



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

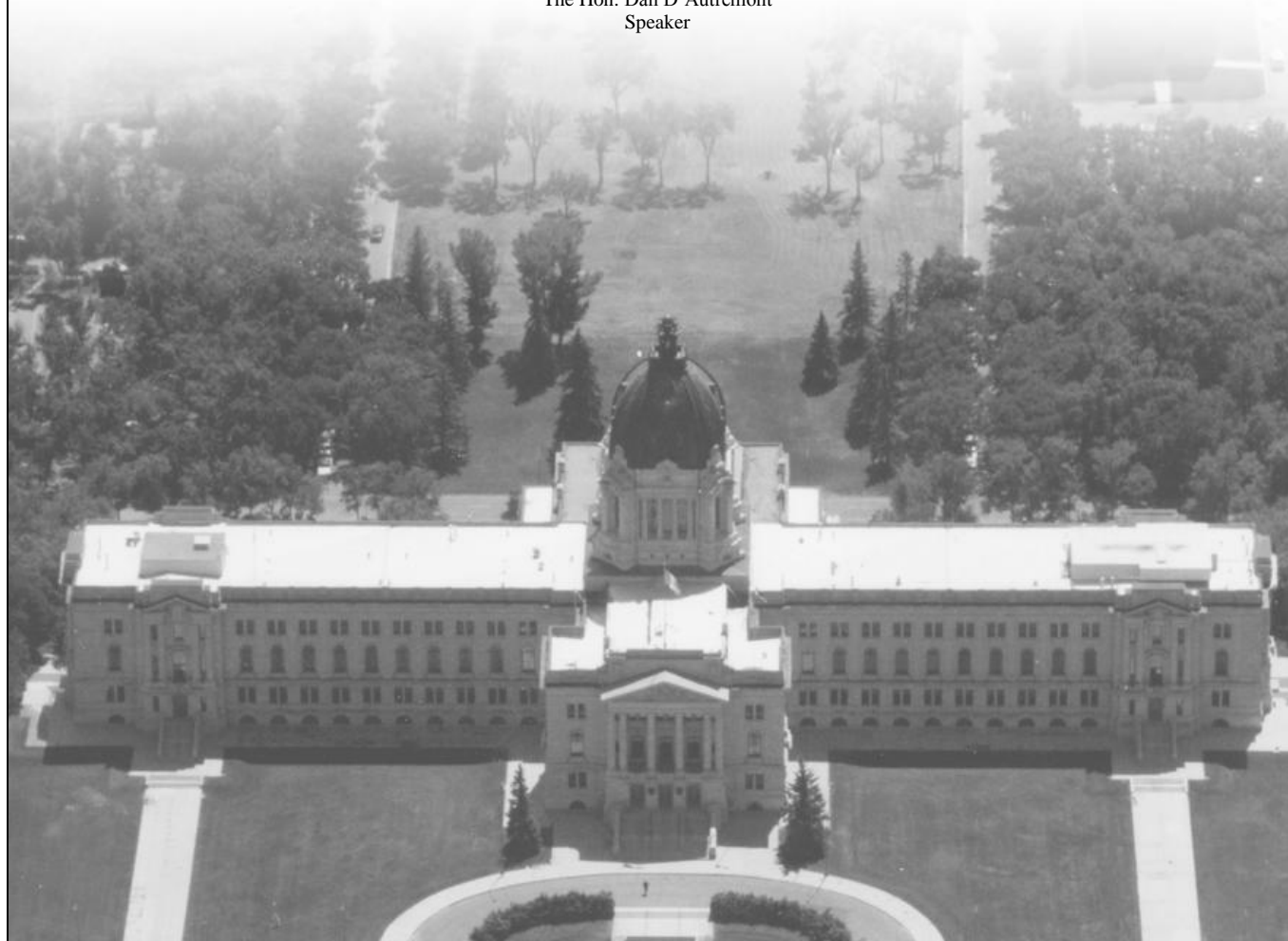
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
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Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
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Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
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McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
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Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
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Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
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Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
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Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
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Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Deputy Whip.

Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce 16 students from Campus Regina Public. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to having a conversation with them after our routine proceedings. Accompanying them are their teachers: Scott Gardiner, Harvey Basi, and Laura Ironstad. I ask all members to welcome them to the House here today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you 25 public service employees that are seated in your gallery. They are here today as part of a tour and a bit of an education about what we do in this building, which I think is helpful that we can figure out what each of us do. And on behalf of my colleagues, I would like to thank them for all that they do.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that we can't do our jobs unless they're doing theirs. And we know that they do their jobs very well every day, and we are so very thankful for that. So I welcome them here to their Assembly, and I look forward to meeting with them after question period today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission in welcoming these 25 public servants to their Legislative Assembly. As the minister has said, in the work we strive to do for the people of Saskatchewan, you don't get very far as a politician without the work of our able public servants.

So on behalf of the official opposition, thank you for the work that you do in serving the people of Saskatchewan. And I join with the minister in welcoming you here to your legislature today, and I look forward to joining you for about 20 minutes for a chat not too far off in the afternoon. So we'll have a good talk then, I'm sure, but welcome to your Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would invite members to join with me in welcoming guests that have joined us in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. As you'll know, November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and so it's a great honour to have the representatives and volunteers from the Canadian Diabetes Association here in the Chamber with us.

Joining us from the Canadian Diabetes Association is Warren Wagner, the regional director, there's Warren; Brie Hnetka, who's the senior manager for programs and partnerships; and

Aileen Leo, who's the executive director for government relations.

As well joining these individuals are people from the Canadian Diabetes Association advocacy volunteers, Mr. Speaker. And I will enter their names into the record, Mr. Speaker: Bob Gawley; Melissa and Tim Johnson and their two children, Emma and Salem — Emma is 13 years old and I believe Salem is 11; Lynne Eikel; Paul Kuspira; Diana Orser; Georgia Joorsity; Bob Lydiate; Sarah Struthers; Peter Dickinson; Tristan Banyay; Arlene Slimmon; Janet Bradshaw; and Melissa Lowenberger. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these individuals from the Canadian Diabetes Association to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the guests from the Canadian Diabetes Association, both the staff and the volunteers. I know the Canadian Diabetes Association does a tremendous job helping people live healthier lives with diabetes, and also working to find a cure.

I know my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana as well as other members of this Legislative Assembly live with diabetes every day, and it's been very enlightening as my colleague from Nutana has gone on this journey in the last couple of years learning how to live well with it. And it is indeed no easy feat, Mr. Speaker. But good information and good support from organizations like the Canadian Diabetes Association go a long way.

So again I'd just like to join the minister in saying welcome, and I look forward to the presentation and program later this afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Coronation Park has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, sitting in your gallery I've got the coaches and the players from the Standing Buffalo Fighting Sioux peewee lacrosse team. And I'm going to introduce them first, then I'm going to tell, I'm going to tell everybody about their exploits. But if you can just give a wave when I say your name. So coaches Russ Matthews; coach, Chief Roger Redman; Don Larson; manager, Larissa Yuzicappi.

And then in terms of players, I've got Brandon Yuzicappi. I've got Brody Brown, Isaac Chicoose, Sandis Laswisse, Cain Thomson, Ayden Tawiyaka, Ethan Yuzicappi, Colton Goodwill, Layne Soo-Oyewaste, Tre Yuzicappi, Zach Ironeagle, Skyla Wajuntah, and Nolan Deegan.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we've got the director of Sask Lacrosse with us, Bridget Pottle.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Buffalo Fighting Sioux peewee lacrosse team won three gold medals this summer as the only First Nation team in all of the tournaments. The unprecedented success for a First Nation team was the culmination of five years of commitment by the youth and families from the tiny First Nation of 500 people. Students started practicing lacrosse at school five years ago. It quickly became popular with the community. Standing Buffalo has had teams registered in the Queen City Minor Box Lacrosse League for the past five years. This year the community had teams registered in the novice division, 10 and under, and the pee wee division, 12 and under.

Mr. Speaker, this team won the 37th annual Calgary, Canada, Canada Day lacrosse tournament gold, the three-day tournament from the novice to the midget A division. It was played in Calgary over the Canada Day weekend. Over 100 teams this year were participating. They were the only First Nation team in any division. Teams had reps from California, Denver, Washington, nine other teams from across Western Canada. It was a 12-team tournament. Standing Buffalo defeated the Kelowna Kodiaks in the final game 8 to 6.

Mr. Speaker, they're not only provincial and national champions, they're North American and international champions. And we should all be very proud, and I'd like all members to join me in welcoming and congratulating the Fighting Sioux on their championship. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition I'd like to welcome the Fighting Sioux to their legislature to congratulate them on this national championship and on all the great work. Chief Redman, Coach Russ Matthews, all the folks that are here — the Yuzicappis, the Thomsons, the Goodwills, a lot of famous names here in Saskatchewan, not just from Standing Buffalo First Nations, Mr. Speaker. But it's quite an accomplishment, and keep up that great achievement and that great work. Wašte.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to introduce in the west gallery, Carlene Schmaltz. Carlene, give us a wave, please; Carlene's here. She works with diabetes back in Carrot River, Mr. Speaker, and she's with the Canadian Diabetes Association. She has a great passion for her work, Mr. Speaker, and anytime you talk to her she's always going on about how diabetes . . . some of the prevention things that could be done and some of the drugs that she also would like.

Also, there's another little catch with Carlene. Her husband, Cory Schmaltz, is the coach of the provincially-famous Carrot River Wildcats football team. Now, Mr. Speaker, they had a very good season. They didn't lose a game until they got into the playoffs. But, Mr. Speaker, wait till next year.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I'd like to introduce in your gallery, three special guests — Mikayla Schultz, Dylan Ferrier, and Stephanie Cox — if you could give a wave. These folks are board members of TransSask, a group that's dedicated to support and resources for the trans community here in Saskatchewan. And Mikayla and Dylan have their own radio show; it's called *Gender Talk* on CJTR. I would ask all members to give them a warm welcome to their legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce my friend and constituent seated in the west gallery: Mr. Warren Wagner, previously introduced by the Minister of Health. And I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Wagner for the great work he does with diabetes. I hope all members will welcome him.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome in your gallery my Aunt Shirley here to the legislature here today: Shirley Thurm, a long-time teacher and someone who's certainly very involved in her church, very involved in the community, very involved in the writers' guild, and someone important in my life. And I'd also like to introduce with Aunt Shirley, her good friend Dave Cawood, a lifelong teacher as well, and someone who's certainly a good friend to my Aunt Shirley and provides a lot of support and care as well, which certainly I appreciate as well. So I ask all members to welcome these two individuals to their Assembly.

And while still on my feet, I just want to give a warm shout-out to Russ Matthews, someone who has devoted his life to breaking down barriers in sport or barriers that challenge many families and children to access sport, and someone that was the founder of the Outdoor Hockey League here in Regina. I've crashed around the ice a little bit with Russ Matthews, usually on the wrong side of his elbows, and I've also seen his work first-hand within the community, bettering the lives of many young people. So in joining with the warm welcome to these international champion lacrosse team, I welcome Russ Matthews.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the members opposite as well in welcoming Mikayla, Dylan, and Stephanie to their legislature. And again welcome and congratulations on all your advocacy and your great work in

furthering the issues in terms of transgendered people. So thank you for that.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to welcome, sitting in the west gallery, Emma Corkish. Emma's presently working with Street Culture and involved with Street Culture Kidz. And very proud of all the work that you've done and just to get, really, really happy to get you into this Assembly. So welcome.

And while I'm on my feet, I'd also like to say a few words about Russ Matthews. Russ and I played lacrosse together for many years, and certainly a great advocate not only for his community but also for kids in sports. And I value him as a great friend and really, really happy that he's here, brought his team with him. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions calling for greater protection for transgender rights. And we know that the declaration of sexual orientation and gender identity presented to the United Nations General Assembly on December 18th, 2008 reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination, requires that human rights apply equally to every human regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

And we know that the *Canadian Human Rights Act* establishes the principle that all individuals shall have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for others the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with the duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices.

With the understanding that all citizens of Saskatchewan fall within the jurisdiction of the aforementioned articles, and noting with concern that acts of violence and related human rights violations as well as discrimination practised against persons because of their gender identity or expression.

[13:45]

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan introduce a legislative bill that will provide protection under the law to all residents of Saskatchewan through the inclusion within *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* of the terms gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I note that this petition is signed by nearly 1,000 people, 937 people from across the province here, and I do so present. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a

petition. Many northern residents benefit from the rental purchase option program, also known as RPO [rental purchase option]. These families are very proud homeowners in their communities. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly cause the Sask Party government to restore the RPO rent-to-own option for responsible renters in northern Saskatchewan, allowing them the dignity of owning their own homes and building community in our province's beautiful North.

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School.

These petitioners point out that the gym at Sacred Heart Community School in north central Regina is now quite literally falling apart, has been closed indefinitely, and is no longer safe for students or staff. There's been a temporary solution arrived at, Mr. Speaker, with the refurbishment of the old sanctuary at the old Sacred Heart Church, but a permanent solution is required.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners point out that the school and community have raised this issue with the Sask Party provincial government since 2007 without resolution. They point out that the Sacred Heart Community School is the largest school in north central Regina with 450-plus students, 75 per cent of whom are First Nations and Métis. They point out that enrolment has increased by 100-plus students over the past four years and that attendance and learning outcomes are steadily improving, and they point out that as a matter of basic fairness and common sense that Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym.

In the prayer that reads as follows, they:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause this government to immediately replace the gymnasium of Sacred Heart Community School.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Child Day and the Child and Family Agenda

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, yes. You haven't heard enough of me today. But thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm honoured to rise in the House to recognize that today is

National Child Day in Saskatchewan. National Child Day is celebrated on November 20th each year in recognition of Canada's adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, our children are this province's most precious resource. I'm very pleased to recognize this day, as it reminds us all about the importance of ensuring our children have the opportunity to live healthy, happy, and productive lives. In order to help achieve this objective, Mr. Speaker, our government continues to invest in the child and family agenda. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the goals of the child and family agenda are that children get a good start in life, youth are prepared for the future, and families are strong and communities are supportive.

Since 2011-2012, this government has invested \$53.7 million into the agenda which has helped to hire new front-line child protection workers, support pre-kindergarten programs, increase services to children and youth with autism spectrum disorder or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and support the building partnerships to reduce crime initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the child and family agenda is now expanding its mandate to include additional work in the areas of education, health and family supports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Transgender Day of Remembrance

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, it's with a heavy heart that I join many across the world on the 15th International Transgender Day of Remembrance. On this day we remember that many people who have been victims of these homicides, and we raise public awareness of hate crimes and provide a safe place for public mourning.

A report released this summer revealed that 238 transgender people across the world had been killed in the last year and a total of 1,373 have been murdered since January 2008. Sadly the report only includes murders of transgender people that can be documented or are reported; it may not be a complete picture of the scope of crimes committed worldwide. The Trans Murder Monitoring Project found that the highest number of murders disproportionately affect minors. In the early months of 2013, 18 of the first 22 people who lost their lives were under the age of 18.

Mr. Speaker, this kind of hatred is unacceptable, and it is only through compassion and acceptance that we can begin to help transgender people feel safe in their communities. It is encouraging to see Saskatchewan youth working to end this violence. There will be a Transgender Day of Remembrance vigil at the Administration and Humanities Building at the University of Regina tonight at 7:30.

We at the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party] have called for changes in *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* in order to provide better protection for all Saskatchewan residents through the inclusion of terms gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination.

I call on all members of this Assembly to give honour to the hundreds of transgender people who have lost their lives because of transphobia and homophobia. I hope that we can strive towards creating a world this kind of violence does not exist anymore. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Moose Jaw Festival of Trees

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For those of you that have not heard the news, there's a phenomena in Moose Jaw that continues to astound year after year. This past Saturday was the 22nd annual Moose Jaw Health Foundation's Festival of Trees. Marj and I along with 430 other guests, including the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from Moose Jaw North and his wife, experienced a night of amazing fundraising in the Friendly City.

This year's theme was A Mad Mad Christmas, and we were treated to an evening of '60s-themed music, decor, and food. The ceiling was treated with stunning red lampshades above each table, a mirrored bar, snow machines, and a vintage living room, along with a shoeshine stand, but above all, of course the elaborate displays and auction items that have become synonymous the Moose Jaw's Festival of Trees.

What sets apart this particular Festival of Trees is the depth of continuous community support. You'll find guest tables of supporters who attended the very first Festival of Trees and now their children are attending as well. Mr. Speaker, this amazing event raised nearly \$250,000 towards surgical booms in the new Moose Jaw Regional Hospital which is scheduled to open in the summer of 2015.

A night such as this is meticulously planned by many volunteers and local groups. Mr. Speaker, the residents of Moose Jaw have once again shown their generosity. I ask all members to join me in congratulating them on yet another hugely successful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Saskatchewan Addictions Awareness Week

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly to recognize the importance of Saskatchewan Addictions Awareness Week. This important week runs from November 18th to the 24th.

Mr. Speaker, addictions is a complex health issue that affects Saskatchewan families and communities. Over 47,000 Canadian deaths are linked to substance abuse every year. The youth of our province are more vulnerable to the impacts of drugs and alcohol. Data shows our children are being exposed to a wide array of drugs at younger and younger ages.

We need to make sure any effect to curb addictions also addresses mental health issues. Too often depression and anxiety are self-medicated with substances. The stigma keeps people from getting the care they need. Nor can we overlook the relationships between addictions, substance abuse, and poverty.

Saskatchewan's North and rural communities face additional challenges in dealing with poverty and addictions. I want to thank the addiction workers for the great job they do with limited resources and staff.

Government needs to do its part to address the physical isolation, limited treatment options, and limited access to services. Mr. Speaker, we need to do more, not just recognize Saskatchewan Addictions Week. We need to follow up with action. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Grey Cup Festival

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week people across the country will get a chance to see first-hand why Saskatchewan is truly the best place to live, work, and raise a family. All eyes will be on our province this week as we kick off the first day of the 101st Grey Cup Festival, which runs until the championship game on the 24th.

Mr. Speaker, the celebration in Rider nation officially kicked off at noon. The member from Dewdney brought greetings on behalf of the government, and my seatmate and I were fortunate enough to get one of the many coveted seats in the Mosaic underground pavilion to kick off the opening ceremonies.

Along with the grand opening, many other venues are open today: the Telus Street Festival, Mosaic Underground Tent, and the official opening of party central, Riderville. Mr. Speaker, the rest of the week features an array of activities that includes the Safeway Grey Cup Parade, Taste of the Nation, Cheer Extravaganza, and concerts by the Barenaked Ladies, Hedley, and Big & Rich. On game day, people can have fun at the pre-game party with The Sheepdogs from Saskatoon, hit the Countdown to Kick-off, or head to the practice field for a pre-game party. All events this week are sure to be a good time for you and your whole family, if you're going to the game or not.

Mr. Speaker, I invite everyone in the Assembly to dress in green and take in the spectacular Grey Cup festivities in our Queen City. Really Regina is the place to be this week, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

National Diabetes Awareness Month

Mr. Doke: — Mr. Speaker, November is National Diabetes Awareness Month. This is an opportunity to raise awareness of diabetes and the challenges experienced by people living with this condition. Mr. Speaker, a diabetes diagnosis can have a significant impact on a person's life. There are medical, financial, and practical challenges. Adjusting to life with diabetes can affect the entire family.

Our government has taken important steps to support people living with diabetes and their families. We expanded the Saskatchewan insulin pump program to include residents up to

25 years of age. The provincial drug plan provides coverage for test strips, a variety of insulins, and other therapies. We've increased support for the live well with chronic conditions program, a self-managed program. We're also strengthening the primary health care system in our province to better serve the needs of patients. People living with chronic conditions such as diabetes will receive greater assistance from teams of health providers and improved supports to self-care.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to thank the Canadian Diabetes Association leadership, staff, and volunteers for devoting their time and energy to helping people affected by diabetes. Their care, passion, and dedication are truly making a difference to the well-being of people in our province.

I ask all my colleagues in this Legislative Assembly to join me in recognizing their contributions. Thank you.

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

Opposition Support for Trade Agreement

Mr. Hickie: — Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker, we have some good news and some bad news to report in the House today. The good news is after months of asking the NDP to take a position on economic policy, they finally have. The bad news is, it's still not the Leader of the Opposition defining that policy.

Mr. Speaker, I was very surprised to see in my hometown paper today the unofficial spokesperson and economist for the NDP, failed leadership candidate Mr. Erin Weir, slamming CETA [Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement]. Mr. Weir took a break from slamming Saskatchewan's record job growth, proclaiming trade with the world's largest import market is a bad thing. Maybe other members of the NDP caucus thought they needed a new spokesperson.

After all, minutes after voting against the motion supporting CETA in principle, the Leader of the NDP went outside the Chamber and told the media he does support the agreement in principle. That has to be some kind of a record flip-flop, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Weir has been telling us for months that Saskatchewan's manufacturing is dying, then slams an agreement which will make almost all of Saskatchewan manufactured goods duty free.

And two weeks ago, the member for Athabasca got up in the House and supported fracking in the province, Mr. Speaker, and we thanked him for that support. Then the NDP caucus claims we're twisting reality in an attempt to hide from their own comments. Can someone tell us over there, where they stand, Mr. Speaker? Obviously the leader can't tell us where he stands; the rest of the NDP leadership hasn't told him yet.

[14:00]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Combatting Bullying

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've seen a fair bit of discussion over the past months, Mr. Speaker, about the issue of bullying. And that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, because it demands our attention and it is a serious matter.

The opposition's concern about the anti-bullying report that was released by this government last week is that it didn't provide a lot of detail, and it didn't really have much of an action plan. But perhaps, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon this government is able to provide some of that detail. We know today that the federal government is introducing legislation dealing with online bullying. And we think this is a good thing, Mr. Speaker, and we welcome that. The anti-bullying report said that this government will simply assess the implications of these federal changes.

Surely this government has been consulted on this, these changes to the Criminal Code, so my question to the Premier: what implications does this government anticipate as a result of these changes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. This is an important issue. And the short answer to his question is we need to see exactly what the federal government is considering introducing into the House of Commons to determine whether or not in fact provincial legislation would be required. Certainly if it is, it's something that we would be open to. I think it's something that we would look at, but that's unclear at this point.

I will say, Mr. Speaker, that of all of the provinces in the country, I think we were amongst the earliest to indicate our support for the federal Justice department, the Justice minister, as they look to ways to protect people in our country from cyberbullying. And that remains the position of the Government of Saskatchewan. We'll determine if provincial legislation is required once we see and understand fully exactly what the federal government is introducing.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The anti-bullying report also made mention of a website, Mr. Speaker. And we've long been supportive of a website to anonymously report online instances of bullying, Mr. Speaker, online so that the right actions can be taken and so that youth are indeed safe. So I was pleased to see this referenced in the report that was provided.

I was disappointed, however, in the long delay before the reality of having the website available for youth in the province and also disappointed at the lack of detail around this change in general. So my question to the Premier: who will be responsible for monitoring and following up on all the concerns brought forward through this anonymous reporting tool?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, again I thank the Leader

of the Opposition for the question. This model that he's referencing is based on the British Columbia ERASE [expect respect and a safe education] Bullying initiative, as members of the House will know. And I first heard about the initiative in detail at the summer premiers' meeting in Niagara though certainly our officials and the Legislative Secretary who was focusing on this was aware of it well before then, and its details.

Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure, in answer to the member's question, that we have a collaborative effort in terms of follow-up on any reports back through either the app, which is also an important part of this initiative, or the other means, the website, other means that folks will have, principally young people will have, to report incidents of bullying. And of course a collaborative effort is going to mean the Ministry of Education is very much involved. But we're going to need to be able to work with and rely on the leadership of local educators and school boards as well.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the government's own Legislative Secretary for the anti-bullying initiative report states that 50 per cent of gay and transgender young people have thought about suicide — 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker — and 37 per cent have attempted suicide. We know that gay-straight alliances are helpful to these young people.

When it comes to GSAs [gay-straight alliance] the report says that schools "should respond positively," but that's quite a vague statement, Mr. Speaker. We don't know what tools or information will be provided to students and to parents, and we also don't know what training and guidance will be provided to teachers and to school administrators. So my question to the Premier on the issue of GSAs: what are the details, to the Premier, beyond simply saying that schools should respond positively?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to be corrected but I believe shortly after the member raised some of these questions, I think it was in the spring session, to the credit of the hon. member, that there was a bit of an audit of the website that government can provide, that is available to the education system, to ensure that there were appropriate links even now for those who are looking for the very thing that he is requesting in terms of supports for those who want to set up GSAs in our province, in schools across Saskatchewan. And I would note, Mr. Speaker, that there appears to be no impediments to that, certainly none that have come to our attention as a result of the work of the member for Saskatoon Fairview or the efforts of the Minister of Education.

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

Amendments to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today I presented a petition calling for the inclusion within *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* for the terms gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination. To the Minister of Justice: is he open to acting on this petition?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's our position that discrimination against transgender people in Saskatchewan is unacceptable. We as a government have committed to make sure that all Saskatchewan residents, whether they're transgender people, other groups, have the protections of the law against discrimination, Mr. Speaker.

The Supreme Court has said that human rights legislation is to be interpreted in a broad fashion. We have asked for an opinion from the Ministry of Justice; we have asked for an opinion from the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission to determine if an amendment is necessary to the code. In their opinion, the existing wording does protect against discrimination with respect to this particular group, Mr. Speaker. We have great confidence in the Human Rights Commission and the commissioner with respect to his opinion, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and now, just this month, Newfoundland and Labrador all recognize that this is an important human rights issue and have included it in their Human Rights Code.

Today is Transgender Day of Remembrance in which we remember those who have been killed as a result of transphobia. It's a good day to commit to action. To the minister: will he commit towards better protection for transgender people through amendments to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in my last answer, we did seek an opinion from the Human Rights Commission as well as the ministry as to whether or not any changes were necessary to the Human Rights Code. The Human Rights Code does include both sex and sexual orientation as prohibited grounds. And the case law from a number of jurisdictions determined that those grounds are satisfactory to protect against discrimination in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I'll quote from the letter that the Human Rights Commissioner had sent to us, a copy of which I have shared with my friend across the way:

Canadian courts have consistently interpreted human rights legislation in a broad and purposeful manner. Courts and tribunal decisions from across Canada consistently recognize that transgender persons are protected under the grounds of sex and/or gender.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned before, we have great confidence in the opinion of the Human Rights Commission with respect to this matter and we will not be moving with any amendments to the code at this time.

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

Revenue Sharing With Municipalities

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, property tax payers in Saskatoon are facing a big tax increase, in part because the provincial government has actually reduced the revenue sharing for next year. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the government refused to actually work out a deal with municipalities due to an accounting change we flagged with them in the spring of 2012. At that time I asked the Minister of Finance then if municipalities had his commitment that they wouldn't see a negative impact from the change. But the minister only said there was no cause for concern. He was confident that revenue sharing would increase. That hasn't turned out to be the case.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government forcing higher property taxes onto families and businesses by not upholding their end of the bargain on sharing of PST [provincial sales tax] revenues?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, our government came to an understanding with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], the major municipal organizations in this province, to, after years and years of asking for a consistent approach to revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker, that they'd have some continuity and something reliable that they could count on.

What was achieved was an understanding to tie revenue sharing to one point on the PST, Mr. Speaker. It was completely understood at that time that it wouldn't always increase, not every year, Mr. Speaker. There'd be times when it would drop, as the member suggested, for next year. But, Mr. Speaker, let's put this in perspective. He's talking about the property tax payers in the city of Saskatoon. Revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker, under the last year of that government, \$17 million. Mr. Speaker, this year, as the member should well know, Mr. Speaker, under this government, \$47 million.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that government, as was referenced, announced with great fanfare the revenue-sharing agreement, something that we supported and something we were working towards as well. But barely before the ink was dry, that very agreement was undermined by accounting changes and taking dollars directly away from municipalities.

The Minister of Finance said just a couple of years ago that he would work with municipalities. He committed to have a discussion and figure out a solution. The minister said:

. . . municipalities have our commitment that we're going to work with them to establish an interpretation of the recent accounting principles that have been placed upon the province of Saskatchewan.

Instead of working with municipalities, why did this government stubbornly dismiss how this would negatively

impact municipalities and decrease their revenues?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I can't believe that member has the audacity to stand in this House and talk about municipal revenue sharing. I spent my entire career before politics working in the municipal sector, Mr. Speaker. I was there when they cut revenue sharing in the '90s, Mr. Speaker, when they downloaded to municipal governments. Mr. Speaker, that member has no credibility on this issue. I was there at SARM during the years of property tax revolts. Mr. Speaker, it's amazing. As far as I can recall, this may be the first time those members have even raised this issue. And why, Mr. Speaker? Because compared to the dark days at the end of their government, revenue sharing has increased 108 per cent under this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recommendations on Long-Term Care

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, this government has a habit of commissioning reports, then putting them on the shelf to collect dust. To the minister: why does this government not implement all the recommendations in the 2010 long-term care initiative report?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was a report that was issued by this government, Mr. Speaker, under the direction of the former minister, working with a legislative secretary, Mr. Speaker.

There were a number of ideas in fact that we have implemented already from that report. For example, Mr. Speaker, under the former government, those low-income seniors living in private personal care homes that had a certain low income level, Mr. Speaker, never received a subsidization from the provincial government. That was one of the main features that came out of that report from the member from Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, Mr. Speaker. And this government did in fact implement that initiative, Mr. Speaker, as well as a number of other initiatives from that report. It was very well worth the government's initiative to do that report from that member and implement a number of the recommendations.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier appointed the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley to be the legislative secretary to the Minister of Health for the long-term care initiative. She wrote a report pointing out many problems with how this government handles seniors' issues and she made recommendations which the government didn't implement all of them.

Her report said, "While none of the recommendations are a perfect 'fix', they are steps in the right direction to provide

Saskatchewan's seniors with the best possible programs and services." One of the legislative secretary's key recommendations was for a seniors' advocate. To the minister: why did this government ignore this recommendation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley did a great job in looking at the issue of long-term care and seniors' care within our province, Mr. Speaker.

She made a number of recommendations that were put forward by the government, to the government, Mr. Speaker. A number of those recommendations have already been acted on. I mentioned already the personal care home subsidy for seniors in private personal care homes who are of low income.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of avenues for seniors to make recommendations or who have concerns about long-term care, Mr. Speaker. The government felt, through whether it be the Ombudsman's office, whether it be through directly to the quality of care coordinators, which is an important role within the health regions, Mr. Speaker, that that function was largely already served. And that's why we didn't move at that point on that position.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the legislative secretary said that her recommendations were steps in the right direction to provide seniors the best possible programs and services. But instead of taking steps in the right direction, we keep hearing that seniors' care is getting worse under this government.

The legislative secretary's report said:

There is a need for a seniors' (or vulnerable adults) advocate. In particular, there was general agreement that vulnerable adults need someone who can advocate on their behalf particularly when it comes to health services and navigating the health system.

With all the concerns we keep hearing about seniors' care getting worse under this government, it seems like the government should've taken its own legislative secretary's recommendation. So again to the minister: why did the government ignore this recommendation? There are needs that are not being met.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have moved, as I have mentioned, on a number of the initiatives, recommendations from the legislative secretary. We've also moved on initiatives outside of the recommendations from the legislative secretary, whether that be the dramatic increase in funding for Alzheimer's, Mr. Speaker, through the First Link program, Mr. Speaker, through the construction and maintenance of new long-term care facilities

across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that seniors, whether it be through resident and family councils, have an avenue to bring concerns forward to the regional health authorities. They'll now have a survey, Mr. Speaker, that they can directly, to the ministry and to the minister into the future, that they can bring forward those concerns.

There are organizations that do a great job working on behalf of seniors, whether that be, Mr. Speaker, the Seniors Mechanism or an organization in Saskatoon, aging seniors, Mr. Speaker, as well as concerns that are brought through the health regions, Mr. Speaker, through the mechanisms that have already been in place for those types of concerns.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, again the Premier appointed the legislative secretary to make recommendations about long-term care. One of her key recommendations was, "Create a Seniors' Secretariat within the Ministry of Health using existing . . . resources." But as usual, this government is just ready for excuses about why it didn't follow through.

Now three and a half years later, we keep hearing shocking and heartbreaking stories about the quality of seniors' care in this province. And now we know many seniors do not have a spouse or a family member that is able to advocate on their behalf. To the minister: is this government willing to admit it made a mistake when it stubbornly dismissed a key recommendation from its own legislative secretary?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, no, I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite is totally correct in her statement. I think we have taken steps to address a number of the recommendations that were put forward in the member's recommendations to the former minister, Mr. Speaker.

One thing that we have done, Mr. Speaker, is we've provided additional funding to the Provincial Ombudsman's office to deal directly with health care cases, Mr. Speaker. That has been additional support through a long-standing organization in this province, Mr. Speaker, that seniors can access, Mr. Speaker. So additional support was put in place through an office that was already established and well regarded within the province, which I think fills the need that the member had identified in her report.

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

Support for Teachers

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More and more teachers are contacting the Premier, the minister, and MLAs on both sides of the Assembly to express their complete frustration with that government. Here's a quote from a letter a rural teacher sent to the minister and copied members on both sides of the Assembly:

Your government keeps talking about conversation with educational stakeholders as being essential. Yet as both a parent and a professional educator, I don't recall having been consulted ever about any of these changes. Please know, and I'm not alone in this, your words are absolutely meaningless without action but all we seem to get from the Saskatchewan Party are words. The bottom line is, you made a mistake. Now fix it.

To the minister: when will this government fix the mess it's made in education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Mr. Speaker, we want to do things that will improve the relationship because we value the good work that teachers do. We value the contribution that they make to the well-being of the citizens and children in our province. And we want to make sure that they are well supported by way of having the requisite supports and suchlike for them. We have, Mr. Speaker, increased in each and every year the overall operating grant for pre-K [pre-kindergarten] divisions, over 23 per cent since November of 2007.

We've had a number of other initiatives and we've announced which ones are being paused, which ones are going ahead. We've had meetings with STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] and a number of individual teachers and teachers' groups, including the various teachers' associations, and that will be ongoing, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, all that government's rhetoric, all that government's spin isn't going to change how teachers feel about that government's record, because they know the reality in the classroom. Here's another quote from the letter to the minister:

I'm concerned not only with the contempt your party seems to have for our profession but also with increasingly difficult situations that exist, not all but many of which your government has either created or neglected in our school divisions and classrooms.

To the minister: when will this government . . . why has this government continually chosen an approach of contempt and disrespect to our province's hard-working teachers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would take great exception to the premise of the member's question. In fact, we value and respect the teachers in our province a great deal. Mr. Speaker, I can advise that, if nothing else that they should take with them, is the great increase in funding that we have made to education in our province.

Mr. Speaker, the total . . . [inaudible] . . . funding for pre-K in our province is now \$1.775 billion. This funding is over and above the \$600 million capital investment and historic \$165 million relief for property taxes. We're continuing to work with

our sector departments to develop a new funding formula, to work with them and do better things so that we ensure that we are able to deliver the best possible education to our students.

We know that our teachers work hard. There are many challenges. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the nature of our society. There are changes. There are changes with technology and other things and we'll continue to work with them.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the problem here is that that government's entirely out of touch with the reality in today's classrooms. Yet it's taken a government-knows-best approach and rammed through with its own agenda. We hear that same sort of nonsense in the response from the minister where he knows he's stuck teachers with bigger class size and cut supports, yet tries to tell them that somehow everything's fine.

A teacher from Martensville wrote in, saying, "There are just too many damn cooks in our kitchen tying our hands and thinking they know better than us front-liners what is best for our students."

To the minister: when will this government stop tying the hands of teachers? When will this government show some respect for teachers as a valued educational partner?

The Speaker: — The member knows the rules when it comes to the use of language in this Assembly and I would ask that, even in a quote, he pick his words carefully.

I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a written question regarding class size and pupil/teacher ratios. I'd like to urge the member to talk to his neighbour next door and get the information from him. Because when he does, he will realize that our average class size of 17.9 is something that other provinces strive to achieve. We are one of the best provinces in the country for class size.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote the former Education . . . the member for Saskatoon Centre. He said, "It's not only class size. It's class composition and meeting the unique needs of all children in the classroom." Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the members opposite that we've increased supports in the classroom. Regular teachers, we have now 439 more; student support teachers, 86 more. We have 21 per cent more psychologists; speech language pathologists, 22 per cent more; medical facilitators and nurses, up 105 per cent; social workers, up 6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we have made a major commitment in our province and are going to continue to do it.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, we see sort of the arrogant brush-off of real, valid concerns brought forward here again today. And if the minister was actually reading the emails that were being sent to him, I think he'd realize just how completely

frustrated Saskatchewan teachers are. The same teacher from Martensville says:

I have never felt so tired as I have these last three months. It feels like I am working harder now than I was in my first three or four years teaching. And to see student performance going down instead of up in the middle of this, well the word frustrated doesn't nearly approach the way I am feeling right now. If this government continues treating teachers this way, I predict many teachers will be leaving for greener pastures because of burnout.

To the minister: when will this government stop treating teachers this way? When will they show them some respect?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we have a strong and aggressive student-first policy and program in our province which is going to improve the performance of the students in our . . . [inaudible] . . . We have an unacceptable graduation rate. We have to try and work with the teachers and try and make a better relationship. Appointed Patricia Prowse and Russ Mirasty to work with STF, work with the various stakeholders that are there. That work is under way and we're hearing good things about it, Mr. Speaker.

But I can tell you that's a far cry from what happened when the members opposite were in government. During that period of time, they chose to close 176 schools. What happened during that time? Those students moved to Calgary. So when he talks about the teachers going to greener pastures, they may very well follow the students that he shipped off to Calgary, Mr. Speaker. We'll take no advice and no lessons from those people.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 116 — *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 116, *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 116, *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 117 — *The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 117, *The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 117, *The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the answers to questions 185 through 190.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 185 to 190. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to order the answers to question 191.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered question 191.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 112

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 112 — *The***

Accounting Profession Act be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and join debate on Bill No. 112, *The Accounting Profession Act*. Again, Mr. Speaker, there are different types of legislation that come to this Chamber. Some being brought forward by self-regulating professions, some that in turn with the . . . what is brought forward by those self-regulating professions is sometimes of a housekeeping nature. In the case of this piece of legislation though, Mr. Speaker, it's not so much a piece of housekeeping legislation, it's more of building a new house.

So in terms of the accounting profession and the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan and the required consequential amendments, it's an interesting piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and one that we understand that the CAs [chartered accountant], that the CMAs [certified management accountant], the CGAs [certified general accountant] all had a very definite hand in promoting, and which again on the face of it looks to be a fairly helpful piece of legislation, and not just attending to housekeeping within the self-regulating professions entailed in this piece of legislation, but indeed building a new house to carry forth that housekeeping.

[14:30]

Again, the Speaker will know that it's always instructive to look to the second reading speeches of the minister when introducing the legislation in the Assembly. I was here in my place, Mr. Speaker, when this piece of legislation was introduced. And it was good to see different representatives of the industry here in attendance for not just the tabling, but some of the promulgation, Mr. Speaker. And again, referring to the minister's second reading speech, with the Act itself:

. . . will establish a new self-regulating body called the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan, CPA Sask. This bill will merge the chartered accountants, CAs; certified management accountants, CMAs; and certified general accountants, CGAs into one profession. The proposed Act would grant a new common CPA designation to all CAs, CMAs, and CGAs in Saskatchewan that are in good standing. This Act would replace *The Chartered Accountants Act, 1986*; *The Management Accountants Act*; *The Certified Management Accountants Act . . . Bill 27 of 1999-2000* not yet proclaimed; and *The Certified General Accountants Act of 1994*, [those pieces of legislation anticipated to be repealed upon passage, upon proclamation of the new Act.]

Again, Mr. Speaker, CAs, CMAs, CGAs together represent the professional accountants in Saskatchewan, constituting 4,400 members and 970 students. And again this has been work supported by those individuals, and we're quite respective of that. And it's to add . . . Mr. Speaker, as is fitting when it comes to self-regulating profession legislation.

In terms of accomplishing this merger of the outstanding Acts,

Mr. Speaker, there will be a number of changes to be contemplated. We're glad to see that the minister references extensive consultation with the three existing accounting bodies and the supportive vote to merge that resulted from that work and again, Mr. Speaker, the fact that this legislation is in keeping with trends evident across not just Western Canada but Canada and internationally.

We'll be interested to see how this plays around the actual realization of the proposed number of regulatory and economic benefits of a merger. In the speaker's second reading speech, he had referenced the fact of "... a new integrated certification program that is internationally recognized," hopefully combining the best of the old existing programs.

Unification of the accounting profession creates a modern and streamlined regulatory regime for Saskatchewan's professional accountants, reflecting the best practices of existing organizations, including codes of professional conduct, practice inspection, and disciplinary processes.

Again, Mr. Speaker, that would seem to make sense on the face of it. We look to see how that will be played out in practice but again on the face of these propositions would seem to make sense.

Carrying on in the minister's second reading speech:

An accounting profession and financial regulatory system that is internationally recognized as being robust, competitive, and consistent will better support Saskatchewan's economic objectives. Professional accountants play an invaluable role in Saskatchewan's economy.

And again it goes on to point out the invaluable role that accountants generally across the piece play around capital investments, be they large or small, but the vital role that accountants of the different stripes are able to play within our economy in making sure that things just, not just add up, but that to be ... the investments are carrying forward in a proper manner.

In terms of the streamlining possibilities with this regulatory regime, again if you can simplify something, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time keep the instrument durable and adaptable to the situation as it presents and evolves in real life, that is a worthwhile set of goals. And again that this approach should help with the CPAs [chartered professional accountant] being "... trained, licensed, and regulated by the accounting profession to use accounting, auditing, and assurance standards published by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada" again would seem to be in keeping with that approach. Wherein the bill also:

... provides protection to the consumer in that they can feel assured that accountants are qualified to provide a service in their designated specialty. The provisions are supported by the CPA transitional steering committee representing the three existing accounting bodies in Saskatchewan.

Again, Mr. Speaker, with self-regulating professions that is

indeed one of their hallmarks, that credentials should not ... The profession's relationship to the granting of credentials, credentialing, Mr. Speaker, and that relationship between the organization and quality assurance and quality control, that that is worked right into the mandate of the organization is of course important as well.

We'll see how establishing CPA Saskatchewan provides for the transition of CMAs, CAs, CGAs as registrants. Again, Mr. Speaker, moving from the actual piece of legislation to practice in the fields, there's a ... It's not just to have good legislation, it's important to have good execution. And again we would expect that this government will be working with the profession to ensure that smooth transition and that no trouble unduly should arise.

In terms of again licensed CPAs being able to issue audit review and other reports of financial statements attesting that they're in accordance with CPA standards, again, Mr. Speaker, a good, good thing, as it should be. Standards aren't worth very much if Saskatchewan is playing by one set of rules and the rest of the world is playing for another. Unless you're aspiring to the governance model of, say Albania or North Korea, what's happening nationally and what's happening internationally should be of importance to how organizations hold up their standards, measure their standards.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I'd add parenthetically to that, it's interesting the approach that has been roundly condemned to the provincial finances by, you know, our accountant in chief, the Provincial Auditor, in terms of calling this government to account for holding two sets of books and stating quite clearly that the way that we account for our finances here in Saskatchewan is unique to the rest of Canada.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if you're going to have standards and if these things are going to mean something, then if somebody like the Provincial Auditor comes forth and, again moving from this basis of regulatory and legislative framework, says that Saskatchewan is keeping two sets of books and that they've got some fundamentally screwy things going on in terms of how the accounts are made, then you'd think it would behoove the government to sit up and take notice and not just to turn, turn away and clog up their ears, Mr. Speaker, or to try and shoot the messenger, as the case has been in some regards.

So again moving to those standards, the unification and the way that those standards inform the regulatory, the audit function, the licensing, the disciplinary functions of the various professional streams of the accountant industry that attach to this legislation, all of those things are very important to consider as we go forward.

And I know again we will depend in no small part upon consulting with the industry itself and looking to their guidance. And what has ushered forth to date, Mr. Speaker, we welcome that insight as to where this legislation is coming from, the intention of it. And we're glad to see that the government has worked with the industry in a fairly close manner to bring forward this unification legislation here today.

So to close off my remarks, Mr. Speaker, on the Bill No. 112, *The Accounting Profession Act*, I know that other of my

colleagues are anxiously awaiting their participation in the debate. I know that we'll have questions certainly in terms of doing our own due diligence, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to a broader discussion that is afforded at the different stages of this legislation as it proceeds through the House. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 112, *The Accounting Profession Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 112, *The Accounting Profession Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 99

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 99 — *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in the debate on Bill 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*. I guess I want to give a few opening comments about pensions. And we know that people that are working, whether they work for a private company, they work for federal, provincial governments, there are many different individuals who pay into a pension plan. And there's an organization, whether it's a board, and I think the PEPP [public employees pension plan] plan here has a board that's appointed to look after the best interests of the assets of the members that are part of the pension plan.

But having talked, it's good to have a pension. We know we have Canada Pension. If you work and you pay into the Canada Pension, you'll get a benefit when you retire. And that's a good thing that people have something, you know. After they're done working hard, there's an opportunity. We know some people save money and they have extra money that they save. They're frugal with their money and they do a great job. But there's an opportunity here to pay into a pension plan, and we see this PEPP plan that's there.

The minister talks about there's, I think, 53,000 or so members to the plan. There's a board that looks after I guess operation of the plan. And I guess they hire a CEO [chief executive officer]. I don't have all the details. You know, a fund manager would look after the fund, however they do that. Having said that, retirement is good when someone is ready and they put in their years of service. They hope that that pension plan will take them till the end of their days. And you know, hopefully they have a good life and they live a long life. And we wish, you know . . . Everyone plans for that, and I know that's the idea. And I think at the end of the day I want to make sure that that pension plan will be there for them till the day, you know, that it's no longer needed and they've taken what they need out of this pension to survive and live and to have a, you know, hopefully a good life. And that's what most people want. They want a good retirement. Maybe travel. Some people will do

different things, maybe a cabin or whatever.

But it's important to talk about the plan. And I know they're making some changes. And I think some of the changes in here are pretty severe, from what I can see. They're talking about a board. And when you change it . . . And I'm not going to get into all the details, Mr. Speaker, but I think some of the changes that I'm seeing, and I know we're going to get a chance to ask more questions and my colleagues will ask more question and then we'll go into committee and we can ask some of the tough questions.

I think there's a lot of details. We wonder why this is coming forward. Like why has this amendment been brought forward or the Act, the changes that they want to make to the Act? Why are they bringing these amendments forward? Well obviously there must be some problems, but we're not sure. I can't see . . . And in the information we've got so far and the minister, you know, explanation when he introduced and did his second reading, I can't see what the reason is in them, and maybe we can find out what it is.

[14:45]

And it refers to board members. And I just want to talk about one part of it, you know. It's referring to board members. And I don't know who the government consulted with or the minister consulted with to find out that this change is needed. I know some people have made comments. Some of my colleagues, you know, have talked about a board where you have to have unanimous decision. In this situation I think that's what's required of the board. It has to be unanimous in order for them to make a decision. And I think they're giving now some changes and they're talking about changing it as a majority.

So the majority of board members could make a decision where it wasn't unanimous. But having said that, I look at that and maybe that's a good thing. But there must have been a reason why it was the way it was and that had to be unanimous of the board. So I wonder why the changes. Has there been some problems? And we don't know what the request . . . Was it by some board members wanting to change? You know, I don't know what it is and I would like to know that. Maybe when we're in committee we can find out some of those details as to why the changes and why they want to go from a, you know . . . And I know it's probably tough. No board I've sat on, I know of, would operate in the same way with a unanimous decision. I don't know. I think, you know, would that be tying the hands of the board if one person was opposed to something? So that's maybe the challenge. I don't know. Good or bad, maybe there was a reason why this pension board operated that way, and a good reason why. And I'm not sure of that. And we'll get those details.

But now they're changing it from a majority of the members can make the decision and it will move forward. Now what type of decisions they make, I'm not aware of. I don't know what the role is in . . . I know we could ask some questions in committee, and we'll get some of those answers. And it's important that we have those answers to know why and what changes will this have and, you know, we'll find out.

But also it's interesting to think, Mr. Speaker, you're talking

about a liability in here, and there is another change that they're bringing forward. And I'm wondering, why are they bringing this forward? My understanding when I sat on boards, and I know other people sit on the boards, there's due diligence on the side of the board member to make sure you attend the meetings, or you let the Chair know why you can't attend the meetings, and he'll excuse you or she'll excuse you. So the chairperson can excuse you from the meeting, and it's noted in the minutes you were not in attendance at the meeting, and it might give a reason why. Some have where if you miss three meetings, then you're asked to step down from the board, and the Chair can ask you to do that. Those provisions are in there.

In this case, we're seeing where . . . And I think what I'm reading from it . . . And I was, you know, trying to understand that if you're not at the meeting and you did not attend the meeting and take part in the meeting, then you're not liable for the decisions that are made of the board. Now I, you know, and I'm having trouble with that. I don't know why this request is coming, so that if somebody's not at the meeting, they're not liable. Yet my understanding in other organizations, you're a part of that board. Due diligence is on you. You should have been there.

So now there's almost like a clause in there: it would say if a member missed the meeting, they would no longer be liable for the decisions of the board because they weren't at the meeting. Now I'm not sure what the clause is within the plan and the board that looks after the pension plan. I don't know what it says about them missing so many meetings, if they're missing.

So there's a lot of information still needs to be, you know, cleared and we have to get some details. And you know, I don't think the minister gave us all the details at the time. He of course gave us what he thought was useful to start the process, and that's fine. But I know there is a lot of details that need to be worked out.

And I'm not sure who they consulted with. And to make these changes, of the 53,000, have they asked the members in the plan? Have they said to the 53,000 members, this is the way we used to do it, here's why, and we want to make sure you're aware we're changing it. We used to be unanimous. Here's the reasons why we don't want to hold board members liable if they're not at the meeting. Have they consulted that to the members that belong to this pension plan? Because I think that is crucial that the members of the pension plan are aware what's going on and if you're making changes.

Because maybe some of the members of the pension plan know about these changes and maybe they don't, but maybe some of them do. And for the ones that maybe are listening today, they want those, you know, the clarification. And I know members belong. Lots belong to the pension plan. And it is, you know, probably a good pension plan for them to have. PEPP does a great job. Nobody's saying that. But I think when you're making changes, we have to make sure that those individuals, it's their assets, it's their pension. And I think it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of five-point-some billion in assets that the pension plan's holding. I might not have my figures correctly, but I believe that's somewhere around there, Mr. Speaker.

So this pension plan, the PEPP plan is a large plan. It serves

53,000 members. But I'm just hoping that the government has talked to those individuals, or has relayed the message. And sometimes that's been the problem. And I want to talk about this a little bit because I think this is important, Mr. Speaker. You know, you talk about we've consulted, or you talk about meaningful consultation. There is a difference. To me it's truly a difference. You could sit and say you listened, and you go off doing your own thing — stubborn, dismissive just like this government is. Or you do meaningful consultation where you actually try to work with and you try to find the solution so that people can agree. It's meaningful and it's sincere and it's done with respect. And I think that's clear. We need to make sure that happens.

So we're looking at the plan and some of the changes that the government's proposing, the minister has proposed with the plan. Again I want to stress the plan is a good plan. And people want to have a good retirement. They want to make sure their assets are protected and, you know, whether it's a board looking after it, people want their assets protected and they don't want to lose what they've worked hard, years and years. Some might have 40 years in that they've paid into that pension plan. It might be 35 years, 30 years. We have many people who have served our province well. And I think there's about 79 different organizations that belong to the PEPP plan, that takes part in the 53,000 members I referred to. So let's make sure, and I think the people want to make sure the government's taking care.

So the changes that they're proposing — and I'm talking about a few of the changes that the amendments they're bringing forward — will definitely impact I guess the board, governance, the liability, and decision making. And you're going away from like where it was unanimous, and I'm concerned. And I'm hoping, I'm hoping that the government has reached out to consult with the organizations with them and they're doing . . . And I don't know who suggested this change. I would like to know that and I think it would be important. We'll ask a lot of questions and I think we'll have an opportunity to ask more questions, Mr. Speaker.

So the assets of individuals, well they want to be protected because nobody wants to work, you know, for years and put the time in and have your pension stuff you've put away for your retirement, you don't want to have that jeopardized in any way. So hopefully these are good changes that the government's asking to do, the amendments. But again I go back to wondering why, and there's more questions to wondering why the changes are the way they are.

And I just want to just go over this one last time when we talk about governance. And my understanding of governance, when I was involved in boards, like I said, you had an opportunity to sit on a board and people asked you to sit there and their corporations, you know, you look at a ministry that looks after the corporations branch and you have to report who your board members are, and it's registered and you attend the meetings. And some of the boards I sat on, you had to show up. You had due diligence. And it was explained to you: you are liable for decisions that you make as a board.

And you know, I know there are some protections to protect volunteer board members for liability who volunteer. But some of the boards are paid. And there's a difference. When you're a

volunteer, yes, we have many boards that we have people volunteer. You want to make sure, the liability, they're protected. But you hope that they have their provisions and the policies to protect the board members, but also to make sure those board members are in good faith doing what they volunteered they would do. And we thank them for that.

But there's also boards who, you know, get compensation, honorarium, and they're compensated for, whether it's a day of board meetings or whatever, there's some compensation to compensate them for attending the board meetings. So on that area I think there's more and should be more liability. They are paid as board members. We have to make sure the due diligence is there for them as well; they're being compensated. And I think some boards are bigger organizations who have legal counsel and they have CEOs and they have a lot of support staff.

So there are different ways to look at this. But on these changes that are happening right now, Mr. Speaker, we know that we'll have more questions, and I know my colleagues will be discussing this more as we go along. And maybe we can get through the information and make sure that the pension plan that people of this province belong to will be protected and to making sure that their assets are protected and that's, you know, we're not, we're not just . . . And you know, I don't think from the changes anyone's going to imply . . . The PEPP plan has a board that operates and will continue, hopefully, to operate and make sure that pension plan goes on for many years and will go on forever as people retire. And as members in the Legislative Assembly retire, they'll have a pension that's there for them as well. It is a pension plan that our employees have and, like I said, 53,000 members belong to the PEPP plan and 72 organizations.

So we want to make sure we're doing the right things, the changes we make. We want to make sure we ask the questions. And I think the members have to feel like they're a part of the plan. And when we make changes, we're making sure meaningful consultation happens with them when we change plans and their investment for their retirement, and that nothing is being jeopardized. And I know the due diligence on our side, we will ask those questions in committee.

So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 98

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 98** — *The Child Care Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 sur les garderies d'enfants* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to speak on Bill No. 98, *An Act to Promote the Growth and Development of Children and to Support the Provision of Child Care Services, and to make a consequential amendment to another Act*.

Mr. Speaker, right off the bat I want to say that's an odd title. I think that if it's only one other Act, why don't they name what that Act is in the title, because to say make a consequential amendment to another Act and not name it, that's odd. But I understand this is a pretty straightforward bill.

But it's more than that though because I think, as we've come to appreciate how much child care means to families and to children and what a good part of social growth for our kids, and as the title says, to support and promote the growth and development of children, clearly child care does that.

Now I just want to refer to the minister's second reading comments. And he just says that this really is repealing the old child care Act, which is only in English, and replacing it with a bilingual legislation. And he states that this came about as a request from the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises, the CÉF, and Association des parents fransaskois, AFP, for *The Child Care Act* to be made available in French. And apparently it was difficult, and I can appreciate that, to follow the regulations, especially when you're in charge of the care of children, young children, that it's important that you understand fully the obligations and responsibilities that are laid out in the Act. And if you're not following it, then it's a problem.

But I think it's important that we have a conversation about this because I am concerned. And you know, one of the things we really want to make sure is that we don't have unintended consequences when we pass legislation. And so if you have now a bilingual Act but hope . . . And I have a lot of faith in the translators, the government translators, but if there's a chance that it's been not translated appropriately, then we have an issue.

But I think my main point though is that if there is bad legislation, it doesn't matter whether it's in English or in French, it still remains bad legislation. Making it bilingual doesn't improve the quality of legislation.

[15:00]

So I want to know, has this government, has the Minister of Education in his responsibilities to make sure that we have the best legislation possible, has he gone out and talked to all the stakeholders in Saskatchewan about this legislation? This is a time to say, you know, we're opening up the Act. We are translating the Act. And if there are problems with any of the parts of the legislation, this is the time to correct it. This is the time to correct it. You know what? There is no point in having bad legislation in both French and English. That makes no sense. Let's improve it first and then have it in a bilingual form. This is the time to improve the legislation.

In fact we know, we know for example and, Mr. Speaker, you may remember that a few years ago I had put forward a private

member's bill about the R-word. And we found out actually that most legislation had been improved and the R-word wasn't in much of Saskatchewan's legislation. And the reason for that was because about 10 years prior, the government had undertaken an initiative to improve the language of the bills in terms of making it both bilingual if appropriate, making sure it was gender-neutral if appropriate, and those kind of things. And at that time they took out terminology that was offensive. And so therefore, at that point I think the only piece of legislation that I could find that used the R-word was something from 1927. And we had to do a search, but it was still there. Interestingly, though, the problem really was, for the R-word, was not in legislation, but it was in the regulations and different documents that this government produced. And there was quite a few examples of the R-word.

And so here you have a situation where when we're doing something to improve the language here in legislation, are they doing the same to make sure that actually the legislation is the very best it can be?

So we'll have that question: who did you consult with? Did you listen to them? And I know the APF and the CÉF, very outstanding organizations, would have a lot of expertise in terms of their experience of child care. But I think it's important that the net be cast much broader because it's important to get a broad input into any of these pieces of legislation, especially when they are so important to the people of Saskatchewan, the families of Saskatchewan. So there's that question we have.

And we also understand that one of the main points is that this will also give the government more powers to do investigations into offences that they see in child cares throughout the province. And we don't really understand, and the Act is not clear, and the minister wasn't really clear in his comments about what was meant about this. But this may mean people running unlicensed child care, and of course that's important that we do . . . We've seen cases in the media over the last year or so — and I don't believe there were any in Saskatchewan; I think it was more Ontario — where we saw overcrowding or kids being left unattended. And this is very, very important that all child care providers are accountable, and particularly when they're running child care centres.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation, and we will have lots of comments and lots of questions about it. And not only because if it turns out to be a missed opportunity, when we could be talking about the real needs of families in Saskatchewan around child care spaces, availability, and the fact that not only do these spaces need to be announced . . . This government takes a lot of care to make sure that the spaces are announced. In fact they may announce them several times. But then the question is, are they actually there? Are they actually there? Are they provided for? And is there a capacity issue? You know, we often hear that it's really tough to find spaces for families because they are just not available. It doesn't make a lot of sense. And we've seen that in our own communities where we have child care providers talking about the unbelievable waiting lists that parents are facing.

And again the costs, the cost. And I know this is something that the member from Riversdale has raised several times and probably will continue to raise, the issue around the child care

subsidy that the Ministry of Education provides and the bizarre nature of how that has been set and has not been raised. And I don't know what the current numbers are, but for many years they weren't spending their full amount because people were not qualifying because they were making too much money. But in fact the amount, the numbers that, the benchmarks that were in the program just didn't match the reality of what families make or single parents make. And it's really, really a shame that we can do this in a time when we have a booming economy in Saskatchewan, but we don't really have a government that is supporting parents to participate in this economy.

We know we talk about a labour shortage, and in many ways I know, and we all know, that parents want to participate, whether they're male or female, but they have parental obligations with their children. And we have to provide more child care at a reasonable cost and reasonable locations, but it has to be quality child care. So this is an important issue.

So parents are doing their part. They want to participate. They're going to school. They're getting their training and they're ready to do their job. But the government has been failing in the area of child care because while they're very good at making announcements, we're not actually seeing the spot, the child care spots, and we're not seeing them where they need to be.

So this is an issue and we will continue to raise this. This is important that we tackle child care. This government has made a lot of noise about this, but when it comes to clear answers about why is it that there's a mismatch between what they say they're doing and the reality that we're seeing with our constituents, something isn't just not . . . it's just not clicking.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, you know I have to tell you that one time I had the most, and it wasn't one of the most powerful experiences I had out door knocking. It was a hot August night, and I was just walking up to a step of a house, and it was a family arguing. And you could tell that these were young parents, probably in their 20s, and they had one or two children, and they were arguing about how they were going to make ends meet. And it was no point of me knocking on the door. The screen was there. I could hear everything. And it's just really sad when you knew, you knew what the story was. And it really stuck with me.

And so we all hope that our kids don't have that experience. You know I have three kids, not yet a grandparent, but we all hope that our kids don't have those experiences where they can't afford to go to work because child care's expensive, or giving up meaningful careers. Where you really hope that your children as young adults can land meaningful work but we also want them to have families because really in so many ways that's such a critical part of who we are as a society and who we are as communities.

So child care is critical and as both sides of this House will agree that it takes a village to raise a child, and child care clearly, clearly is part of that, Mr. Speaker. So I think that, I know that we haven't had a good, long, full debate about this, and it's just unfortunate that there's not more to this bill. And we know that child care across Canada is being examined because we have many, many things happening, many things

happening. We have problems with the fact that the income equality gap is growing in Canada.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's good to see you in the chair. But I will continue. I don't know if you need me to repeat the points that I've made but I may anyways. But we know there's many challenges for young families, and whether it's housing and the extreme costs of housing. And I could talk a bit about that because there is a lot of families who are deeply concerned about the costs of rent and what it means. And I think of communities in Saskatchewan, whether it be Estevan, where you have a vacancy rate of zero and there's absolutely no chance of finding any suitable housing for a young family. But yet Estevan is a wonderful community in the sense of, talk about, work opportunities. It's a great place. And I think that it really is. And it really is. And it's a great place with meaningful work in the energy sector and well-paying jobs.

And well we have some questions about representation, but what can we say. That is not what we're here to debate for today . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There you go. But we really have issues. And you know, last year, or it was in the spring, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I brought up a petition from the folks of Estevan concerned about the cost of housing and even the cost of renting trailer spots because it's such a hot market in Estevan, such a hot market in Estevan. And you know, I appreciate the comments from the member from Estevan, but I do really think this is a challenge for Estevan in having an appropriate housing strategy. But this is what young families are facing. So they're facing that in Estevan.

But you go to Prince Albert where you have a vacancy rate of some . . . over 6 per cent, over 6 per cent. And things in Estevan, well we hope things go well in Estevan. I mean . . . Or Prince Albert, not quite as hot as the economy as Estevan. I know, I understand there's some setbacks. And we could talk about the representation from Prince Albert. We could talk about that, and there's some real issues there.

I've got to tell you, you know, it was interesting. Today in question period, we had some comments about CETA. And I was reading the *Prince Albert Herald*. That story, that story was very interesting. And there was comments made, a member statement, about comments by Erin Weir and CETA. In fact we had the same debate about the Canadian-European trade agreement. And of course in principle we all see a lot of potential benefits, a lot of potential benefits there. But we want to see the details. We believe you need to see the details.

Now it was interesting. The Premier even made that comment. When he talked about the federal bill when it came to cyberbullying, he wants to see the details. But a Canadian-European trade agreement? We don't need to see the details. How is it for cyberbullying, you want to see the details? The trade agreement, no worry about the details. And what the member from Prince Albert said, and I couldn't believe it, he said, it goes without saying that we're going to do due diligence. I don't know about that. I've got to tell you, when he uses, it goes without saying, it goes without saying, I've got to tell you. And if that's the approach they're taking to child care, it goes without saying I have some questions. I have some questions. Because child care is . . . Well child care is so critically important.

We've all, you know, as we've raised our own kids, and we've all worked and whether it's working on a farm, working in schools, working in nursing homes, or in hospitals, this is a real, real important issue to our economy. And you know, we're looking to have this sustainable growth. And we don't want to see a situation where we say child care is just not possible or it's too expensive or the inspections aren't happening, you know. And we don't want to have any tragic incidences happening around child care. So when the bill is open like this, of course we'll have comments on this.

And you know, one of the areas I would want to see, and we haven't had a real chance to talk about this, but when my kids were growing up and I was going to school and my wife was working here in Regina, I was attending the University of Regina to get my education degree. And that was back in 1980 it would have been, the year my daughter was born, 1980-81, and it was the first 24-hour daycare in Saskatchewan, a 24-hour daycare. And I was on the board at the time. Now I would have been, I guess I would have been in my 20s at the time, Mr. Speaker. So it was very interesting. And of course the issue of fundraising and having appropriate funds for this . . . But it was interesting that you would have a 24-hour daycare.

[15:15]

But the reality is we have a lot of shift workers in this province. I didn't realize how many shift workers . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, and those who work out of the nine-to-five traditional hours of work. And we're going to see more of that because of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* because now we've seen this government allow the 10-hour workday.

Now we have said, and this government has, you know, has pointed out to particularly me as a former minister of Labour, that when we were in power we authorized over 1,000 permits allowing workplaces to have that. And fair enough. That's true. But we knew who those 1,000 workplaces were so we could have some knowledge of what was the social implications for our communities and our society where you have 10-hour workdays. We thought, as I recall this, that a lot of these places were in the North. They were either people who would go into work sites like remote work sites and that kind of thing. Surveying companies would be a good example. And I could talk a little about surveying companies. I don't have my book with me right now though.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these kind of changes are important when we're talking about our society, that now we don't know, we don't know what workplaces are going to have 10-hour workdays. They don't have to register with the Ministry of Labour. They did before.

We understand that no workplace was actually turned down for a permit. The company was worked with in terms of understanding the implications of a 10-hour workday. If they felt it was necessary, that was fair enough. And it was all fair and it was reasonable. But the challenge was, or the good thing was that we knew where that workplace was. We knew how many workers were, what the impact it would have on society. Now we have no idea. And of course one of the unintended consequences of that are children who are going to be without

their parents for up to 11 hours a day because of going to work, the travel back and forth, that type of thing. What's the impact of that? I think it's not going to be great.

Now I know the minister and I had great debates about this. He would say, nurses and firefighters love it; can't see why a teacher wouldn't love it, you know. And I don't know, you know, when you have a teacher working a 10-hour workday with kids, that's not quite the same as a nurse in a 12-hour shift or a firefighter, is it? So you know, this is an important issue, and we need to understand the societal impacts of these kind of changes that this government has kind of brought forward.

And we, you know, while the minister . . . And it is ironic. Now the Minister of Labour has taken on another job. I mean it sort of represents a sign of times in Saskatchewan where everybody has to have a second job, and the Minister of Labour has taken on a second job. And I don't know if he has a hard time making ends meet or he's got too much free time, but it's the same minister who has got child care added to his portfolio. So we had a good discussion about that, and we will continue to have that because those things fit like hand in glove — where you work and child care. And I think that's important that we have the kind of conversations about.

So is this the kind of Saskatchewan we want? You know, we want people to have good families, good homes, good work. We want this province to grow, but we don't want it to be reckless. And I think we can all agree that we don't want kind of an out-of-control, reckless type of growth. We want it to be safe. We want to make sure that people can make ends meet and actually put a little away.

We know this government . . . Now hats off to the Minister of Finance for the work a couple of weeks ago. And I don't know if he's here or not. It doesn't really matter. But I do want to say the recognition that we should be looking at CPP [Canada Pension Plan] and the increases in CPP as a way to make sure people have a decent retirement is good. Now I know they have to work out the details. But there was a bit of a logjam where people were really reluctant to talk about CPP as a potential for making sure, particularly the lower income folks when they retired . . . You know, in Saskatchewan, in Canada we have done a fair amount of work in terms of the very lowest income seniors. And that's about 16,000, I think the province is saying now, that both get the Saskatchewan Income Plan, the guaranteed annual income, or guaranteed allowance, and CPP and the old age security.

So that's one group of people. But, Mr. Speaker, as we've talked, and we talked about seniors today in question period, the fact that this government has chosen not to have a seniors' advocate is a real problem. But we know there's a group of seniors who are at the low income level, a little bit above the SIP [seniors' income plan] cut-offs, who will be having a hard time making ends meet.

And you know, I've got to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the toughest stories I often hear and I have to say, well that's the way these programs are designed, is where somebody's put away 50,000 or \$75,000 and that's what they've saved. They may have worked minimum wage or a couple of dollars above that, you know, making maybe 30,000, or let's say 30, \$40,000

a year. So they weren't making a lot of money a year but they were putting away a little bit because they believed . . . And it's a good thing to do, to save money. So they did save money. But they found out they would have been further ahead to have bought a car or something with their money because having that savings of \$50,000 disqualifies them for other benefits that they rightly deserve.

Now some people say that you should actually save over \$100,000 and then you're kind of in the game when it comes to pension plans. And this is a debate we've had in this House before with the government about the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, which in and of itself is not a bad thing, but you have to make sure you're saving enough. But it really does have a problem for those people who are not quite at the bottom but who are working, making not a bad wage but not a great wage and putting some money aside.

So, Mr. Speaker, what does this have to do with child care? Well this is a reality that young people are facing today when they're making choices about where do they spend their money. Do they spend it on housing when we've seen rents go out of control? And they must have housing. They must have food. All right. And we all encourage them to put money aside for their retirement. But it's hard to tell families when they're in the 20-some-year-olds, just like I was saying when I was on that board for 24-hour daycare and I was 20-something at the time, hard for me to relate to putting money aside for a pension plan. But I was having money put aside through the CPP [Canada Pension Plan]. But then child care is an important part of that decision. It's hugely important.

And so I know that many of my friends, my colleagues want to get in on this topic, you know, but I could go on about this because this is really near and dear to my heart. I've got to tell you, we have to talk about child care whenever we get the opportunity. It's hugely, hugely important. So as I said, we'll probably have questions in committee. It's an important issue, and we hope that we're not translating bad legislation and wasting time doing that. If it's bad, it's bad; whether it's French or English, it doesn't make any difference. We want to make sure it's good legislation. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move adjournment of Bill No. 98. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 98, *The Child Care Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — That is carried.

Bill No. 100

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 100** — *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in to the discussion today on Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*. I think one thing that it's always important to flag when we start these debates in the fall is legislation. One of our jobs in the opposition is to go through the bills and hear what the government has to say about the bills. Sometimes what you see isn't always the exact intention. But in the fall we have an opportunity to start reviewing the bills and start asking questions, but usually what we like to do is go and talk to stakeholders and find out their thoughts and perspectives, people who are directly impacted by new bills or changes to bills, and to see what they think. So in the months going forward this is what we'll be doing. But in the meantime there are a few things about Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013* that I would like to address.

I think it's important for everybody to understand what the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency is and what their job is. And they're an independent agency with responsibility to the province, to local governments, and to property owners. And the legislation that we're debating actually right now mandates SAMA, the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, to develop and maintain the province's assessment policies, standards, and procedures, to audit assessments and review and confirm municipal assessment rolls, and provide property valuation services to local governments or municipalities.

Right now SAMA is funded by the provincial government and through requisitions that the municipalities pay for SAMA's field services. I think property valuations are absolutely imperative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and very regular property valuations are important because you take a young family who purchases or has purchased a house in recent years, and if property valuations aren't done on a regular basis, then — and as they are right now, about every four years — what ends up happening is, people who have budgeted and saved and have done what they can to be able to become property owners may face a very hefty property tax hike. So I think one of the things the legislation proposes doing is ensuring that these valuations are happening more frequently. So that seems to be a very positive thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There is one thing in the bill that is slightly problematic. Right now the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency is funded and there is a 65/35 per cent split in sharing the funding responsibility for SAMA between the province and the municipalities. And the government is proposing, in this legislation, repealing provisions relating to that. And the minister had said in his remarks, "... since this prevents the agency from seeking greater funding from the municipal sector." That could be problematic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm not sure if the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities are aware of the minister's remark. This could mean added costs for our municipalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again one of the things that we'll be doing as an opposition, in our role to analyze legislation, we will be going out to organizations like SUMA and SARM and individual municipalities, as well to hearing their feedback, seeing if they

think it's a good idea to remove the 65/35 per cent split sharing of the cost of SAMA. Perhaps they do, but these are questions that need to be asked. And this is some of the work that we'll be doing in the coming months, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But as I said, valuation on a regular basis of properties, annually perhaps even, is a very good idea because it avoids that valuation every four years and then a huge jump in property taxes. I saw people in my own constituency who, as I'm sure many of us have, who faced enormous property tax hikes and hadn't prepared for quite that jump. So having the valuations more often, more accurately — then property taxes can more accurately over a period of time reflect those — is a much better way of doing things.

But I do know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as this is the start of reviewing bills, we will go out and we'll talk to stakeholders about this. But I will have colleagues who will continue to want to ask questions about Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act*. And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for now I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of all the members to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[15:30]

Bill No. 101

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 101** — *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013* be now read a second time.]

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

[Applause]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the warm welcome to take my feet here today as it relates to Bill No. 101, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013*. We will be engaging in consultations with sector partners on this front to make sure we fully understand the consequences, intended and unintended, of this legislation.

I've read through briefly the statements that have been put onto the record by the minister. We do look forward to time in committee to have the minister expand on those points. We do know that the legislative changes that have been brought forward, the minister suggests, are supported by those involved with the University of Saskatchewan. But we'll be doing that consultation with certainly administration and governance at the University of Saskatchewan, with the students' association, student leaders, with graduate association leaders, and making sure that the changes to this legislation meet the needs of that proud institution, making sure that the changes to governance as

they relate to the senate, as they relate to the management of the university, meet the needs to make sure that this university can go forward with the kind of pride that it has in the past.

We know unfortunately that this government far too often dismisses and brushes off consultation with the very partners who are involved on the ground in delivering a service. We see that in education, particularly in the pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] system where this government's disrespected and dismissed the educational partners here in this province. Of course that's the teachers, the school boards, the administrators that serve this province so well, and as well parents and teachers, Mr. Speaker.

Now what we want to do is make sure that what the minister has put on this record is in fact correct. We want to make sure that the consultation process has been broad. We want to make sure that the scope of considerations when opening up this bill were as broad as they should be because when you open up legislation, it provides you an opportunity to refine an Act and make sure you're serving the needs of an institution and, in the case of the University of Saskatchewan, make sure you're serving students, our province, our economy, our future, Mr. Speaker.

We know that this government's record in post-secondary education has been one that's gone off the tracks, Mr. Speaker. And that's been disappointing and it's a concern to many. We see that when we're talking about the University of Saskatchewan. We know that this government has broken promises as it relates to capital funding for that university, and we know that has a direct impact on the administration of that university but it also has a direct impact on students. We saw in a budget cycle just a year prior that government break a commitment for its then off-loaded . . . That government has off-loaded over \$100 million of debt onto the books of the university. And the university has been placed under significant strain on that front, and of course the students of that institution are impacted.

So we're disappointed with where this government has gone off the tracks with its agenda in post-secondary education. It seems to us that it's pushing forward with its own agenda, failing to recognize the importance of the post-secondary sector in this province, failing to recognize the value in our universities, and failing to support the important work that's occurring at our universities, the important purpose that those institutions play within our province, ensuring the bright future that we should all be committed to working towards.

It's disappointing at a time where we have such tremendous economic strength in this province, where we have population growth, where we have immigration that's occurring, that this government's failing to capitalize on making the improvements that they should. From that economic strength, this government is in an unprecedented position to support students and support our institutions. But this government has dropped the ball on that front, and as a result you have students that are paying more than ever before. You have institutions that are working harder and harder to do what they can with the tight resources that have been offered by this government.

And we need to, we should be setting the priorities in a different

fashion where in a strong economy we should, this government should be making post-secondary education a priority and not passing on such a heavy burden to students by way of tuition increases, not passing such a heavy strained burden on to the institution that's now been forced to make significant cuts, Mr. Speaker, and at a time where we have economic strength.

When I go through the pieces here to what the minister suggested, certainly some of them seem to be very practical, certainly some of them seem to reflect some consultation with educational partners. If that's the case, that's a good thing, and we'll be doing our consultation with those educational partners. We'll be looking forward to time in committee with that minister and his officials to fully understand the changes that are being brought forward, but also to make sure we fully understand what other recommendations or what was the scope of consideration when this Act was opened up. Because as I say, when an Act is opened up, it provides a phenomenal opportunity for an institution and for a province to refine an Act to make sure that it's there to serve an institution, a university well into the future but also to serve a province.

When I look at some of the changes, I understand the minister's shared that some of this will clarify the awarding of diplomas in the list of powers of convocation. He says that that's under section 11. It's those sort of items that we want to make sure from the university that they're supportive of. We want to understand the consequences, intended or unintended, of these sorts of changes. And we'll be doing that with the governance of the university, with the administration of the university, with the students' association, with the graduate students' association to make sure we understand all impacts, all consequences.

I also understand that they'll ensure that individuals elected to represent the senate, they're making some changes there, and quoting from the minister here:

. . . most specifically and especially outside the student members of the senate, they will work to ensure that they represent the senate, will be graduates of the university. And this is as per section 24.

So we want to understand where this recommendation is coming from, the impact of that recommendation. Of course there's probably some intended consequences. We want to understand if our educational partners, the university and the stakeholders there, have identified any concerns or unintended consequences. Understand that the minister's suggested that this will also clarify the process by which student members of the senate are elected, and this is afforded action in sections 29 and 32, the minister suggests.

"As well [he goes on to say] amendments will amend the term of office for the senate's nominees to the board to allow them to serve a three-year, a third three-year term. That is section 45."

So we want to make sure that that process respects the realities on a campus, respects the realities of student members of a senate. And we want to understand where, you know, where these changes are coming from. Who's made these recommendations, and what are the impacts? Are they going to be making improvements to the current process? And if so, we

will be happy to be supportive.

We also recognize that there's a statement about extension of a three-year term, or the possibility of a three-year term, and we'll want to make sure we understand what that means, why that's being changed. You know, certainly I can think of some practical reasons why that may be the case. But that'll be important for us to make sure it is in the best interests of the institution, the university, and those students that serve for senate.

I do want to say that I find it to be such an important role that those student leaders have taken on to serve in the governance in the university, to serve in the senate. And certainly we value those voices and we think we are very well served by having student leaders engaged in the governance of our universities.

As well, I understand that they're amending powers of the council to facilitate the appointment of student members on hearing boards. I understand this is in section 61. And they'll be addressing the requirements of the corporate seal. This is section 98.

Now as it relates to student members on hearing boards, again this is something that we want to make sure we're understanding where these changes are being pushed from, making sure we understand the full consequences of these changes. But certainly as an opposition we'll be making sure that what these changes, or what the consequences of these changes should provide is something that allows student leadership to be fully engaged and respected in the processes of a university. And certainly if this is strengthening that process, then that's something that we'd be pleased to welcome as well.

I recognize that the minister said that:

... amendments that will allow a senator to serve a third three-year term will bring parity between the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the board appointments made essentially by cabinet, and those elected by the senate. These are the members of the board that are eligible to serve as board ... [and Vice-Chairs], so we think it's [I was quoting the minister that we think it's] important there is parity in the number of terms these individuals can serve.

So just understanding that this is ... We want to make sure that of course there's the appointments of that government to an institution. But we are very interested in those that are elected but within the university. We want to make sure that they have opportunity to influence those universities. And so we'll be keeping track of what those changes mean for the university.

I understand the minister suggests that many of the other changes are housekeeping in nature. And he goes on to cite some of those changes. I think what we'll be doing over the coming weeks is drilling down into this legislation with stakeholders, making sure that this government has consulted and listened and respected the voice of the University of Saskatchewan: its administration, its governors, the students' association, the grad students' association, all those that are impacted by these changes.

We want to understand as well that to see if there's an opportunity to build on this legislation. Are there potentials to provide amendments that would strengthen this legislation? Because as I say, when you have legislation open, that's a phenomenal opportunity to make sure you refine that legislation to serve us well into the future. We want to make sure this serves our university, the University of Saskatchewan, well into the future. We want to make sure that it serves students in our entire province well into the future.

So those will be the sort of discussions we'll be having with stakeholders. Unfortunately far too often we've seen that government push forward with its own agenda without any listening to educational partners or with stakeholders. And we've seen the consequences of that in far too many cases. So we'll engage the partners. Certainly many of the statements put forward by the minister seem to be reasonable at this point in time. We'll just be making sure that the feeling is mutual with stakeholders and making sure that there's not opportunities to improve this piece of legislation.

But with all that being said, at this point in time I'll adjourn debate as it relates to Bill No. 101, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 101, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 107

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 107 — *The Wildfire Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 107, *An Act Respecting the Prevention, Management, Control and Extinguishing of Fires*.

I think this is an important piece of legislation and one that has caused a lot of debate over the years here in Saskatchewan. So I want to make a few comments about this because I think people in Saskatchewan, if there's one thing that concerns folks is the whole issue around what happens when fires get out of control, particularly when you're in the forest fringe area. But in the North ... But even in the South I know that, you know, we have a real treasure in Cypress Hills with our forest there is now well over 100 years. I think the last major fire that went through the Cypress Hills area was in the 1880s if I remember correctly, and there's been some work, some controlled burns, and a lot of logging to control the situation in Cypress Hills. But it will be a tragedy that I think the whole province will feel if that area has and experiences a major forest fire. And that's becoming much more of a reality.

We've seen news stories, whether it's in Colorado or California. We've had the stories here in British Columbia and even in Saskatchewan, in La Ronge, P.A. [Prince Albert]. And I know when you talk to the folks from the North how meaningful this is and when they talk of just being in their homes and hearing the fires, and it's a traumatic event. While we can we talk about the capital investments, clearly that's huge, but on a personal note, it's scary. It is one of the most scariest things I think imaginable, but fortunately I've not had that experience. But talking to others, it's incredible.

[15:45]

And we also think, even though people lose their lives fighting fires . . . I think of the 21 firefighters killed in Montana this summer who were fighting a fire. And they were trained. They were the experts in forest fires and they were the elite of forest fire fighters and were caught in a fire that went back on them. And it should never have happened, but these are major, major disasters when they do happen. And so it's important that we consider this.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know you and I have had this discussion many times over the years about forest fires, going back a while. So it's good that we keep revisiting this. And I will want to say that I hope the minister has consulted well on this area. I know that particularly the RMs [rural municipality] that are on the forest fringe are vulnerable to significant costs. And I know when the Minister of Environment launched his consultations this spring, I understand that it caused quite a lot of concerns. And so they've retained the original 4.5 kilometre buffer zone and that has not changed, and that SARM has come on board with that. But clearly it sounds like he did get an earful this spring when he launched his consultations about this. The media stories are quite explicit about the fact that the RMs, the reeves, were just not willing and the costs were just too much. And I know that and I understand that. In my former role as an Environment minister, the costs were huge.

But I do want to say — and again it's a concern that we have with all the bills about who was consulted, glad to hear SARM was consulted — how were the northerners consulted? What was happening with that? And of course I imagine the mining association was consulted as well. Clearly mining in the North is a huge concern, because a lot can be lost by a wildfire, and of course that's the home to our uranium mines and gold mines. And so it's very important that that doesn't . . . that all the due precautions and wherewithals is taken into account.

And of course for the northerners, whether they be First Nations or Métis in the North, it's hugely important that this be taken into account and that they are consulted with how best to recognize their own property and their homes, their traplines, their sources of incomes. And how will that be protected? And so I hope that there's been due diligence in terms of consultations with the folks in the North. I know that this is a hugely important issue for them and is very telling when a forest goes through and the change in the landscape is stark and people are deeply, deeply concerned.

Having said that though, we do have to acknowledge that there is a role of fire in the ecology of forests. And as forests age, it's important that they renew in as natural a state as they possibly

can, and fire is a natural part of the ecology. The unfortunate part though is that 50 per cent of the fires are caused by humans. And that's not part of the natural ecology. So that's a bigger problem, and the fact that humans cause fires closer to humans, to other humans. And so that's the other, bigger problem is that they're around homes or around commercial enterprises. And so we have to make sure that we can do more on that in terms of a pre-emptive stage.

And I do want to take a minute to review the minister's comments, because I do think that there were some concerns. And he talks about the legislation requiring "all industries, including public utilities working in provincial forests or designated parkland, to complete fire prevention preparedness procedures that will . . . decrease the number, cost, and area burned by industry-caused fires."

That sounds very good and that's really an important part, but how do we put teeth to that? That's hugely important, that somehow we have to make sure that happens. And so this is why I go over to the next part, where they're talking about getting rid of permits. So again, and I talked about this earlier today in terms of fire permits and how that gives us a view into what's actually happening in terms of who's burning what, when, and how that can help us in terms of better planning. But as the minister talks about the new proposed wildfire Act:

. . . will also enhance client service and reduce government administration by moving from a system currently requiring permits for all burning activities to a risk-based notification system. Only the highest risk activities will require permits in the future, Mr. Speaker. The remainder will require either a burn notification or no notification at all, if identified as a low risk. The ministry notification process will avoid the false dispatch of costly resources.

So it would be interesting to know more about this. So how much have they actually lost due to false dispatches? I'm not sure if that's a problem. And of course we had concerns earlier in the spring about towers and whether they are watched by people, are manned, they had people in them or whether they were going to be remote controlled and will that be . . . is that going to be more cost efficient or not, or will there be more fires? And again this is fires that are caused by people, that humans cause. And so we're going to . . . This'll be very, very interesting to see. I have some questions about that in terms of how much this all costs and what's going to happen.

But my concern is really to get away from the idea of permits completely. I think that there is some . . . you know, how a fire, a forest condition can change pretty darn quick from being low to being medium or intermediate. And somebody may think, well it looks like it's low right now — and it all depends which way the wind blows — and so they think, I don't need to get a permit. So they go out the next morning and start the fire. And it's going to be interesting to see how this plays out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because if they have no permit and they're not required to have one, then are they breaking the law? Or should they have got one? But why didn't they get one in the first place just to be safe? And I bet, I bet it'll be interesting to see, that many people will actually go get a permit just to be on the safe side. Because if you have no permit, then you may be more liable because these things change hourly or could change

hourly. You know, is it the condition of the fire? Is it also weather condition?

Now I think, if I'm right, there's the 30-30-30 rule — if the temperature's 30, if the humidity is, you know, 30, and the wind. So you have three factors that really can cause a problem: humidity, wind, and temperature. And all of these . . . So how do you have a permit system that recognizes . . . or not a permit system, but a risk-based notification system when all of those could be factors? Or are you going to have zones to say, listen, this Act doesn't apply in this area because it's just too complex. It's going to be something for locals to be really knowledgeable for. And I think they're just going to have to get to know their conservation officer very well in terms of what's happening here.

So I have some questions about that, Mr. Speaker. I think that's going to be one that's going to be problematic. I know that this government has made lean as part of their mandate and are cutting back on personnel. But this is a place where, you know, when you have a disaster . . . And we're seeing more and more of these disasters, and I think if you have only one disaster and it's caused because of this lean initiative, that is tragic. And if it's going to be a major forest fire and it's because they've decided to go to a risk-based notification system and they should have been using permits, this is going to be a real problem.

Mr. Speaker, again I just want to say about the comment that the minister talked about, fully supported by SARM. And of course that's a good thing. And as has been noted in the spring about how vocal SARM was . . . and in fact we raised questions in the House about this. And the minister, you know, is trying to backpedal on that a bit saying, well you know, it's not quite right. But clearly the reeves made their points loud and clear, and it's a good thing they listened.

But I want to make a point that, has the minister consulted with all the affected stakeholders? And I'm thinking of the northerners, the reserves, the hamlets, the Métis villages, and of course the commercial interests as well, but also the conservation interest too. And of course, you know, I think that's critically important.

I want to talk just a minute too about the fact the minister recognizes that our province will align with other legislation in other provinces — I assume that's what he means, Canadian wildlife partner jurisdictions — and treat resource stakeholders consistently, including industries under the US [United States] partnership agreement. And so I'm not . . . Again we'll have questions about that, because I'm not quite sure. He's vague in terms of, is he talking about other provinces?

You know, one of the strengths of our interjurisdictional agreements, interprovincial agreements is how we can respond to other provinces' needs if things are going well here in Saskatchewan. If fires are not at their high peak, we can go help other provinces — in fact, other states. And when things are not going well here, we can count on support from other provinces. And so I'm curious to know if that agreement is still in place, and can we count on that? That's really important that we have that ability to do that. But I have some . . . I want to make sure that that is the case, that there's no sort of investing all our eggs

on the New West Agreement and saying that's good enough.

I know there is a lot of talent, a lot of skills, a lot of knowledge in forest fire fighting right across the country. And if we don't make use of that, it will be at our loss, and we need to make sure that we do take advantage of that. And so when he's talking about making this fit and align with other jurisdictions, I hope that means other provinces and also the Canadian government in their areas because they also are significant players in this.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a lot of questions about this. I think this is interesting that we've brought this up, and we do have some concerns about what the implications are for RMs, for corporations, and this type of thing. We have concerns about what does this mean in terms of the results-based platform that they have. And I think I have some real concerns about what, in terms of not issuing some permits or the different levels of what that will be required, there may be unintended confusion. And I hope people are safe more than they are sorry, but the government needs to take some real leadership in this.

And so with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know others will want to talk about other topics here so I'm going to be taking my seat. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I will be now moving adjournment on Bill 107, *The Wildfire Act*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 107, *The Wildfire Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[16:00]

Bill No. 111

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 111 — *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 111, *The Personal Care Homes Act*. It's *An Act to amend The Personal Care Homes Act*. And, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the shortest if not the shortest bill that we have in this session. And effectively what it does is add some regulatory power to the minister to make some additional possible things to be done under *The Personal Care Homes Act*. And I think practically we might as well read the short little bit that's here so we know what we're talking about.

Effectively what it does is add the power for the minister to authorize:

. . . the publication of, or the provision of public access to, information . . . [relating to] inspections of personal care homes, including the contents of an inspection report and

information respecting a licensee's compliance or non-compliance with any Act or regulation;

“(a.2) prescribing the period within which the information mentioned . . . may be published or public access may be given;

“(a.3) governing the manner of publication or provision of public access to the information mentioned in clause (a.1)”.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is unnecessary. Everything that's listed here can be done already, and we need to have an understanding from the minister why he's brought this particular bill forward and why he's intending to wait until next year to do what this bill says. It's my sense that he can do exactly what's set out in this bill right now, and he should do that because the public is very interested in what's happening in personal care homes across the province. We know that there are abilities for the minister to do all kinds of things within the legislation. And the fact that he wants to publish this information and provide it for the public, whether it's on a website or in the newspaper or the *Gazette* or anywhere else, I think can be done right now.

And so what's the point of having a bill like this? My sense is that it's a bit of a political stalling bill. It's a bill to look like you're doing something when you're not really doing anything other than having an Act with the name *An Act to amend The Personal Care Homes Act*. Mr. Speaker, we don't need to have games like that when it comes to the care of our seniors, the care of our parents and grandparents. What we need is action. What we need is information.

And, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the minister and the Ministry of Health to publish the information that they have already from their inspections and make it available to the public. I suspect if they had checked with the Information and Privacy Commissioner about this bill before it went ahead, they would find out they already have this power to do it. So why wait until next summer or next year? I think, Mr. Speaker, the reason that the minister puts that in his notes is so that he can stall this information and prevent it from going to the public until next summer. So I challenge the minister to start giving us this information right away, and let's not delay the information that's provided.

Mr. Speaker, this information is important for people who are trying to make choices about where their loved ones are going to be cared for in level 1 and 2 care facilities. We know that they're for the most part private facilities that have the level 1 and 2 care provision, and that information is there. And we also know that there is a system of inspection.

Now according to the work of the Provincial Auditor, maybe it's not as regular or as up to date as it could be, but I think most of that part has been remedied as a result of a response to chapter 34 of the Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan's report in 2012, volume 2, starting at page 295. And, Mr. Speaker, what's stated quite clearly there by the Provincial Auditor is that the Ministry of Health, the Minister of Health is responsible for regulating provincial care homes, and that requires licensing and inspecting of personal care homes. When you go through

and look at the whole chapter, you'll see that there is a process for doing that, that there are standards that are there. There are inspections that are done.

The final recommendation in the report from the Provincial Auditor says . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well why don't you put this information out so it's available for families when they're making choices about where they should have their loved ones placed? And specifically, I'll read the specific recommendation on page 304. This is the recommendation of the Provincial Auditor, and it says:

We recommend that the Ministry of Health publicly report inspection results when personal care homes do not comply with *The Personal Care Homes Act, 1991*.

And that's a fairly straight-up kind of thing, Mr. Speaker. We don't need this legislation for the minister to do it. And I think . . . I challenge the minister to produce the letter that comes from the Information and Privacy Commissioner about why they would have to do this kind of legislation. Because practically this is the kind of information that the minister should be providing to the public of Saskatchewan, based on the information that they have.

We have scads of information that's available on the Ministry of Health website, and there's no reason that this information couldn't be there right now. So I challenge the minister to go get an opinion from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, get information from the Ministry of Justice or the Attorney General's legal advisers, and provide it to this House to show why he can't do it now. I'm willing to look at that information but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this is a political stalling bill. It's not necessary for it to be done right now.

What we do know is that there are people all across the province who are upset with the care that their family members are getting, whether it's in the personal care home side or into the long-term care home area, and people come day by day to raise questions about this.

It's everything from the government's removal of minimum standards, but I think the bigger issue here is that there appears to be some kind of a cap on the funding available for health regions that is playing out by pushing and eliminating some of the staffing that's required in some of these areas. And, Mr. Speaker, personal care homes are mostly outside of that whole scenario, except I think there's a responsibility and a recognition that this, the problems that are there in the personal care homes, need to be publicized.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why? Why do we get a stalling bill around something that's so important to our people here? I don't think we're going to get challenges, but maybe the minister can show us that there will be some challenges to providing this information. I think it's the obligation of the Minister of Health and his officials to provide this information to the public and it's very clear that the auditor thinks that it's important that at least the minister outlines those facilities which fail their inspections. And all that information is available to the minister and to the minister's staff. It should be available to the public. And I think that these kinds of inspections are, I suppose, related to the public health

inspections of restaurants and food establishments and it relates to similar kinds of issues about how people make choices where they go.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that this short bill is unnecessary and that the minister should be providing us with information in much greater detail than he did in his speech if he wants to stall providing this information to the people of Saskatchewan. I challenge the Minister of Health to start providing this information right away. With those comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks and adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 111, *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 108

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 108** — *The Athletics Commission Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to enter the discussion today on Bill No. 108, *The Athletics Commission Act*. This is a brand new bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And what it aims to do is it will sanction and oversee professional combative sports events in Saskatchewan, which would include professional boxing, mixed martial art contests, and exhibitions.

According to the minister, the minister has pointed out that Saskatchewan was only one of three jurisdictions that had not yet regulated mixed or combative sports, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So there seemed to be a bit of a vacuum here where some of the . . . particularly the mixed martial arts or any of the combative sports could be held in such an environment that wouldn't be safe for competitors.

But interestingly enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I actually have recently taken up kick-boxing myself for no other reason than exercise and stress relief, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I have to say, despite my coach's suggestion that I put faces on the pads that I . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — It appears that a number of members would like to enter into the debate on this bill, but currently the member from Saskatoon Riversdale has the floor, and I would recognize her. And I'm sure other members wishing to enter into the debate will have ample opportunity. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I was

saying, I've recently taken up kick-boxing for no other reason than stress relief and some good exercise — stress relief in part from this place. And it's interesting. My coach has offered the opportunity to put pictures on my kick-boxing . . . on the pads. But I've declined actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite will be happy to know.

Anyway I've never been a big spectator of combative sports, but you know, having recently taken it up, I quite enjoy it. And I maybe have found my true calling. It's too bad I'm a little older than most athletes who embark upon this career, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But with all seriousness, this is an absolutely imperative bill. I know that there were many people in Saskatoon in particular advocating for regulation of mixed martial arts and combative sports, and many other jurisdictions. It had been regulated at the municipal level but, as we see, seven other jurisdictions had taken this very . . . to the next level and have regulated it provincially. The one thing that the minister also pointed out is that in June of 2013 the federal government passed Bill S-209, amending section 83 of the Criminal Code, which legalized the sport of mixed martial arts across Canada under the authority of provincial athletics commissions or similar established bodies. So it would be very important to in fact have that athletics commission in place.

I just want to go on and talk a little bit more about the minister's remarks here. So the minister says, the reason for this commission:

. . . this government has committed to establishing a provincial athletics commission [which] . . . will hold the authority to sanction professional boxing and mixed martial arts events. This commission will be designed to ensure a consistent standard of qualifications, rules, regulations, and safety protocols for all participants and officials across the province. [And he goes on to say] . . . the commission will have the authority to provide protocols for licence applications, event permits, as well as the terms and conditions of a particular event.

This I think it's an important piece, mister deputy, Mr. Speaker, now:

It also ensures that competitors participate in appropriate pre-fight medical testing such as blood tests, concussion screening, and eye exams. It ensures that qualified medical staff and event officials are hired, that promoters and competitors have the proper licences, and that promoters have suitable liability insurance.

And as well I think this is another very important piece: "The commission will also be responsible for tracking competitors' fighting histories and ensuring safety protocols are enforced."

[16:15]

I know one of the things that has been in the news in very recent years which applies to anybody who is in contact sports — whether you're a football player, a hockey player, you're involved in mixed martial arts or boxing — has been concussions. And as most of us or all of us know, concussions

are in fact a brain injury, and all concussions are very serious. We've had recent stories, or stories in the last few years about, in particular, two NHL [National Hockey League] enforcers who had turned out to have, well had multiple concussions over their careers and ended up having a condition called chronic traumatic encephalopathy. I'm probably not saying that accurately, Mr. Speaker, but both Reggie Fleming and Bob Probert, following study of their brains, both proved to have CTE [chronic traumatic encephalopathy].

And what exactly is CTE? It's a progressive degenerative disease which can only be definitively diagnosed after death, which was the case of Reggie Fleming and Bob Probert. And it used to be called dementia pugilistica, or DP, as it was initially found in those with a history of boxing. And as I've said, it's most commonly found in athletes in football, hockey, professional wrestling and other contact sports, and also in soldiers who have been exposed to a blast or concussive injury, in both cases resulting in degeneration of the brain tissue and an accumulation of a particular protein. And that's how they diagnose CTE.

And what comes from CTE are symptoms of dementia such as memory loss, aggression, confusion, and depression, which generally appear years or many decades after the series of brain traumas. And Reggie Fleming and Bob Probert both died very tragically. Actually in leading up until — I read a news article actually — reading up until about May 2004, in the previous four months, three NHL enforcers had died tragically. Derek Boogaard had been found to have taken painkillers and alcohol. And Rick Rypien was assumed to, I believe he committed suicide, and Wade Belak. And they were all thought possibly at that point to have CTE. So it's very serious.

To ensure that any athletes who are participating in these sports are monitored pre-fight and through their careers, I think, is absolutely imperative, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that professional athletes are well taken care of — it is a very physical sport — and to ensure that we aren't just preventing concussions but long-term brain injuries that lead to depression and in many cases they've led to suicide, Mr. Speaker.

I think one of the things to prevent unsanctioned fights and dealing with unsanctioned fights, ensuring that there's a regulatory system in place is more than a good idea. And I know that that's what many people in Saskatoon who are lobbying city council to regulate fights in Saskatoon were looking for.

So on the face of it, this legislation looks to be very good. It's a very good idea to put in place an athletics commission, especially in light of the fact that the federal government has legalized the sport of mixed martial arts and that we were laggards. And we were one of only three provinces who had yet to put in place legislation.

I think the one thing that our job now as opposition will be to do is to make sure that this legislation addresses what the minister says it's going to do. Are there any pieces that are missing, or anything in it that might be problematic? So over the next several months, we'll be reaching out to stakeholders to ask them if this meets the needs of regulating combative sports in Saskatchewan.

I know the minister had said in his remarks he had looked to some other provinces to see what they were doing. I think that will be our goal too, to compare and contrast our legislation with what other jurisdictions are doing, again to see if there are any gaps or any gaps in what and how we're regulating and if we can improve upon that. So that's what we'll be doing over the next few months, Mr. Speaker.

But on the face of it, Bill No. 108, the Athletics Commission is by and large an important piece of legislation to ensure that athletes are protected and that events are sanctioned and run properly. So I know that I will have colleagues who will be weighing in on Bill 108 at some point in the future, but with that I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 108, *The Athletics Commission Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 102

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 102 — *The Builders' Lien Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to rise here in the Assembly today to have an opportunity to comment on Bill No. 102, *An Act to amend The Builders' Lien Act*.

It was a great pleasure last night to be able to meet with a number of land surveyors in Saskatchewan and have an opportunity to discuss this bill with them. I was actually fortunate; I was expecting to speak to it yesterday. But as it turned out, I didn't and here I am now. And I had the opportunity of having some conversations with a number of land surveyors last night in our meeting with them, and certainly one of the things I wanted to talk to them about was their concerns about this legislation. And I'm happy to report that they are the ones that requested these changes. And there are a number of reasons for that, which I will talk about in a couple moments.

I think one of the telling things that was interesting though is when the surveyors were sitting in the Assembly yesterday. Some of them came in and visited about 4:30, actually I guess about 24 hours ago, and watched the proceedings. And he was quite concerned, he was speaking to his MLA from Saskatoon Eastview and had indicated, why is it that when you're giving speeches nobody is paying attention? And there was some concern about that, Mr. Speaker.

And to explain the process of adjourned debates, it's always kind of interesting when the public are trying to be engaged and interested in what's going on in the Assembly. And I guess it's a bit disappointing in a way, Mr. Speaker, that we don't have

more of an engagement when these debates are going on. And certainly I know that because most of the time these debates are basically comments and concerns from the opposition, that maybe it's not as entertaining or interesting for government members to find out what we have to say about these bills.

But certainly I think members of the public, when they join us in the Assembly at this time of the day, it's always a bit of a curiosity about how many conversations are going on when these adjourned debate speeches are being provided. And people are reading the newspaper and holding it up, things like that, Mr. Speaker. It really makes it interesting, and maybe we need to think about how these procedures work a little bit better or how they could work maybe a little bit better.

At any rate, the speaker that is . . . oh sorry. I see the member holding up his newspaper, but as an architect he probably would be very interested in these changes because architects are actually already protected under *The Builders' Lien Amendment Act* and apparently they were protected for a long time. This is one of the things I found out last night. Architects and engineers have always been protected under *The Builders' Lien Act*, and with a view that the work that they do on any building and construction project is important work and needs to be paid.

And what's happening with this bill is a recognition that not only are architects important and not only are engineers important and other construction agencies, but the very essence of certainty in building and construction these days is the survey fabric. And we all know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we've heard of stories of disputes where, you know, people are arguing about where the property boundary is, and people have built houses that straddle two different properties. And these kinds of disputes cost a lot of money. And the certainty that's provided by a professionally done survey plan is something that's really important to building trades and construction and any kind of development in any area.

So it's not exactly clear why land surveyors were left out of the Act back when it was first introduced, but I think this amendment that's being proposed here is one that I do heartily endorse and am pleased to see that land surveyors will now be included in *The Builders' Lien Act* through the amendments that are proposed here.

Now the minister indicated that there is actually three types of amendments that are being proposed here. And one is . . . The first is the one I've spoken to where we see the protection of *The Builders' Lien Act* being provided to land surveyors. And the minister pointed out that, you know, we always have to strike a balance between the rights of landowners and the rights of contractors and tradespeople who do construction on the land that's being developed.

And certainly having title is something that's very important to the landowner. And being able to register a lien against that title is something that's not an inconsequential activity, and it can certainly impact the ability of the landowner to sell their land or the property that's built thereon. So this is always something that I think the courts have been very careful about ensuring that the balance is there.

And certainly this type of legislation, it was obvious there was a

need for it when it was first introduced because builders were often being left out in the cold. They weren't getting paid. They were being stiffed by the landowners, and there was no legal recourse for them to go except through the civil courts in a lawsuit which would be difficult to enforce. So having the opportunity to put a lien on a property when monies are owed to you is a great legal remedy, Mr. Speaker, for a number of different trades. And we're pleased to see the minister bring forward a proposition to include land surveyors in that process.

The second part of the bill that the minister indicated was being amended is the new section 4, proposed new section 4 of *The Builders' Lien Act*. And what he's proposing here is that there used to be a requirement for 1 per cent of the contract price to show completion. And he's removing the . . . And also there used to be a requirement for either 1 per cent or \$1,000, but the minister's point is that that \$1,000 reference was established in 1986, so it obviously is not a very valid figure anymore. And rather than having a number prescribed right in the legislation, the minister is proposing that it be only just the 1 per cent of the contract price to determine completion.

This is important to the landowner, Mr. Speaker, because they want to be able to have their property clear of all the obligations, and if there is a lien on their title, it's more difficult for them to move that property or sell it and transfer it. So this will give a little more clarity in terms of a meaningful figure for the ability of the determination of when a contract is complete. Again I think that makes total sense. And based on the conversations I had last evening with the land surveyors of Saskatchewan, I think this is something that they're supportive of as well. Of course, you know, we want to be able to canvass a wider audience than the group that was there last night, but certainly it seems to be that the support is there for that.

The other thing the minister indicated in his comments was a change in the trust claims because currently the limitation period for the trust claims is one year. And the minister's suggesting that the trustee would be discharged from their obligations one year after the contract is complete or abandoned, and this is at odds with the two-year limitation period that we find in *The Limitations Act*. So it looks like this is just a general recommendation to bring those two time periods more into sync, and certainly that's not something I think that there would be a lot of concern about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This kind of housekeeping-type legislation, I think . . . well not to say it's not important. It's very important to the land surveyors of Saskatchewan to be able to have the ability to access this kind of legal remedy. It's important but it is not the one issue I think that the government still needs to look at when it comes to issues land surveyors face, and that's the issue of accretion, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

And I know in my previous career I worked a lot on files where the issue of accretion is something that's a major concern to the land surveyors here in Saskatchewan. And we're the only jurisdiction in Canada where the Ministry of Agriculture actually has a claim on accreted land. And when I talk about accretion, what the legal term refers to is when you have a piece

of property that's along a water's edge and the water recedes, so the actual piece of land becomes larger. And in Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Agriculture very carefully claims those areas that are dried up or exposed by the evaporation of the water, and that's completely at odds with the common law and the rest of Canada and on federal lands, Mr. Speaker.

So this has raised a number of issues over time. And I think it's a little more thorny of an issue, and perhaps that's why the ministry isn't looking at it at this point in time. But it's certainly something I think that has been an issue, a live issue, for surveyors for a number of years, and we would certainly recommend that this be something that the ministry looks into.

And you know, it's not as easy I guess. It's not so much low-hanging fruit as this amendment to *The Builders' Lien Act* would be. It's a much more thorny issue. But it certainly is one where we are out of sync with the rest of the country and where the common law of accretion still applies.

And we know the government has avoided having litigation on this matter over many years now and often settled the disputes or find other ways to make the dispute go away. And what I'm told by the land surveyors is that . . . You know, land surveyors and landowners are practical people. And there were a number of issues even with, you know, road access on oil well sites, and where access is near a water body, it actually is an issue in terms of accretion. But landowners are practical people and so are oil companies, so they've often found ways to resolve the issue without resorting to the courts.

And I think this is an issue that probably will end up in the court at some point unless the ministry is proactive and takes some measures to rectify the sort of inequity or the oddity of the position that's being taken by the Government of Saskatchewan. So I think that's probably a topic for a different day. But certainly with the comments that I heard last night from the land surveyors, it's much more of a live issue I think than this particular issue that's being addressed in the amendments to *The Builders' Lien Act*.

So I think at this time, Mr. Speaker, that is probably the extent of the comments that I would make on this bill, Bill 102, *The Builders' Lien Amendment Act*. We certainly support I think in principle the propositions that are being put forth, but we'll want to take some time — and I know my other colleagues will want to have an opportunity to comment on this as well — take some time to make sure that it's properly canvassed and that we understand if there are any complications or issues that arise from this that are not immediately apparent.

So I will wrap up my comments at this point, and I would like to move adjournment of the debate on Bill No. 102, *The Builders' Lien Amendment Act, 2013*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 102, *The Builders' Lien Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 103

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 103 — *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to join the debate today on Bill No. 103, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2013*. This is a pretty interesting piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, again tying the question of the issuing of hunting or angling licences to the question of whether or not someone is keeping up with their maintenance orders.

And again this builds on other work that has been done in terms of the issuing of licences to drive vehicles, Mr. Speaker, in terms of providing greater force and greater leverage to ensure those maintenance orders are being kept up with.

So referring to the minister's second reading speech and what the member from Saskatoon Northwest had to say in the debate launching this legislation into the House, wherein since 1986, the maintenance enforcement office has been responsible for recording and enforcing registered support orders; the office continuing to have one of the highest collection rates in Canada; where in 2012-13 fiscal, over 91 per cent of payments were collected, resulting in a record-setting amount of over \$39 million in collections. Close the quote.

And again, Mr. Speaker, those payments, we'd do well to remember the human side of what is represented in those numbers. Each of these are court-ordered maintenance payments. This is income whereby families are able to support the raising of children and the maintaining of households. And again in the unfortunate events surrounding the dissolution of a marriage, making certain that there's fair treatment in place for families that have gone through this need for dissolution.

And again I know that this is not something entered into lightly by the court system or by the judiciary in terms of these maintenance payments being ordered. Again this can make the difference between a household living in some basic measure of decency, affording resources for children and their proper rearing, and paying the bills and putting food on the table, Mr. Speaker. This is what I think of when I entertain the question of maintenance orders.

And again that 91 per cent of ordered payments that had been collected in 2012-13, that's a good return rate. And we're glad to see the priority that that kind of return rate would indicate, and again the \$39 million in collections that that represents, Mr. Speaker. The vital difference I'm sure that it's made for those households where that's income that they are counting on, and income that arises from, like I say, the legal dissolution of marriages, be they common law or otherwise, and the way the children are incorporated into those judgments, and making sure that the income is there in an equitable and indeed a court-ordered, judicious manner for those payments, and the difference that that will make or not for the children attached to

these relationships.

Again returning to the minister's second reading speech:

... the MEO [maintenance enforcement office] regularly reviews and suggests updates to the legislation to ensure that it's offering the public the best possible service in the enforcement of support orders. One critical purpose of the Act is that it provides the MEO several enforcement mechanisms to help ensure that support payments are complied with. Currently the director may place garnishments on wages or other income, suspend driver's licences, apply for the denial of federal licences such as passports, and place garnishments with the federal government in order to intercept funds such as GST [goods and services tax] refunds and income tax refunds. The director may also attach and collapse pension entitlements and RRSPs [registered retirement savings plan]. Ultimately the director may apply for the seizure of a payor's property.

Again with each of these measures, Mr. Speaker, it would be good to know in a more precise manner, of the \$39 million that was collected in the previous fiscal year, what portion of those funds arose or were collected as a result of the director invoking different of the means described here in the legislation or in the minister's second reading speech? And what is the estimate that attaches to again expanding this approach of the directors being able to invoke these different sanctions around hunting and angling licences? Is there a projected amount that is thought available to be recovered?

How will this increase the recovery rate, again which is admirable at over 91 per cent and again the difference that that return rate makes for families, Mr. Speaker, and for the kids that are on the other side of these enforcement orders and support orders? It would be good to know what precisely each of these different mechanisms has brought to the table. Is there a greater frequency of one or the other? And then in turn, Mr. Speaker, how this relates to other jurisdictions.

So far as I know, I'm not sure if other jurisdictions have taken a similar approach as regards hunting and fishing licences and what the experience of those jurisdictions has been. But again the basic principle here being that with these other instruments that have been brought to bear, it's helped to arrive at a 91 per cent enforcement success rate on support orders. And again if ... It's not good enough to take things on faith, Mr. Speaker. We'd like to have that demonstrated and substantiated, so we'll be looking for greater detail on that.

Returning to the question of the ... or to the introduction of this piece of legislation in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, with the minister's second reading speech:

The amendments before the Assembly today will provide a further enforcement tool, Mr. Speaker, as they will permit the director of the MEO to direct the Minister of the Environment to prohibit a hunting or angling licence from being issued to a payor who is in arrears on support payments by at least three months. Restricting the ability of an individual to secure a hunting or angling licence is an enforcement tool that will complement the MEO's

existing enforcement tools.

... the intention is that this new tool will only be utilized when other enforcement actions aimed at the financial resources of the payor prove unsuccessful. Accordingly, these amendments require the MEO to take all reasonable steps to enforce the order prior to restricting the payor's ability to secure a hunting or an angling licence.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we'll be interested to see how this is enacted operationally. What sort of plans are there for that co-operation between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Justice and the maintenance enforcement office? We'll be interested to see how this squares with the sharing of information under the freedom of information and privacy provisions of this legislature and of the Government of Saskatchewan.

We'll be interested to see how this squares with the fact that it is not too long ago that the Government of Saskatchewan contracted with a vendor to provide online licensing for hunters and fishers. And I know the different problems that we've heard about that approach to hunting and fishing licences from different vendors throughout the province that have been doing this for many, many years, Mr. Speaker, and the new sort of wrinkles that have arisen courtesy of this government's contracting that service with a Tennessee provider. We'll be interested to see how that impacts the ability to execute something along this line. We'll be interested to see how that affects different sort of privacy provisions that are there for information and how all this squares, Mr. Speaker.

And again it goes back to, what is the precedent for this? What is the immediate sort of impetus? The principle's there with other sort of sanctions being brought to bear, be it with driver's licences or other measures, and having that as the trigger to provide greater sort of suasion on the payment of outstanding maintenance orders. But we'll be again looking to see if there's a precedent this is building on from another jurisdiction, other provincial or territorial jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker. And certainly there are jurisdictions that come to mind in terms of both having similar approaches on the maintenance of enforcement orders and the great incidence of hunting and fishing in those jurisdictions. So we'll be looking for a greater indication on that front, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

Finally referring to the minister's second reading speech, it closes out stating, "the director," again this is at the maintenance enforcement office:

... the director will need to provide the payor with at least 30 days notice of his or her intention to restrict the payor's ability to secure a hunting or angling licence. Mr. Speaker, these amendments provide the MEO with an additional enforcement tool and confirm the government's commitment to the timely payment of support for children and families.

Again how that 30-day notice is enforced, what sort of protocols are there around the ensuring of information and the protection of privacy where warranted, and how this will be

conducted between different government departments, Mr. Speaker. Again there are some assumptions you can make about past practice and how this is related to the matter of driver's licences, to use one example, and maintenance enforcement. But to say it again, it's not enough to take these things on faith. We'd like to have this committed to explicitly by the government as to how this will proceed.

With that, Mr. Speaker, there's other questions that we'll have about this piece of legislation, Bill No. 103. But for the time being, I will take my place and adjourn debate on Bill No. 103, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2013*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 103, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 104

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 104 — *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendment Act, 2013*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, pleased to rise in debate in consideration of Bill No. 104, *An Act to make a consequential amendment resulting from the enactment of The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2013*. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a pretty . . . Given the consequential amendment nature of this particular piece of legislation, the main sort of legislation is Bill No. 103 and this following in the train of that. As such, the meat of this particular consequential amendment concerns the subsection, or the new section 27.1 wherein the following section is added after section 27 of *The Fisheries Act (Saskatchewan), 1994*:

“Prohibition against obtaining licence — maintenance enforcement

27.1 The minister shall prohibit a person from applying for or obtaining a licence if the Director of Maintenance Enforcement has directed the minister to suspend the person's ability to secure a licence pursuant to subsection 43.04(2) of *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act, 1997*”.

Again consequential amendments are just that, Mr. Speaker. The main sort of trigger for this particular piece of legislation is Bill No. 103 and is attendant to the changes brought forward in that piece of legislation. So again, with the idea being that we want to improve upon that 91 per cent enforcement of maintenance orders, that we want to improve on that \$39 million that is collected in that process, Mr. Speaker, and the difference that those dollars represent as income for children and families and the way that court-ordered maintenance provisions are enforced or not in this province, again we think this is worth consideration and can build upon the good

experience or the productive experience I would say, Mr. Speaker, as regards the practice already experienced to date with driver's licences and other measures being brought to bear.

I don't think I need to say much more than that at this time on this question, Mr. Speaker. So with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 104, *An Act to make a consequential amendment resulting from the enactment of The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2013*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill . . . adjournment of Bill No. 104, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 105

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 105 — *The Informal Public Appeals 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 to rise and enter into the debate on Bill No. 105, *An Act respecting Informal Public Appeals*. This is a very timely Act. I think it's an important one, and of course it's one that we'll have some questions on. But I think that, you know, as the minister talked about in his opening remarks, about this is the kind of thing that is done to assist a bereaved family with future education costs or spontaneous appeals made to the public, for example after a fire or flood. And it doesn't address professional fundraising by established charitable organizations.

And I assume that those organizations, if it's professional, would have some method or some system when they have specific causes. And we're seeing that today unfortunately, with the tragedy, the disaster that happened in Philippines, and organizations are stepping up to fill a real need to help the people in the Philippines in that disaster.

But we see this more locally at home, whether it's a flood that's affected a community or a small group of people, and it's pretty specific. And you know, Saskatchewan citizens are well known for stepping up to the plate and helping. And their helping, that's just what we're known for, and helping our neighbours get through those tough times and whether it's a sudden loss of a loved one or setting up an educational fund, that type of thing. So it is quite timely that this is the case with this Bill No. 105. And we recognize that sometimes there are gaps because . . . especially when it comes to a trustee. What happens when the need is met? What happens if the fundraising drive is extremely successful and there's excess funds? What happens in that case?

So it's interesting to know what the government will be doing, how they designed to address this, who will be charged with this. So we haven't had as much time as we would like to hear from professional fundraisers, people maybe in the know of this. We will be interested to know: who did they consult with?

Clearly this is a problem that has been identified. We think that this is an important, a very important issue.

So I think that we will have questions in committee on this, but I do want to say that we look forward to having those conversations. For example, this Act defines what a public appeal is and limits the scope to sporadic or informal appeals, confirms that funds raised through public appeal are held in trust. And often that's an important issue people want to know. So what happens if I do give \$100 or a couple of hundred dollars? What happens to that money? And establish a default scheme where what happens if there's too much money raised or not enough. What will happen in that case?

You know, it talks about establishing a mechanism for disposal of surplus funds and an ability to provide funds when or where needed. They will create a power for the courts to direct the application of surplus funds, set out the powers and duties of trustees, investment of funds, further public appeals, and the transfer of funds to another body. But it . . . Provide for regulatory authority, user-friendly forms, and that type of thing.

So it'll be interesting to see how, when we get into committee, how the government envisions this process. Will it be done through the Public Trustee, public guardians? Is it yet another board or authority that's set up? So these are some of the questions we have. But I am glad to see that it's being tackled, because as Saskatchewan grows and we see that sometimes we can have traumatic, tragic situations happen. And as I said, we are a province that steps up to the plate and we'll do what is needed to be done. But more and more it's important that we don't have people taking advantage of the situation, and unfortunately we have heard of stories of that where, you know, things have gone astray. And we definitely don't want to see that kind of thing.

And when these kind of things happen, sometimes judgment is not always at its best and systems aren't always set up and things aren't always taken into account. And we need to make sure, we need to make sure that they are.

So questions. Who have they consulted? Who haven't they consulted with? Why not? We want to make sure the system is transparent. They have alluded to it, that there will be some access to some information. They're talking about forums, but we have questions about that. Is that the very best way?

We know often these things happen in small communities, and those small communities can be in large cities. But if it's an ethnic community or a neighbourhood community, that's always difficult to ask those difficult questions. But you know, we need to be able to do that.

And so this bill, the informal public appeals, will go a long way we hope to fill the gap of regulations around this, and that people caught in tragic circumstances won't be held in some odd ways. Because you know, I know in small communities there can be a lot of questions. So what happened to the money? Where'd the money go? That there can be accounting for it and then therefore people can be, as you know Saskatchewan people are known for, we are known for being generous people. And this will just support that, and be sure to answer a lot of the questions that might come about because of that.

So as the minister said in his speech, he says:

This bill is careful not to create hurdles for those with good intentions. Individuals who choose not to use the forms to establish a public appeal can proceed without them. The bill will still protect these people, but to a lesser extent.

So it sounds like there will be two, still kind of, you can still do the informal public appeal if it's . . . And now this will be the interesting question. Will there be an amount? Will there have to be some accounting for this? We're not sure. So it sounds like you can do a small appeal, a small informal appeal, but it would be important to have some, still some accountability.

And when he goes on to say rather than hurdles, Mr. Speaker, this bill seeks to remove traps that have evolved . . . so the well-meaning trustees can commence an appeal that are not made victims of their own good intentions. And isn't that the case, Mr. Speaker? Often we're made victims of our own good intentions.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I know many people want to speak to this because it does speak to our good intentions. So, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 105, *The Informal Public Appeals Act*. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 104, the enforcement of maintenance orders consequential amendment . . . Excuse me. On Bill 105, *The Informal Public Appeals Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — It now being the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Makowsky	4107
Heppner	4107
McCall	4107, 4108
Duncan	4107
Chartier	4107
Docherty	4107, 4108
Bradshaw	4108
Forbes	4108
Stewart	4108
Wotherspoon	4108

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes	4109
Vermette	4109
McCall	4109

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

National Child Day and the Child and Family Agenda	
Docherty	4109
International Transgender Day of Remembrance	
Forbes	4110
Moose Jaw Festival of Trees	
Lawrence	4110
Saskatchewan Addictions Awareness Week	
Vermette	4110
Grey Cup Festival	
Steinley	4111
National Diabetes Awareness Month	
Doke	4111
Opposition Support for Trade Agreement	
Hickie	4111

QUESTION PERIOD

Combatting Bullying	
Brotten	4112
Wall	4112
Amendments to <i>The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code</i>	
Forbes	4112
Wyant	4113
Revenue Sharing With Municipalities	
Wotherspoon	4113
Reiter	4113
Recommendations on Long-Term Care	
Chartier	4114
Duncan	4114
Support for Teachers	
Wotherspoon	4115
Morgan	4115

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 116 — <i>The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)</i>	
Reiter	4116
Bill No. 117 — <i>The Municipalities Consequential Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
<i>Loi de 2013 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée <i>The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2013 (No. 2)</i></i>	
Reiter	4117

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Ottenbreit	4117
------------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 112 — <i>The Accounting Profession Act</i>	
McCall	4117
Bill No. 99 — <i>The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Vermette	4119

Bill No. 98 — <i>The Child Care Act, 2013/Loi de 2013 sur les garderies d'enfants</i>	
Forbes	4121
Bill No. 100 — <i>The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Chartier	4125
Bill No. 101 — <i>The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Wotherspoon	4125
Bill No. 107 — <i>The Wildfire Act</i>	
Forbes	4127
Bill No. 111 — <i>The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Nilson	4129
Bill No. 108 — <i>The Athletics Commission Act</i>	
Chartier	4131
Bill No. 102 — <i>The Builders' Lien Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
Sproule	4132
Bill No. 103 — <i>The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
<i>Loi de 2013 modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires</i>	
McCall	4134
Bill No. 104 — <i>The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Consequential Amendment Act, 2013</i>	
McCall	4136
Bill No. 105 — <i>The Informal Public Appeals Act</i>	
Forbes	4136

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