap, and why have they been left out? I think that again as we talk about teacher training, and one part of this new piece of legislation which is so important is the protection of children and the disciplinary manner. But when we talk about teacher certification, teacher recruitment, teacher training, clearly the universities will have something to say about that. And they are not part of this.

And just to underline the section about how we can, you know, the section about bylaws and how bylaws come about, and the one that I find very interesting is section 2, section 16(2)(l) prescribing the procedures of . . .

(p) setting standards regarding the manner and method of practice of teachers;

(q) prescribing procedures . . .

(r) establishing categories of certification and registration and prescribing the rights and privileges of each category;

(s) respecting the teacher education programs required to be successfully completed for the purposes of certification pursuant to this Act;

So this is something, and I keep coming back to. This is hugely, hugely important. If we're going to have great schools we have to have great teachers, and for that they have to be, their programs have to be the very best. And to make sure that happens, we have to have full consultation with the appropriate groups.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will have a lot of questions to the minister on this bill. And I know members will have a lot of questions, a lot to say about this Act in the days ahead. We are looking forward to it, and it is good to see the STF, the school boards on side, and that some sense of collaboration is starting to appear.

But we don't see the whole picture, and as I said, we'll be having a lot of questions for the minister on this — especially in terms of the universities and the role of the universities. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debates now on Bill No. 174, *An Act respecting the Regulation of Teachers and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 174, *The Registered Teachers Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Bill No. 176**

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 175**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 175 — *The Registered Teachers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée *The Registered Teachers Act**** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't . . . my comments won't be quite as long because this is just a . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, yes. You know, I feel like I'm in a classroom here and it's June 29th and people are looking at the clock and saying, we can get out early if . . . But maybe, but you know, this is an important job, and this is something that we really feel very, very . . . It is our job, and it's our job to be nitpicky and to go through this and read through this carefully, you know, because I do feel . . .

And I was doing some math last night, you know. When we go through this and we have 37 pieces of legislation, on this side we get to speak to each piece of legislation and we have to read each piece of legislation. We have to read the minister's remarks. I'm not sure if three-quarters, maybe half of those folks over there have read all the legislation, have read all the minister's comments. I'm not sure. But on this side we have, and I'm very proud of that. And if they have, good on them. Good on them.

And I do appreciate the fact they do hang in here, and many of them seem to, at least through their comments . . . I know some of them get a little pre-emptive and start to shout out before I have a chance to speak . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm not used to that. I'm not used to that, Mr. Speaker. In my 18 years of teaching, I've never seen this happen before. I've never seen this happen before.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do think that this is an important piece of legislation before us, and of course there's always the companion piece that follows the Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of *The Registered Teachers Act*. And so I don't have any comments about this. Again this will be something that will be brought up in committee when it goes to committee. But at that point I would move adjournment on Bill No. 175, an Act to make consequential amendments. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 175, *The Registered Teachers Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 176 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's, as always, my honour to be able to rise in the Legislative Assembly here to speak to the bills that are before the Assembly. I think it's a very important part of our democracy is that we have a full and thorough opportunity to debate these bills. And it's certainly one that I feel very honoured to be able to participate in, as always.

And so today I'm going to make a few comments about *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)*. And I guess that's one of the main comments I want to make is this is yet another example of this government not getting it right the first time. My colleague just ahead of me indicated some of those situations we see over and over where our legislative drafters are being asked to come back to the table and get it right the second time around. This is one example of that.

And what's basically happening here is that there was significant changes, as the Assembly would remember, last spring, made to *The Traffic Safety Act* as a result of some hearings that went around the province and listened to what people's concerns are about traffic safety.

And really this is about distracted driving, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And just before I was preparing today, I watched a video that's online. I think it's geared towards teens more than anyone, but it's a shocking and graphic video about a horrible accident that happens as a result of texting while driving. I know it was shown . . . I've seen parts of that video before when my son was taking driver training. Parents were also asked to come and watch this video. And it shocked me at the time and it shocked me again today. And I just think the violence of these accidents . . . And they showed a number of vehicles that were destroyed as a result of texting while driving or being distracted while driving. I think the science is there and yet the temptation when that phone buzzes, to take a peek, is very hard to resist. And I think many people would attest to that. I know I certainly have difficulty doing that.

One of the articles I read talked about, there is the technology available to jam cellphones or texting when they are in a vehicle, and maybe that's what we need to wean ourselves off our addiction to our cellphones. But I think one of the groups that's most vulnerable and I worry about are young people, because they don't have enough experience driving, for one, and secondly the compelling part of a text buzz is almost too much for them to resist. And I think, you know, I've talked to counsellors about this, and there's studies now or new thought about cellphone addiction — actually being addicted to cellphones. And I think that's part of what we're seeing here in this phenomenon related to distracted driving.

So yes, it's important as a society and as a legislature that we

respond accordingly to the trends that become popular in our public life and our social life and even our driving life. We spend a lot of time in our cars.

So the two changes that are relevant to this particular bill, Bill No. 176, there's two things that are happening. First of all, in the spring session the bill that was passed by this legislature allowed for the seizure of a commercial vehicle for up to seven days if the person driving, if the employee was caught texting while driving or distracted driving. And I think that took a lot of people by surprise. When the seizures started happening, a lot of the business community expressed a great deal of concern, and so this was the oops. I don't think it was carefully thought through at the time. So now the government's come back with a bill in December responding to that oversight once again.

So there's two things that are going to happen. In addition to the seven-day seizure, the government has added another penalty for drivers in a commercial vehicle, and they can lose their licence for three days. That is similar to if you were caught driving with an alcohol blood limit of .04. So the minister has indicated that's an appropriate response or penalty for an employee driving a commercial vehicle.

Now one of the concerns I have about the way this particular section is worded . . . It's a new section in *The Traffic Safety Act*, and it's 280.1 . . . well 280.1 is the new section. But again, and you've heard me talk about this before, you have to refer to the regulations. In this section, prescribed, which means go to the regulations and find out what is prescribed, shows up one, two, three, four, five, six, seven times. So it's really hard to actually understand what's in here if you have to go to the regulations seven times in one clause, in one new clause. And I know *The Traffic Safety Act*, if you look at the list of regulations — and that's another section that's being amended here, section 287 — I think is something like eight pages long, the number of regulations. And yes, I mean this is a matter of administrative convenience, but it's really difficult to comment on a bill like this in the legislature when we don't know what the regulations are going to look like.

And that's the next clause that I'll talk about is clause 4 of this Act talks about amending the regulations section of the highway traffic Act regulations, or *The Traffic Safety Act* regulations. And there's a number of things that they have in there. This is what the minister talked about in his comments to the media back in December. But he's telling us what might be in the regulations, but we don't know because they haven't been passed yet.

But this is where the regulatory changes that we're going to see will prescribe the circumstances where the driver's licence is going to be suspended, in the context of what I'm talking about. Also prescribes circumstances where they can get a review to the traffic safety board, I would think, for their suspension, what the form will look like for the review, what the fee will be for the review, and the powers of the board on the review and prescribing the limit, or limiting the matters the board must consider on a review.

[16:30]

So what this is talking about is the change that the minister

referred to that would alleviate the concerns of the construction industry in particular. But people who have drivers driving snow removal or other kinds of emergency vehicles are also very concerned about the impact of having their vehicle impounded for seven days. So what the minister is alluding to, we haven't seen it. It's not in the bill. We don't know what it's going to look like, but he is saying to reassure the people that have employees driving their trucks or their vehicles, he's saying we will put something in the regs that will allow the employer to quickly call somebody and say, I need my vehicle unsuspended, or unimpounded, or . . . I don't know if that's a word, but anyways, not impounded.

**An Hon. Member:** — Disimpounded.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Disimpounded?

**An Hon. Member:** — Disenfranchised.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Could be disenfranchised, but I don't know if a vehicle has that. Okay, I'll move on.

The question is whether or not . . . If it's 3 in the morning, and your driver just got caught texting and is issued a ticket and your vehicle's impounded and you're removing snow in an emergency situation, how are you going to get a review board struck by the highway traffic safety, or whatever the board is, to release your vehicle? And maybe we'll see that in the regulations, but there's definitely some concern within the community as to whether or not these regulations will do the trick.

The other thing I find rather interesting in what the minister was saying — because again we don't really see it in the Act; this all just refers us to the regulations — but he's talking about . . . It was actually in his media scrum. It wasn't even in his comments to the Assembly here but it was in his media scrum. And I need to find it here. But basically he's saying that there's some things the companies are going to have to do in order to get their vehicle back. So they're going to have to prove that they have a driver's abstract for that employee.

So this is encouraging, obviously, employers to ensure that they have driver's abstracts. But what if, what if an individual had a ticket previously for distracted driving? Does that mean they won't get their vehicle back? Or you know, are you going to be forever punished — you never get a job if you had that one ticket against you? So these are things that I think will be further fallout from the decision of the minister to impose this requirement to provide a driver's abstract.

So I know he was questioning about it and he wasn't entirely certain about what was going to happen. He was asked in the scrum about the driver's abstract: is that something business owners actually do right now? And he says, I think it depends on the nature of the driving and everything else. Well he doesn't seem to know exactly when abstracts are requested at this point in time. He went on to say, I think there are some companies that do it and some that don't. And he's going to look at it as a procedure when he moves forward. Then he went on to say, these commercial vehicles are very expensive and they want to make sure they know what their driver has been up to. So does that mean that, you know, they won't hire anybody

who's had a speeding ticket 40 years ago? Or you know, what exactly is going to have to be in this abstract for them to get their vehicle released from a pound?

So I think these are maybe further questions that we'll be seeing further changes to the Act on, but it just seems like it's not well thought out at this point in time. And I'm kind of concerned about how this driver's abstract is going to impact decisions to hire people and also what exactly would need to be in there for the vehicle that has been impounded to be released.

So that's just one thing that jumped out at me. I'm sure other of my colleagues are going to have other questions as we go through the debate on this particular bill. But at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 176, *An Act to amend The Traffic Safety Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 176, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2014*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 177

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 177 — *The Insurance Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again a pleasure to rise and speak to a bill. In this case, this is a big bill. We are looking at an overhaul of *The Insurance Act*. As the minister pointed out in his comments when he introduced it, this really hasn't had an overhaul since the early 1900s. It's a large Act.

Other of my colleagues have also commented on it. Unfortunately I wasn't able to participate in the technical briefing that was held just today. It's too bad it wasn't held at a different time that we could have participated and informed ourselves as to that technical briefing because in this case, it is a highly technical bill, obviously, when you're talking about an entire industry that is highly regulated.

There is some comments that are available now from some people involved in the industry. The minister indicated that he had done extensive consultation from the industry and that the industry supports the bill. And if that is indeed the case, then that's a good thing and that's certainly what we are looking for.

There are some changes that are identified and laid out in an article by McKercher LLP, so obviously law firms are going to take a very close look at that. And they've identified that the most obvious changes in the legislation is consumer protection. Obviously consumer protection is an important part of insurance and ensuring that consumers get basically what they asked for.

And it just reminds me of a situation I have right now with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. And I'm really not being protected by SGI, and I'm very sad about that. I had a minor hit and run where I was able to obtain the licence plate of the vehicle that ran into me, but they're from Manitoba. And so my insurer, for whom I pay all kinds of money, they say, sorry, we can't help. They refuse to pay and you're on your own.

So now I have to go to small claims court. On March 13th I'll be in small claims court, but it's really unfortunate. Like my insurance company is not going to bat for me at all in this case. They just threw up their hands and said, we can't do anything. So it's a hassle and it's annoying, but it's something that I feel is only right and just. It's that this vehicle backed into me and I have \$1,500 worth of damage on my car. So it would be nice if your insurance company would support you and actually go to bat for you and obtain at least the deductible from the person who ran into me.

It's just I think you hear this over and over from people when it comes to insurance, and I hope this bill is robust enough to make sure that people do get what they pay for. Too many times you hear, well the insurance company, you know, wouldn't pay for that because . . . And there's a long list of reasons why people don't get insurance even though they've been dutifully paying for their policy for many years in some cases.

And you know things like flooding, we have a lot of situations in urban centres these days where we have aging and crumbling infrastructure, and unless it's a sewer backup there's no protection whatsoever for people. And those are the issues that you really need the insurance for. And I think, given some of the extreme climate events that we're seeing coming through North America for sure, and probably other parts of the world, but we think of Calgary and the flooding that happened there, premiums now . . . Insurance companies have done very, very well for themselves over the years, but now premiums are skyrocketing.

I'm hearing it's the same with crop insurance in Saskatchewan. There's a lot of farmers who I've been talking to that are very upset about the lack of availability of crop insurance in some circumstances, or the lack of any sort of covering of their costs on losses that they had when they've been flooded out. And this I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you've heard from farmers as well in your area because I know there's been a lot of rain where your riding is, and this is not unique to any particular part of the province. We're hearing this from all different parts of the province because of the extreme climate situation that we find ourselves in, or maybe the new norm, depending on how you want to spin it.

So at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we really need some help with the technical understanding of that, and I understand that the minister's staff provided it to some of my colleagues and our staff earlier this afternoon. So we look forward to being able to benefit from that technical briefing. I know we've asked for a side-by-side analysis of the previous Act vis-à-vis this Act. And I know side by sides are difficult when you have rearrangements but certain explanatory notes would be appropriate for this, and maybe the minister is working on getting that to us. We're certainly hopeful because it's really difficult to be able to line up where the changes are.

And I think that's very important in any kind of a debate is to identify for the public where exactly the changes are and why they were considered necessary.

So we look forward to having explanatory notes. We look forward to being able to review the information that was provided in the technical briefing. And I know other of my colleagues will be much more articulate on these changes than I, because of that.

So at this point I would like to move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 177, *An Act respecting Insurance and Insurers and making consequential amendments to other Acts and regulations*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 177, *The Insurance Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:40.]

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| <b>Bill No. 176 — <i>The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)</i></b>  |      |
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| <b>Bill No. 177 — <i>The Insurance Act</i></b>   |      |
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# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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