



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

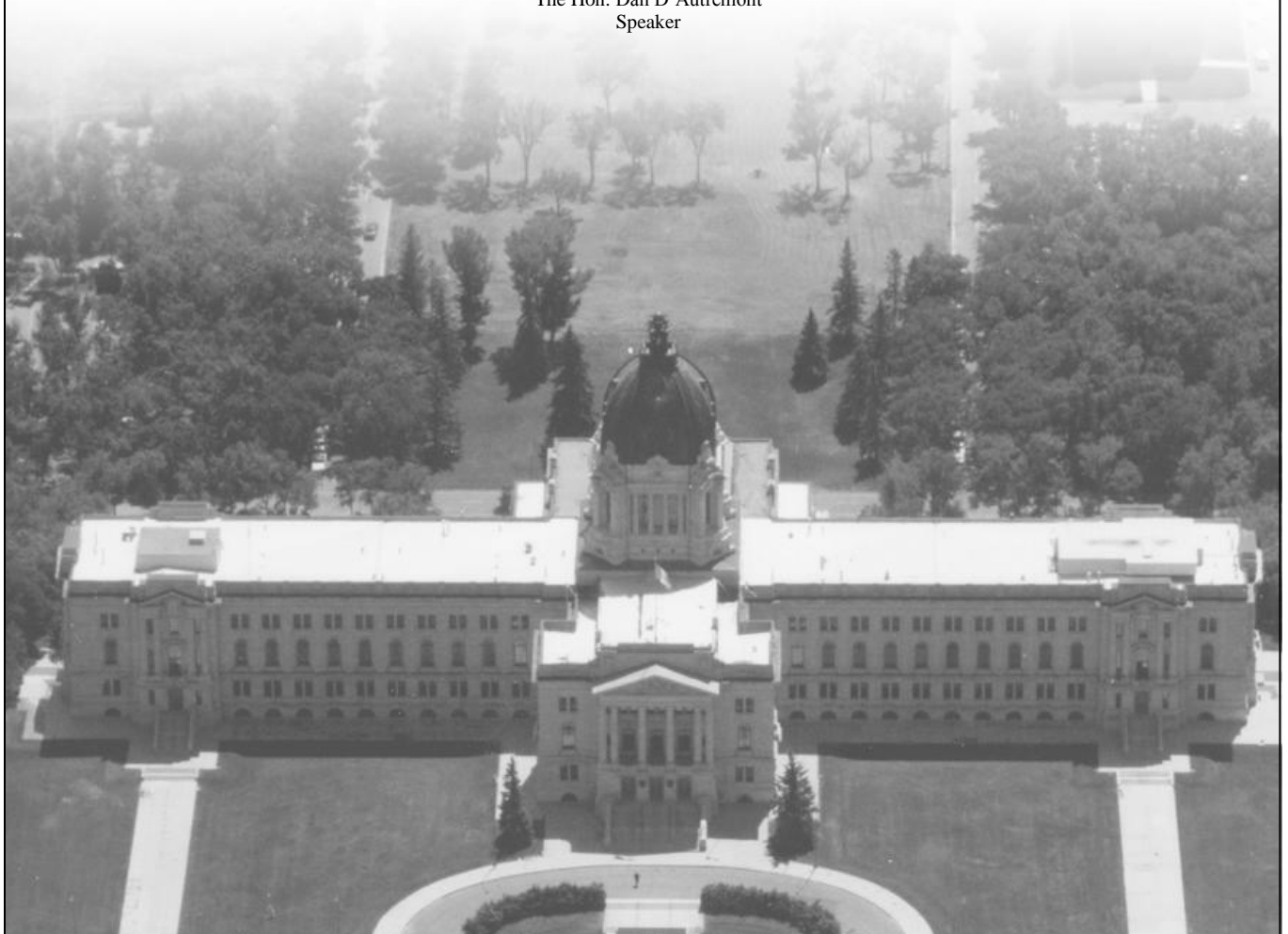
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

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



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave to make an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The Premier has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, there's really only one thing better than having a Grey Cup champion down here, and that's having Grey Cup champions here and up in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, it's always an exciting time here at the legislature when we are paid a visit by a Governor General, and the current Governor General, David Johnston, is doing a great job in leadership for our country. But I think even he would understand that he may not be our favourite Governor General, Mr. Speaker. Our favourite Governor General is Albert Henry George Grey, the 4th Earl of Grey who gave Canadian football the Grey Cup. And, Mr. Speaker, we're particularly pleased to be able to welcome the Grey Cup and its bearers here to the Legislative Assembly today. They are all seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

This building is now 101 years old, as we all know. As fate would have it, the building is now being featured prominently as part of the festivities of the 101st Grey Cup. Mr. Speaker, to make way for this event, I want to congratulate all sides of the House who very presciently, last year in the 100th anniversary — and you, Mr. Speaker, had a role in this — decided that the long-standing tradition of the House, of this House, for red carpet would be changed to green carpet this year, Mr. Speaker. This has made complete sense, especially in the wake of the events of the last 48 hours.

Mr. Speaker, the Riders are truly important to the province in a way that's hard to describe to someone who's not from here. It's true for rural Saskatchewan. It's true for urban Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan. We have amazing superstitions and traditions that date back through the years and right now, Mr. Speaker, this is the absolute best time in the history, in the life of this storied franchise. We have now been to I guess four Grey Cups since 2007. We've won two of those Grey Cups.

Mr. Speaker, we make national news and international news. Tom Hanks shows up at our football games now, Mr. Speaker. As I said outside, you know, it was interesting, we as a Rider nation, we all saw Tom Hanks in the *Green Mile* and he was here to see us all on the Green Mile. Mr. Speaker, we had Chris

Berman talking about the Saskatchewan Roughriders on the ESPN morning show yesterday and then again . . . well two days ago, and then again yesterday on *Monday Night Football*.

And so we're grateful that they play great football. We're grateful that they're champions. But we're even happier that they're examples for the province, provide leadership, and they really bring Saskatchewan together like no other institution I can think of, and for that we're very grateful.

So if I miss a few I apologize but, Mr. Speaker, bear with me in introducing, first of all, the Grey Cup. Everyone can recognize that. It's being held by Chris Getzlaf, no. 89, and Geroy Simon, no. 81. So the top Canadian in the Grey Cup and Geroy Simon who was in three other Grey Cups prior to Sunday I think, but caught his first, well his first touchdown pass and his second Grey Cup touchdown pass. And he did it in green and white.

And he's with the best executive CEO [chief executive officer] in the CFL [Canadian Football League]. Right beside Geroy is our very own Jim Hopson. Not too long ago, the Deputy Premier reminds me, that he was director of education for the Sturgis . . . among other places, but in Sturgis, Saskatchewan here.

Mr. Speaker, someone who, together with his assistant general manager, general managers put together this team and made some very, very bold off-season moves to make this very historic and really almost picture-book finish happen is our general manager, Brendan Taman. And he is seated . . . But seated beside him is the assistant general manager for the Riders and a good friend of the member for Regina Dewdney and an outstanding offensive lineman in his own day and an '07 Grey Cup champion, Jeremy O'Day.

And I'm going to miss some of the names, and I apologize. But people wondered last week, who is going to cover Andy Fantuz? We all knew Weldon Brown's going to cover Andy Fantuz. And Twila Brown, Weldon's wife, is here up from Houston, Texas, so we want to say hello. As well as the team chaplain, a great guy well known in Regina, Rod Donison is there. Give us a wave, Rod. And no. 70, Steve Mazurak, is over there, an institution with the Riders.

So we just want to welcome you. You're representative of the team. A lot of them had to leave. We're grateful you could be here. Again, thanks for the example you set. Thanks for bringing this province together in ways that are really hard to describe. And welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition, it is a true pleasure to join in in the welcome and the words of congratulation that the Premier has already stated.

In the Premier's remarks, he talked about some of the traditions and he talked about the green carpet. And, Mr. Speaker, you will know we also have fairly strict rules about props in the Assembly. And I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for being lenient in this case because not one of us on the floor or one of us in the province would call the Grey Cup a prop. And it brings a smile

to all of our faces to see it here in the Assembly today.

I want to extend a huge thanks to the leadership, the management, the coaches, the players really for making dreams come true for so many Saskatchewan people.

And when it comes to Rider nation, when it comes to the Riders, it really is something, Mr. Speaker, that brings us all together. It transcends some of the differences we may have from time to time in politics. It transcends some of the geographical differences in our province, transcends some of the age differences that we might have.

Saskatchewan is thrilled with the Grey Cup and so happy to see it here today. I want to say thank you for the roles that you have played in making this happen. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to once again welcome the Grey Cup and welcome the entire Rider contingent who are here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, just if I may as a part of introduction of guests, to say this. Coming up next month is the dispersal draft. And just because dispersal drafts work this way, it means we'll say, potentially say goodbye to some Saskatchewan Roughriders we love who will join the RedBlacks.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we might want to consider, by resolution of this House, perhaps, even making a statement to the country: Saskatchewan's a have province; we give every day to Ottawa. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think we should deserve special dispensation to not send them any players, to keep them all right here in the province.

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — I ask leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, the reason I ask extended leave today because there is a very special group of grade 10 students from the Yorkton Regional High School today. They're seated in the west gallery. There's 41 of them.

Their teacher, Perry Ostapowich, is pretty much a very recognizable fixture in this Assembly. I think he probably brings more students to this Assembly than any teacher probably in history. With him is his intern, Laura Sveinbjornson, as well as educational assistant Kaylee Duncan. And their driver, Pat Rawlick, I know very well. I don't see him up there. He's pretty hard to miss.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I ask extended introduction is because Mr. Ostapowich is very good at engaging the students. In fact

he sort of started a bit of a game here awhile back where if they contact the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], they might get a shout-out in the Assembly. And it's a lot of fun but also, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a very good example that he teaches, where people in public office can be very approachable. And they should be very approachable.

And because of that, I think 3:30 this morning I was answering emails. Yes, I'll introduce you. There's quite a few — a few on Twitter, Facebook, and some others. And it's just something that Perry has done over the years that really engages these students in not only . . . Their knowledge of this Assembly is second to none I think and the ongoing operation of this House, but also again the students being able to engage with their local MLA, myself. And I know he's done the same thing in the past with his former MLA, the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

So a few shout-outs I want to give out is Marisa Desmarais — just give us a wave when I mention your name — Jillian Just, Zackary Fry, Meagan Flunder, Kelby Brinley, Addison Wiebe, Emma Teneycke, Giac Deswiage. Two that actually asked the Premier to give them a shout-out — I saw he was twittering with them — but Wyatt Strutynski, Courtney Matechuk. And two very special people to me; they're actually family members. Luke Walters is my nephew so to speak, and my nephew Turner . . . Sorry, not Turner. Turner's not here. Brodie Ottenbreit. He refers to me as his favourite Uncle Greg. One point I'd like to make . . . I love him.

Since 2010, November 30, 2010, Mr. Ostapowich has brought 247 students to meet me here. This is his 22nd group since he's been a teacher, well over 700 students to this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And one point I'd like to make before I do take my seat is that the member from Dewdney, my seatmate here, was quite upset when he heard who was coming because apparently Mr. Ostapowich coached the minor football team that beat my seatmate's team from Regina.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to recognize these students and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Request leave for extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off before I get over to some very, very special guests here today, I just want to quickly join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and welcome our contingent that's here today. As a kid born and raised in Regina and cheering for the team my whole life, like so many others in this province, just can't simply can't express what this means to Rider nation to win one on home turf and in Taylor Field on Mosaic Stadium, and you've done us all so proud. So thank you, President Hopson, General Manager Taman, Mr. Getzlaf, Mr. Simon. Thank you so very much, Jeremy O'Day, Steve Mazurak, the whole team.

We really appreciate what you bring to our province.

And I'd like to now focus some attention to some very, very special guests that are with us up here in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker. So to you and through you, it's my pleasure to welcome a contingent of a campaign here in Regina, A Million Acts of Friendship. Now this campaign in fact is going nationwide and across our province, but it started right here in Regina. A group of leaders sit in our Assembly that represent teachers, parents, and students here in Regina, and I'd like to introduce just a few of them who I'll be sharing a little bit more about them here in the Assembly here today.

But I'd like to recognize Janice Taylor. If you could give us a wave there, Janice. She's the founder and CEO of Just Be Friends. She's an impressive entrepreneur from Regina. She in fact has travelled the world with Oprah and has been recognized for her work. And she's focused in a big way on making a difference in the community with A Million Acts of Friendship. And it's a pleasure to have Janice here today.

I'd like to also welcome Ginger Braaten here today. She's a program director with A Million Acts of Friendship. But she's probably most importantly a local mom to Ruth M. Buck and a school community council member for a long time and took a lead role in initiating the activities and the piloting of A Million Acts of Friendship over at Ruth M. Buck, which has now spawned the next stages of this program.

There's some very special guests from my constituency seated here today, and that would be teacher Tracy Muchowski and eight student leaders — if you can give us wave — from Ruth M. Buck School, one of the pilot schools. Give us a wave there. And they're wearing the Just Be Me shirts with I think on the back it says, No More Labels.

And there's another group of 28 grade 5 and 7 students — give us a wave — from École Wilfrid Walker, along with grade 7 and 8 student leaders from that school as well, and their teacher, Emma Champ. And these students, these teachers, Janice and Ginger represent leaders from within our province who are building a campaign that's certainly important to us all. So I ask all members of this Assembly to welcome these leaders to their Assembly.

[13:45]

While still on my feet — excuse me, Mr. Speaker — it's my pleasure to welcome my sister, Chantel LaHaye, to the Assembly here today. And she's here with some very special guests. Chantel is a nurse here in Regina, and her husband always helps me with building projects, so I appreciate that as well. But she's here with two of my nephews. I have six nephews. Elijah, can you give us a wave? And Nicholas. And these are grade 1, grade 3, and also really great fishing partners, Mr. Speaker.

And they're joined by two international students, one of whom is staying with Chantel's family, and whom we've got to know quite well. They're from Japan. They're studying English here in Regina. And I'd ask Yasue Kashihara to give us a wave. Yasue is from Fukuoka in Japan. And she's here with Sara Nishimura from Nagasaki. And they're both going to school at

Miller and enjoying their time here in Regina. And you'll notice that these students from Japan, it didn't take long for them to put on the Roughrider gear. They've got it on up in the Assembly there today, and I know they were cheering hard on Sunday. So I ask all members of this Assembly to join in welcoming my family and these two special guests from Japan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And there's more, Mr. Speaker. I recognize, sitting up in the very top of the east gallery there, a leader within Moose Jaw, a principal from within Moose Jaw, a good friend of mine, Derek Hassen. Derek's not only a great educator, he's also one heck of a hockey player, Mr. Speaker, and I ask all members to welcome Derek Hassen to his Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to welcome a grade 1 class from Lakeview, Mrs. Friesen's class, and they came for the festivities out front today and decided to stay for lunch and now to the Chamber today.

And with this class, Mr. Speaker, if I could also have a wave from two of the cutest Rider fans. Reilly and Gracie, could you give us a little wave? These are my girls, and my wife, Ali, has joined them as well. So please help me welcome the entire class from Lakeview here today. Thank you.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of anti-bullying. And we know that bullying causes serious harm, and the consequences of bullying are devastating, including depression, self-harm, addictions, and suicide. And we know that bullying is a human rights issue, one of safety and inclusion. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to protect Saskatchewan's children from bullying because the lives of young people are at stake and this government must do more to protect our youth.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise petitions on behalf of extremely concerned residents and families from across southern Saskatchewan as it relates to the entirely unacceptable closure of the emergency room at Regina's Pasqua Hospital. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to ensure our capital city has two 24-hour emergency rooms.

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

These petitions are signed by concerned residents from Regina, Central Butte, and Raymore. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of residents of Far Reserve Road. This road is used as a main road into the regional landfill which is operated by a tripartite agreement between the communities of La Ronge, Air Ronge, and Lac La Ronge Indian Band. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to pave Far Reserve Road, which has not been given the proper resources by this government. The dust on this road is causing respiratory problems for the elders and community members. It also creates poor visibility for drivers. This is a safety issue, in that we have students walking along a very dusty road to school. This road has a high volume of traffic in this is the only road to the regional dump.

It is signed by many northern residents. I so present.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of replacing the gym at Sacred Heart Community School. The undersigned residents of the province bring to the Assembly's attention the following: that the gym at Sacred Heart Community School in north central Regina is now quite literally falling apart, has been closed indefinitely since last spring, and is no longer safe for students or staff. Mr. Speaker, there is a temporary solution in place in terms of the refurbishment of the old sanctuary at the old Sacred Heart Church, but this is something that calls out for a permanent solution.

The petitioners point out that Sacred Heart Community School is the largest school in North Central with 450-plus students, 75 per cent of whom are First Nations and Métis. They point out that enrolment has increased by 100 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, Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym, Mr. Speaker. And in the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners 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 good citizens from Moose Jaw, Weyburn, and Regina. I so present.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Grey Cup Victory Celebration

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, when the sea of green took over downtown Regina and the whole province, it was evident that the Rider nation wears its Rider pride in full force in Saskatchewan and in Canada. And today we saw that parade of proud fans continue. We were pleased to have the victory parade that began at Mosaic Stadium travel along Regina's famed Green Mile and end here at the legislature.

It's great to see that Saskatchewan people have rallied around the organizers and the volunteers who helped make this week a success. Players and their families, coaches, and team support staff joined the thousands of fans who filled the steps of the legislature to continue the celebration.

The victory parade was well attended, and Rider fans had another opportunity to join the whole province in the celebration of the unbelievable performance of the Saskatchewan Roughriders in their Grey Cup victory.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Saskatchewan Roughriders and all their supporters for a successful Grey Cup event. We all look forward to another green Grey Cup in 2014. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today is a great day of celebration for the 2013 Grey Cup champion Saskatchewan Roughriders. Just a few minutes ago, as we know, they hit the streets for the Grey Cup victory parade. The CFL championship team along with the Rider Pep Band, Roughrider management, and the coveted Grey Cup greeted fans as they travelled down Albert Street from Mosaic Stadium before making their way to the steps of the Legislative Building.

Mr. Speaker, it was a proud moment for Saskatchewan as dedicated Roughrider fans bundled up and, with their Rider pride to keep them warm, gathered in front of the Legislative Building to greet their beloved Riders and congratulate them on their big win. In addition to adoring fans, team family members and friends gathered on the front steps as well to join in the celebration. Mr. Speaker, as we know, not only does it take a great team to win a championship. It takes tons of support from those very important people closest to them.

After a short program, the crowd roared as the team hoisted the Grey Cup high above the steps from the Premier's balcony. Surely it'll be a memory for all fans to treasure for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all colleagues to join me in congratulating the Saskatchewan Roughriders, the heroes of Rider nation, on their outstanding Grey Cup victory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### A Million Acts of Friendship

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to recognize the A Million Acts of Friendship campaign here today. This is a new program already working to build and support healthy relationships and reduce bullying in our schools. The social education platform was created by local entrepreneur Janice Taylor and her team. Janice is committed to making a difference in the community.

But bullying is a serious issue. As a teacher and a member of this community, I am disturbed by the damage bullying causes to many children's lives. This platform helps families and children connect with one another and with their communities in positive ways. Today we are joined by students, parents, and teachers from both Ruth M. Buck and École Wilfrid Walker.

Last spring these guests and hundreds of students in my constituency took part in the Million Acts of Friendship challenge as a pilot. They were among the first in Canada to participate in this innovative school-based program. I want to recognize a local mom and now program director, Ginger Braaten, and all the students, parents, teachers for making a difference and for providing their leadership.

Participating in A Million Acts of Friendship challenge is a great way to support healthy relationships and activities in our communities. I've signed up, and I'd like to challenge all other MLAs and community leaders to join me and participate in their communities as well. Mr. Speaker, I ask all in this Assembly to recognize Janice Taylor and her team for their tremendous work and to thank all the local students, parents, and teachers for their leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Community Leader Chosen as Game Changer

**Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the final game of the Roughriders' regular season, Scotiabank announced that Darren Whitehead, a constituent of mine and former Prince Albert city councillor, had been named the Scotiabank Game Changer for the Roughriders' 2013 season. Darren was recognized on the field during halftime for the outstanding work he has done in the community and was awarded a \$25,000 donation for Special Olympics Saskatchewan.

Darren is highly deserving of this recognition as he is a great example of how one person can make a meaningful difference to the lives of people in the community. For 30 years Darren has served as a leader, mentor, and coach to athletes with an intellectual disability, helping the development and growth of the Special Olympics. He has coached several medal-winning floor hockey teams at the provincial, national, and international levels. As a referee, he has officiated 15 provincials and was referee-in-chief for the three Special Olympic Canadian national games.

Darren was selected as the 2013 season Scotiabank Game Changer from a group of eight finalists and was selected as the winner based on a combination of fan voting and a judging panel.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Darren Whitehead on this great achievement and thanking him for his hard work in the Prince Albert community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Homes for the Holidays Tour

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today to recognize the Homes for the Holidays tour, which took place in Regina November 8th and 9th, with all proceeds going to Kids Help Phone.

Mr. Speaker, Homes for the Holidays has been a successful part of Kids Help Phone in Regina for the past 14 years. This year my husband, Terry, and I were pleased to have our home in the tour. This year over 500 people bought passports and toured our homes, and over \$20,000 dollars was raised. Mr. Speaker, that was a lot of folks in my house.

Thanks to this incredible generosity of the community, Kids Help Phone has been able to continue to ensure counsellors can be an important go-to resource for Saskatchewan youth in need of help. By providing this immediate, caring support to children and youth located in urban and rural communities throughout Saskatchewan, Kids Help Phone significantly improves youth mental health.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a big thank you to SaskTel who was the major sponsor for this event. We would also like to thank the following sponsors for their support: Remax Crown Real Estate, Greystone Managed Investments, Co-operators, Brown Communications Group, Tamco Homes, Superior Cabinets, CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.], My 92.1, Premiere Van Lines, STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], and Clements Printers.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing this year's successful Homes for the Holidays fundraisers for Kids Help Phone right here in Saskatchewan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### New School for Hudson Bay

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge a very significant event which took place in the community of Hudson Bay. Last week the community of Hudson Bay began the construction on a brand new school. I had the privilege of attending this event along with dignitaries and representatives from the North East School Division. It was a wonderful event and is a very exciting announcement for the whole community.

Mr. Speaker, the new school in Hudson Bay will have room for almost 400 students, ranging from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. It will also include a child care centre with 36 available spaces. The total cost of the project will be about \$28 million, with our government committing \$17 million towards this project.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that, since 2007, our government has built 20 brand new schools, completed 23 major renovations, and completed over 900 smaller capital projects, investing approximately 600 million so we can continue to educate the future leaders of this province.

Mr. Speaker, this is just more proof that while the NDP [New Democratic Party] closed schools, 176 to be exact, merely managing . . . barely managing decline and ignoring rural Saskatchewan residents, our government will continue to meet the challenges that come with a growing province and will continue to build new schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

### Fond du Lac Firefighters Win Competitions

**Mr. Doke:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to draw attention to the Fond du Lac fire department, which consists of Thurman Mercredi, Brendon McDonald, Lonnie Augier, Bradley Mercredi, Dejay Mercredi, Jerome McDonald, and last but not least, the fire chief, George McDonald.

The team won the 2013 Provincial Aboriginal Firefighters Competition held at the Peter Ballantyne urban reserve in Prince Albert this past July. Mr. Speaker, then they moved on to compete against teams from across the country and won the National Aboriginal Firefighters Competition held at Walpole Island First Nation in Ontario this past August.

While certainly an impressive achievement on its own, Mr. Speaker, the honour is only compounded when noticing that this particular fire department has won provincials eight out of the last 10 years and nationals five times in the past 10 years. Through hard work, discipline, and a commitment not only to their community but to their province, they have truly raised the bar and become leaders by example. And for this we thank them and recognize their accomplishments here today.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the Saskatchewan legislature join with me in congratulating these individuals on this achievement and thank them for continuing to keep our northern communities safe. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Emergency Medical Services in Regina

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The closure of the Pasqua ER [emergency room] through the nights is hugely concerning to Regina and area residents. So I have a number of questions related to this development, Mr. Speaker. First of all, to the Premier: how many medical clinics are open in Regina throughout the night?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I just want to say in a general

sense that this is a very serious issue for our capital city and for the province because it impacts emergency care available in southern Saskatchewan. It is a temporary closure, and this needs to be stressed, Mr. Speaker. Any closure is obviously not what we want, but it is temporary.

Mr. Speaker, I have had a meeting again . . . The minister and I have been talking about this, as he has with his officials and with the region. We talked again today, and I have assured him that he has whatever resources he needs from the government to bring this to a quick conclusion, the temporary closure.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, there are some issues even beyond financial for all of this in terms of just the availability of emergency docs, but there is much work being done today. And the Minister of Health is aware that he has the full support of the government and whatever resources he needs to bring this to a very speedy conclusion, this temporary closure.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for those overview remarks. My question was specifically about how many medical clinics are open throughout the night. For the medical clinics that are on operation here in Regina, my question for the Premier is, when is the last patient accepted to those medical clinics in the evening?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll give way for the Minister of Health to answer the very specific questions that are put forward by the opposition. I can tell him though and tell the House today that I believe the Meadow Clinic, which is immediately across from Pasqua, can certainly provide some assistance to emergencies because of the nature of the qualified people. They have now extended their hours till, I believe it's till midnight. And that's seven days a week, Mr. Speaker, which is a help.

But again, to bring this temporary change or reduction in hours of service to a speedy conclusion is the government's number one priority. And the Minister of Health and the Ministry of Health and the region and I would expect the doctors are working hard to ensure that happens.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think yesterday when we were having this discussion in question period about the hours that it would be available, I believe it was said till 9 p.m. I'd have to check *Hansard* for the exact. But that's why we're asking these questions because patients obviously need to know where to go in the event of a life-threatening emergency.

According to information that's available and with some checking, it's my understanding that there are no clinics that are available throughout the night and that the last patients accepted to those clinics, accepted, is at 8:30 in the evening. So this would be one change, but it's important to know the policy across the board.

So my question to the Premier: for the medical clinics that are



operational for emergencies in the night when the Pasqua ER is closed, is the General emergency room the one facility where there's 24-7 care for life-threatening emergencies for patients in Regina and area?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, directly to the Leader of the Opposition's question and what he phrased life-threatening emergencies, first and foremost we would direct people to the General Hospital, Mr. Speaker, which will be open 24 hours a day throughout this time, Mr. Speaker. It will be fully staffed as it normally is, particularly to serve those issues, life-threatening, traumatic, neurology, and other types of, those types of issues that would be sent to the General Hospital.

And as the Premier has indicated, Mr. Speaker, during the beginning weeks of this temporary disruption at the Pasqua, the Meadow Primary clinic will be open until midnight seven days a week to deal with those issues that wouldn't be a life-threatening emergency.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — So with the Pasqua ER being closed from 7:30 till 8 in the morning and with the nearby clinic closing at midnight as one small relief valve, the fact is that Regina General will have huge pressure in what is already a very busy ER. So my question to the Premier: what is specifically being done at the General Hospital in the ER in order to ensure that the health professionals working there can cope with essentially doing the work of two ERs throughout the night?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the General Hospital emergency department will be fully staffed during this period throughout the night, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well the region is working with the public to ensure that the public have other options that are available, Mr. Speaker.

First and foremost we would refer people to the HealthLine to have that immediate referral for help, Mr. Speaker. As well the region is working with other clinics within the community to determine whether or not there's capacity to also have them extend their hours, Mr. Speaker. So the region is working to see if there are those options available, Mr. Speaker.

But I would say the General Hospital emergency department is open 24 hours a day. The Pasqua will be open, Mr. Speaker, for much of the day in the emergency department. There will be health personnel at the emergency department at the Pasqua in the event that somebody needs transferred by a paramedic to the General Hospital. And the region is working with all the southern regions to ensure that they know what the procedures are in place to ensure that people will be referred to the General, which already does take place.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So when the Pasqua

ER closes at 7:30, that means that Regina General will have to deal with the life-threatening serious situations, whether it's a motor vehicle accident, a heart attack, or a stroke. So it's important to know what specific steps are being taken at the Regina General to ensure that professionals there can cope with the increased number of patients coming through the door.

So my question to the Premier: what specific steps are being taken in order to ensure that patient safety is not being compromised?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I just want to just ensure that the member opposite knows and the public know that, regardless of this temporary service disruption at the Pasqua Hospital, patients who to this point require specialized, for example specialized cardiac, neurology, and trauma care are currently transported to the General Hospital. That is the first option available, Mr. Speaker, for those traumatic incidences, those traumatic events, Mr. Speaker. That will continue, Mr. Speaker. Communication is taking place with all the southern regions to ensure that they still do know that that will be, Mr. Speaker, the first option that emergency medical personnel do know and are aware of, Mr. Speaker.

As well, as we move into this period that will begin later this week, the region will be evaluating the volume and the flow of patients to make any adjustments that they would need to to ensure that there is sufficient coverage within the emergency department.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Yesterday in question period we had some discussion about who will be left at the Pasqua ER in the event that patients show up seeking urgent care. So my question to the Premier: what kind of health care professionals will be at the Pasqua ER when the doors close at 7:30 p.m.?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at this point the region is proposing that a paramedic and an additional paramedic team be brought on staff during the hours that the Pasqua emergency department will no longer be accepting people coming in. Mr. Speaker, the team paramedic will be there to transport individuals that may need to go to the emergency room at the General Hospital, Mr. Speaker. They've also looked at, perhaps with the help of both the paramedics as well, perhaps as having a triage nurse available. They're still making that final determination, but at this point it will be a paramedic, Mr. Speaker.

They will also ensure that people who arrive that aren't in an emergency situation do know about the extended hours across the street from the Pasqua Hospital at the Meadow which, it has been mentioned several times, will be open until midnight.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health. Excuse me, I recognize the Opposition House Leader . . . Opposition Leader.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the topic that the minister was discussing, Mr. Speaker, in an event that someone shows up at the emergency room, there was a question, Mr. Speaker, about what health professionals will be there. I believe it was reported earlier on in the *Leader-Post* that there wouldn't be a health professional there, so it's good to know that a paramedic will be there. My question though is, how many health professionals will be there? What is the composition of the paramedic team in the event, Mr. Speaker, that multiple patients show up with life-threatening concerns at the same time?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, the health region, Mr. Speaker, is putting together the contingency plans for the Pasqua, have indicated that they've decided that it will be paramedic, an additional paramedic team will be brought on staff, Mr. Speaker, to transport individuals coming into the Pasqua Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, in the event of an incident, some sort of traumatic accident, Mr. Speaker, what normally would already take place is, in those severe cases, they would already be going to the General Hospital. The paramedics, the 911 already know that that is in place and has been up until this point, Mr. Speaker, that the General Hospital is the preferred location for those traumatic incidences.

In the event that there is walk-up traffic, Mr. Speaker, at the emergency room, they will be either transported by ambulance, will be instructed to make their own efforts to get to the hospital if it is not a serious incident or, Mr. Speaker, be dealt with at another location such as the Meadow Primary clinic.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — So my question, Mr. Speaker, in the event that someone shows up at the Pasqua ER and they need to be transported by ambulance to the General for their care, how does this work? Are there multiple ambulances that are there waiting to transport patients? How does the backup system work if the triage has occurred and it has determined that the patient needs to be transported rapidly to the General?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the event that the ambulance would be needed and the paramedic team would be needed to transport somebody the short distance to the General Hospital, in that case, Mr. Speaker, there are other ambulances available within the city. They would make arrangements to ensure that there was that backup that would be brought to the Pasqua Hospital, Mr. Speaker, and continue that way to ensure that, while there may be a patient taken over to the General Hospital for that short distance over to the General, Mr. Speaker, there are other ambulances that will be on call and available within the city.

[14:15]

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

## Seniors' Care Services

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, it's not only emergency and acute care that is getting worse under this government. We know that seniors' care is getting worse as well. Sandra Celantano is here with us today because she is frustrated about overcrowding and understaffing in care facilities. Her husband Joe is at Extendicare Parkside here in Regina. Sandra saw call bells ring unanswered and residents, including Joe, left to wait far too long for help.

But what really upset Sandra was the lack of appropriate support for the physical therapy that Joe and other residents desperately needed. To the minister: why is this government not properly supporting physical therapy for those who desperately need it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we've made our way through 2013, this has been an issue that has been raised a great deal in terms of seniors' care. Mr. Speaker, we are making our way through applications from health regions to improve services, Mr. Speaker. What the members will know that, over the last six years, while the number of beds have essentially remained the same and the case mixes remained essentially the same, Mr. Speaker, over those six years, we've seen a 10 per cent increase in staff within long-term care, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the specifics of this facility and the region's allocation of different health professionals, I won't speak to that specific issue, Mr. Speaker. I can follow-up with the member after question period. But, Mr. Speaker, we have made significant strides to improve the care for seniors within our facilities. And, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to next month, not only releasing the Urgent Issues Action Fund \$10 million, but also a planning session for how we look to provide care to seniors better in the future.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, Sandra's husband Joe is crammed into a room with three other residents, all of whom have wheelchairs, and all of whom are expected to do their physical therapy in that same crowded room. There is no dedicated space in that facility for physical therapy. So Sandra and Joe have actually tried to do his therapy in the hallway, amidst the coffee carts and laundry carts and patients and visitors. Those are hardly optimal conditions, Mr. Speaker. Yet we know from the CEO tour report that concerns about a lack of support for physical therapy exist in care facilities all over the province.

Again to the minister: why is this government not properly supporting physical therapy for those who desperately need it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, as a part of the member opposite's question speaks to the space issue within some of our facilities, Mr. Speaker, we know that the way that we built

long-term care facilities back in the '40s and the '50s and the '60s, Mr. Speaker — many of those facilities which we are still using today — were not built in a way that we would ever do today. Mr. Speaker, today we build a facility, it's single rooms with individual bathrooms. It's not four to a room. But, Mr. Speaker, what we're dealing with is unfortunately a legacy of far too little infrastructure and capital renewal within this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent \$1 billion in our first six years of government on health capital, Mr. Speaker, over 300 million of that working with communities to build new long-term care facilities in 13 communities, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a new facility for 100 individuals in Saskatoon. As well, Mr. Speaker, capital planning for a replacement in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker. But over \$300 million in government funds, in taxpayers' funds, will only get us 13 new long-term care facilities out of 156. Mr. Speaker, many of them are aging, and we're working our ways through that infrastructure backlog.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, this isn't just an issue of overcrowding. Sandra has had to put a lot of pressure on the care facility to make sure Joe actually received the physical therapy he desperately needed. Sandra feels fortunate because she was there to advocate and to speak out for her husband. But she is worried about what's happening to other seniors who don't have a strong advocate to demand proper care.

To the minister: how many residents in care facilities should be receiving physical therapy but are not?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that our health regions and our long-term care, the administration within long-term care and our affiliates do the best that they can, Mr. Speaker, to provide the services that our residents require, Mr. Speaker. That's why they review the cases every three months to check to see whether or not the requirements of each individual have changed, Mr. Speaker. That's why this government has invested heavily into long-term care, heavily into health care over the last six years — a 48 per cent increase in the health regions' budget, who do deliver health care on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, on behalf of the government. Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion in additional funding, Mr. Speaker.

And we've seen, while there is still more work to be done, Mr. Speaker, we've seen significant gains in terms of staffing within long-term care, in terms of maintenance within long-term care, and in terms of new builds and new construction to replace what is an aging system, an aging infrastructure, but more work to be done, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, Sandra Celantano's concerns should not come as a surprise to this government. The CEO tour report identified similar problems at this particular facility. The

review noted a shortage of space to undergo physical therapy and not enough staff.

To the minister: was a business case received to address these particular problems at this facility, and will the government be providing funding through its one-time payment fund?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, it doesn't come as a surprise because it was as a part of the CEO tour. And what we heard back from residents and families, Mr. Speaker, perhaps it would have been a surprise to the NDP because they had never gone out to families and residents and heard first-hand and toured all 156 facilities across this province, Mr. Speaker. We've done that for the first time in this province's history.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the requests for the \$10 million, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to speak to any specific request as they're still being evaluated by the ministry, Mr. Speaker. We hope to have those dollars out over the course of the next couple of weeks. We will be requiring though, Mr. Speaker, that those dollars be attached to something specific in the report, and that the regions will follow up to the government in 60, 90, and 120 days to ensure that the dollars actually made it to the residents, that quality improved because of those dollars, Mr. Speaker, and that we can use that to inform future decisions of the government in terms of investment.

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

### Prince Albert Bridge

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday when I asked the Minister of Highways about a second bridge for Prince Albert and this is what he said: "... if we can see more economic development and more traffic in that area, Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly look at it into the future." Mr. Speaker, if there's economic growth. Mr. Speaker, if there's more traffic. That's what this government's answer is. This government is supposed to be ready for growth, but in the real world they're just ready for excuses. To the minister: why does this government have so little faith in Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have great faith in northern Saskatchewan, great faith in the P.A. [Prince Albert] area. Mr. Speaker, that's why we commissioned a report with the city of Prince Albert and the RMs [rural municipality] in that area to look at whether a second bridge was warranted. I would ask the member opposite if he has read the report, Mr. Speaker, because the report is very clear to say that if in the future there is more economic development, especially on the north side of the Saskatchewan, that will warrant more traffic back and forth, Mr. Speaker, across that bridge, then we should certainly look at a second bridge.

But I can't help it, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't the government that wrote the report. It was an independent business analyst, Mr.

Speaker, that wrote the report. Now I'm asking the member opposite, would they spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a report that suggests one thing, and then completely ignore it?

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question that the P.A. people want answered because New Democrats believe in the tremendous potential of Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan. This government apparently doesn't think there's much hope for economic growth in Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan. The Minister of Highways says if there's more economic development and if there's more traffic in that area, then the government will actually be thinking about building a second bridge for Prince Albert.

Again, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: what happened to the whole ready for growth talk? Why is this government always writing off Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, this government, again, believes in northern Saskatchewan. We believe the economic development opportunity is there. That's why we put \$4.2 million in to fix that bridge, Mr. Speaker. That's why we put \$90 million into P.A. and north, Mr. Speaker, through other ministries. We believe in northern Saskatchewan.

It's too bad under 16 years of NDP government and representation from the two northern communities, they didn't believe in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Because, Mr. Speaker, when they had a chance to fix the bridge, they turned it over to the city and did nothing themselves.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Prince Albert and the people of northern Saskatchewan are doing their part. They're working hard, Mr. Speaker, to grow the economy despite being completely abandoned by this government. Yet despite the good work by the people and businesses of Prince Albert and despite the good work by the people and businesses of northern Saskatchewan, this government is still sitting back and being skeptical about the potential of that region. If there's economic growth, this government says it might consider a second bridge.

Mr. Speaker, well how about recognizing that there will be economic growth because of the hard-working people and the good businesses of Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan? And how about actually building a much-needed second bridge for Prince Albert? Again to the minister: when will this government stop neglecting Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we certainly on this side of the House believe in economic growth. Mr. Speaker, that's why in 2007 I believe the people of Saskatchewan said, we

could do much better in this province, and hence we elected a number of members. But, Mr. Speaker, that's not the end of the story because in 2000, they had quite a bit of faith in this government. But in 2011, they had 49 per cent faith, Mr. Speaker — 49 members compared to 9.

Mr. Speaker, this province is doing very, very well. Northern Saskatchewan is going to do very well.

Mr. Speaker, when they had the chance to believe in northern Saskatchewan, they didn't. Now when there's only nine of them, they found some sort of faith in northern Saskatchewan that never believed in it before, Mr. Speaker. They had a chance to fix the bridge. They ripped the top off and had the city put it back on, Mr. Speaker. That's in the record of the members opposite, and that's especially the member from Athabasca.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 121 — *The Election Amendment Act, 2013*

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 121, *The Election Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has moved that Bill 121, *The Election Amendment Act, 2013* be now introduced and read the 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?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave to make a motion of absence.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to make a motion of absence. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## MOTIONS

### Leave of Absence

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave of the Assembly:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Martensville for Wednesday, December 4th and Thursday, December 5th, 2013 to conduct a workshop at the International Republican Institute meeting at Amman, Jordan.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That leave of absence be granted to the member for Martensville for Wednesday, December the 4th and Thursday, December the 5th, 2013 to conduct a workshop at the International Republican Institute meeting in Amman, Jordan.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[14:30]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 192 through 197.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered questions 192 through 197.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 109 — *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013***

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to present to the House for second reading *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013*.

I recommend the legislation be amended to allow for the following: the Act to prescribe in regulation that a percentage of pool funds annual net capital must be invested into innovation type investments. The minister will set the form by which tax credits will be issued to investors in the future and other housekeeping amendments.

As members of this House are aware, the Ministry of the Economy is focused on growing various sectors of our economy, especially the innovation sector. Our researchers, developers, entrepreneurs already have a great track record in introducing or improving the products into the Saskatchewan marketplace, but we need to do more.

For several years the labour-sponsored venture capital

corporations have been prudently supporting provincial businesses. They're investing funds from more than 40,000 Saskatchewan people that believe in backing our local enterprises. Mr. Speaker, most of these funds are carefully invested in traditional businesses.

However investment opportunities in Saskatchewan are evolving and we need the LSVCCs [labour-sponsored venture capital corporation] to keep pace with these changes. Specifically we'd like to see the LSVCCs step up investments into our innovation sector. We want these funds to increase the amount of innovation investments in this portfolio by up to 25 per cent by year 2016.

We expect this funding to stimulate our innovation sector and launch new and improved products into the marketplace. Our researchers, developers, and entrepreneurs sometimes work from early morning to late at night on a project. When they are not working on the research, they're often looking for new sources of capital for their funding needs. However they would rather focus more of their time on inventions and innovations and providing access. The local funds will help do that.

Saskatchewan people are the ultimate winners in any innovation success. The economic benefits will be shared by innovators and local investors. The Ministry of the Economy has made the necessary amendments to the legislation. We will fulfill the government's goal as stated in the plan for growth. The plan highlights innovation as one of our engines for growing Saskatchewan's economy now and into the future. We feel that this legislation is in the best interests of maintaining the momentum of our provincial economy.

Mr. Speaker, I now present *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013* for second reading.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister for the Economy has moved second reading of Bill No. 109, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very pleased to be able to stand in my place today and offer our initial comments on this particular bill, Bill 109, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

And I noticed that one of the things that people ought to know in the province of Saskatchewan is that we have an exciting economy and things are moving forward, Mr. Speaker. And certainly from our perspective as the opposition, we're quite happy that the economy continues to build, we're quite happy that the population continues to grow and, Mr. Speaker, we're very happy that Saskatchewan overall is doing very, very well. Certainly we want to see that opportunity continue for the years to come.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we hear from some of the comments that attach to the bill talking about investing into innovation, talking about the 40,000 Saskatchewan people that invest in some of these funds, and talking about one of the things that the minister's spoke about was maintaining the momentum for the economy to continue for years to come, Mr. Speaker, that's all

part of the language of our smart growth strategy that the NDP has certainly adopted over the years. And we have developed, Mr. Speaker, and we're continuing to develop and continue to hone some of the very valuable advice that we're getting from many businesses and from many organizations throughout the province, Mr. Speaker.

We just don't have confidence that the right wing party across the way knows how to run a booming economy, Mr. Speaker, as we obviously see the number of problems that they have created. And they have bungled their way through this mess. And yet, despite their bungling, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan continue being optimistic. We see the investors coming to our province in droves, which is great. And, Mr. Speaker, that kind of momentum is very important to maintain. We understand that particular language and, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we obviously also understand is the fact that you have to make sure that you invest in many strategic areas as possible. And obviously one of the thrusts of this bill talks about investing into innovation, Mr. Speaker.

Now one of the things that I think is important for the people of Saskatchewan, I noticed on the news early today the fact that the farm income was up a substantial amount from last year. We see I think the amount that they had, I think it's almost 30 per cent more that they got in income. I'm talking about the agricultural sector. They got 30 per cent more income this year than last year. We're seeing a lot of activity in oil and gas over the last couple of years. We're seeing a lot of investment into a number of other areas, Mr. Speaker, and we want to make sure that Saskatchewan is positioned well. We know, and sometimes we often pray, that we never see bad times come to the province ever again, Mr. Speaker. But we know that history will tell us that the boom in Saskatchewan is, it's important that we capture as many benefits for as long as we can to make sure that Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan residents benefit for years and years to come.

Now one of the things that we often say, and it's not something that we want to admit as a province, but when you have good years we can also anticipate bad years, Mr. Speaker. So as part of the governing process you want to make sure that we deal with as many pre-emptive issues as possible beforehand, that in the event that we expect a couple of bad years that Saskatchewan is well prepared and that our province is strong and that our province is able to withstand some of those economic storms that may be coming up on the horizon, Mr. Speaker.

So there's no question from our perspective. Smart growth from the NDP perspective means understanding that you're going to have some great years, you're going to have some good years, Mr. Speaker, but you also have to anticipate some tougher years and some really bad years. And that's why it's important that, as you consider some of the bills coming forward from the government, that you pay very, very close attention to what they're doing when you talk about investment, and certainly trying to attract more investment and attract more people, and in this instance, Bill 109, to try and attract more investment into innovation, Mr. Speaker.

So one of the things that I often tell people back home is when a government introduces a bill, the NDP want to make sure that

they pay very close attention to what they're trying to do. And as always, there's always the issue that we always ask is, have you consulted certain groups? Have you met with certain groups and what is their immediate questions? Now, Mr. Speaker, you look at the economic building that we often speak about and I tell people about this back home. We've said this a thousand times if not a million times that part of building a brave, bold new economy that's going to be sustained for future growth, that's going to be smart, that's going to be forward-thinking, it's going to be innovative, it's going to be exciting, it's going to engage as many people as possible, it really is basically on three or four principles, Mr. Speaker.

The first principle is you've got to be able to open up the environment for having people come to invest and live and work into the community or into our province. And so certainly trying to attract corporate involvement, business involvement, bringing investment to the community, that's pretty clear, Mr. Speaker. It's pretty common sense as well.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, you obviously want to make sure that you have the Crown sector that is going to continue being a big part of the Saskatchewan economic plan overall because the Crown sector — whether it's SaskTel or SaskPower — they obviously create a lot of wealth for the province. They obviously create jobs and they obviously add to the GDP [gross domestic product] overall of our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, the third component that we speak about is obviously making sure that we work in concert with our working men and women of this province and also the students and many other people that are continuing to work. And, Mr. Speaker, they have to also be part of a plan.

So from our perspective, you look at the three components that I spoke about. And there's other components as well, but the three main components of course is making sure that you have a strong private sector, a vibrant sector that is ready to invest and bring their skills and bring their dollars and bring their expertise and bring their services to the province overall. We think that's a very important, crucial part. And certainly that continues to be part of what the NDP has built in the past and what they'll continue to build into the future.

And of course the second one, as I mentioned, is to make sure that our Crown sectors stay very, very close to the Saskatchewan people in terms of ownership. The Saskatchewan Crowns need to be owned by the people of Saskatchewan. It's so very important that they cannot be for sale, Mr. Speaker.

And of course the third component I spoke about earlier is making sure that you engage the working men and women and not go to war with our unions and not go to war with the different organizations out there that represent workers' rights, Mr. Speaker. That is so very important, so very crucial.

Now other aspects certainly from our perspective, when he talks about a smart growth economic plan so to speak, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that you also take into account things of the importance of taking care of the environment overall. We think that environmental issues are really important when you look at the economic plan overall. And we think a lot of times when you look at what the federal government is doing, what

this provincial government is doing, they're really not taking care of the environment as much as they should be. And we think that's an integral part, an integral part of any economic plan that any province might have, Mr. Speaker.

So we look at those particular components when you want to build a province, you want to have a long-lasting benefit from some of the boom that we're having now. You've got to start thinking of incorporating many issues into your plan, and that includes making sure you have good investment planning; making sure that you have a strong Crown sector; making sure you've got a good, solid supply of qualified labourers, a labour pool; making sure that you have an environmental plan as well attached to this overall plan; to make sure that you engage First Nations and the Métis people; to make sure that you engage the public on a number of other sectors such as making sure that they understand what the plan is. These are some of the things I think, Mr. Speaker, that I think goes without saying, that these are the basic building blocks of any economic plan for the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we want to know a lot more about this particular bill. Bill 109 talks about investing into innovation. One of the things that the minister mentioned is that he would have a role, and I think the point that he raised is the minister will decide, will have some influence on how you invest into that innovation. And, Mr. Speaker, that goes against the grain of the right wing party over there saying that they shouldn't be involved in the economy whatsoever, but on this particular bill he says that he would have some decision-making power. We want to know what kind of decision-making power that he's conferring upon himself or that he's bestowing upon his government.

We need to know those particular details, Mr. Speaker, because from our perspective we have no confidence whatsoever that the Saskatchewan Party is able to manage the boom properly and is able to manage the boom for years to come to make sure that the benefits are there for the people. I don't think they have the ability, Mr. Speaker. We never had that confidence in them before. We certainly don't have that confidence in them now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at Bill 109 . . . And I'm really impressed with the amount of people that are investing in this particular bill or have invested in some of the venture capital funds. The amount that we see is 40,000 Saskatchewan people have invested in some of these funds, and that's an impressive amount. And it goes back to my earlier comment that 40,000 Saskatchewan people have chosen to invest in the province of Saskatchewan through some of these funds. And I think that's certainly a strong indication of how many people are prepared to invest in their own homes, in their own communities, and of course in their own province, in their own businesses.

And that's something that we ought to capitalize on, and we need to make sure that we're not only recognizing our homegrown effort to invest into our communities but we also have to make sure that we open up the investment opportunities from outside the province because obviously that helps Saskatchewan overall when you have many more people investing in some of our businesses and some of our corporations and some of our opportunities.

So that being said, Mr. Speaker, we know that there's a lot of work to do. Saskatchewan is a strong province right now. The economy is strong. The population is growing. And there's good news on a number of fronts, Mr. Speaker, whether it's oil or gas, and certainly whether it's the ag sector, that there is some good news and there are some bright days here, Mr. Speaker. But as we always learn from some of our elders back home that if you have some good days, be ready for the tougher days because certainly they will come, and those people that are prepared for that certainly will be able to weather that storm at the time.

[14:45]

So I think one of the things that's important as I look at the province of Saskatchewan, we're an exciting province. We've got a great economy, as I mentioned, but we also know that we have to find many more aggressive ways and innovative ways to attract investment capital here. As everybody knows, investment capital is fleeting. There are people out in the world that are . . . And there's a huge competition for that investment capital. And how do we as a province, how do we as a province position ourselves to capture as much of that worldwide investment capital that's out there, to try and attract that investment here in the province of Saskatchewan? In the large country of Canada, Mr. Speaker, how do we position ourselves well?

And that's one of the biggest questions that we have on this particular bill is, how do we . . . What objective is attached to the bill? And how will the people of Saskatchewan know that this bill is certainly going to make the benefits of the province that it says it's going to benefit? Mr. Speaker, that's one of the important questions that we ask this particular government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I go back to the 40,000 Saskatchewan people. These are very learned people that have taken the time to study this particular bill, and they obviously would have a lot of influence as to how this process would look. But my biggest question on this particular Bill 109 is the 40,000 people are obviously going to be impacted and we want to know what their opinions are, what their comments are. I mean that's one of the most important things that we ought to understand in government, is that if we don't understand anything in particular, we should always make the effort to try and find those that do have that knowledge and to learn from them, Mr. Speaker.

So there's a lot of people out there that are leaders in understanding investment, the venture capital dollars. We want to find out from these particular organizations how this particular change, how the particular change will impact the venture capital corporation overall. We don't have that information readily, Mr. Speaker. We obviously have some time to do so, so we want to make sure that we take that time to do that and ask the folks out there that have that experience and have that knowledge and certainly have some advice for us, that we would ask you to come forward and share that information with us to make sure that what this bill is purporting to do does exactly that, that it doesn't interfere with the marketplace overall when we're talking about attracting any kind of dollars to help our province build this economy for years to come.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you look at some of the language, there's no question from our perspective that we've got to find as many ways now to maintain all the momentum in this current economic building that the province is doing.

We see a lot of good, solid corporations doing their work. We see the Crown sector doing their work. We see the private sector, we see the small businesses doing their work. They're all moving Saskatchewan forward. And what you don't need is a government that's interfering with that effort. The government's role quite frankly is to try and position as much as they can to provide some of these corporations and companies and businesses with a solid, skilled workforce, with making sure that they have the adequate infrastructure. Like the list goes on as to what the government's role is, Mr. Speaker. But they cannot interfere with that process. It's got to be undertaken by the investment sector, and they have to be able to know that this is a good place to bring that money and to help the economy overall.

So, Mr. Speaker, those are my initial comments on this particular bill. We have a lot more to say about this, Mr. Speaker. There's one piece of many, many other pieces when we talk about how we position Saskatchewan as a government, how we position Saskatchewan well.

We have a lot of challenges overall as a province. We are a landlocked province. We are a province of over 1 million people. We have a great resource base, whether it's forestry or potash or oil and gas. We have all the assets of a province that could really build a solid economic plan for years to come. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to ever go back to the day when our interest payment on the debt that was left to us as a government of over . . . close to \$1 billion a year, we don't want to go back to those kind of days of debt, Mr. Speaker. So it's important that the people of Saskatchewan learn from that lesson and learn that, from the NDP perspective, it is always about smart growth. It is always about proper growth. And we have to always keep in mind that we want to benefit the people of Saskatchewan.

That's why we're here in this particular Assembly and that's why, as an opposition, we watch very, very carefully as to what the government is trying to do. And we would ask them, whatever happens in the future, that you . . . The issue that we've raised as the official opposition is that, you know, this particular government inherited a booming economy. They inherited billions of dollars in the bank. They inherited a growing population. Optimism was coming, Mr. Speaker. Everything was just all set up for them. They became government at the right time, Mr. Speaker.

And all we ask them from our perspective, despite the hard years of rebuilding Saskatchewan's credibility financially and putting in all the economic building blocks in place, is not to mess it up. That's the simple thing we ask them, not to mess it up. Remember the principles of making sure that you have a strong, vibrant Crown corporation, that you have a strong union sector with skilled labourers because they're just as important as investment capital, and to make sure that you have the atmosphere for the private sector to come and thrive in the province of Saskatchewan. These are all basic building blocks that were put in place by the NDP. And, Mr. Speaker, we watch

very carefully that the current government that's in charge here, and we're working very hard to make sure that their term is limited, that we're making absolutely sure that anything they bring forward to try and meddle in the economy overall, that we scrutinize that and watch that very, very carefully.

So on that front, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 109.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 109, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## 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 member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 112, *An Act respecting the Accounting Profession and the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. And we understand this is part of an initiative that's happening right across Canada to streamline the accounting profession and roll three designations, the CPA [chartered professional accountant], CMA [certified management accountant], CGA [certified general accountant], into one CPA, chartered professional accountant, which seems to be a laudable goal. And I think this will be an interesting discussion as we proceed forward to debate this in detail.

And it's quite a thorough bill in front of us, and I just want to take a minute and talk about the institute. What they are establishing is an institute, the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan, and it would be operated under the name of the CPA Saskatchewan. And I think this is an interesting piece. It's always good to set out what are the duties and objects that you hope to establish. And of the institute, it is the duty . . . And it's section 4(1), so people who are listening or at home:

4(1) It is the duty of the institute at all times:

- (a) to serve and protect the public; and
- (b) to exercise its powers and discharge its responsibilities in the public interest.

(2) The objects of the institute are:



(a) to regulate the practice of the profession and to govern the registrants in accordance with this Act and the bylaws; and

(b) to assure the public of the knowledge, skill, proficiency and competency of registrants in the practice of professional accounting and other services provided by registrants.

And all things flow from those to the duties and the objects of the institute. So it's relatively straightforward, but if only it were so. And that's why we have accountants, because things do get complex and complicated. And it is a very important thing that we have well-trained professionals who are accountants, and we can only look as close as our own auditors here in our province and the good work that they do to make sure that we're on task and things don't veer off too far from what our targets were in terms of what our spending was and the efficiency and use of our financial resources because after all that is what we are tasked for here in the province.

But I want to step back and just say . . . Well I just want to review the duties of the institute. And it's straightforward: serve and protect the public. That is straightforward. They don't talk about private interests. They talk about the public. And then it goes on, "to exercise its powers and discharge its responsibilities in the public interest."

I would have liked to have seen maybe a little bit more definition or some parameters or some discussion around what is the public interest. I often refer to a very good piece of work that was done earlier in the 2000s around the provincial interest, and it lays it out quite specifically, whether it be heritage, whether it be environmental, whether it be the water, whether it be even gravel. It's quite laid out nicely.

But here, when we just generally say public interest, what is the public interest here? That opens up a whole Pandora's box about what might be in my interest may not be in your interest. And what is the definition of this? And of course even somebody might argue the public interest as opposed to the common interest. And there could be shades of different you, know, different shades here, and I think that it would be interesting to have that conversation. And I hope, I hope when this is referred to committee that we may actually invite some of the accountants to be part of that discussion, and what's their interpretation of this.

Because I know it is well within the ability of the committee to ask witnesses to come forward. And I would hope that maybe we have those witnesses come forward and give some input into this because I would like to know about the public interest.

And of course the reason is, I mean for many of us, you know, the use of accountants decades ago was, you know, the sign of high finance. It was something that we didn't often associate with. But clearly in the last two or three decades, and I do think about particularly around 2000 when we saw what was happening in the world of some of the major corporations, particularly in the States — I think of Enron as one — where there was a lot of questions being asked about how could such a thing happen? People were investing. Apparently the corporation was on sound footing. And people were assuming

that things were being checked, that all the bases were covered. And all of a sudden a major corporation, a major, major corporation collapsed. And then people had many, many questions about the professional responsibility involved in that type of thing, and the impact on shareholders and the impact of citizens in terms of retirement funds that just disappeared overnight.

And we saw that again in the States with the housing collapse and the mortgage fiasco around, in 2007-2008. And again what happened there? What happened there? Because people were counting, were depending on professional responsibility of many disciplines — and I think accountants would be included in that because quite often they are the auditors of the corporations — and somehow things went astray.

So I think that it would be really interesting to talk about the public interest, and I know the minister had referred to how important this is going to be for consumers. And I'll get to that in a minute. But I do want to underline what is the meaning here and what is the interpretation of public interest? It would be very interesting to get that on record, and the minister did not refer to that in committee.

[15:00]

We can definitely see it at the provincial level when we have auditors doing the good work. And we know that the relationship with the auditors in this government, and particularly this minister when we talk about balanced budgets, they don't see things eye to eye. And when our auditors have said, let's do things in one set of books and people can understand that more easily, this government insists on using two sets of books, depending on the place the people are talking to. And of course there is a lot of confusion about whether the books are actually balanced in this province or not. There's some very big questions about that.

And so this is why it's very important to talk about the public interest because sometimes I think this government thinks it's about the government interest and not the public interest. But that is who they're charged to be responsible for; that's their mandate, the public, the public interest here in the province. But I sometimes wonder if they've taken it to a different level, and that is the government interest. And that's not, that's not what this is about. So when we get the minister and hopefully we might be able to get some accountants in, we can talk further about this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that this is how the stage is set out, and it's been asked for by the accounting profession. And it's one that, again, it's interesting. We're getting a lot of material. A lot of legislation is being created this way. Are there others that should've been consulted in this, in the development of this Act? You know, because once we create an Act, we want to make sure there are no unintended consequences. It is our goal to make sure that this is the strongest the legislation could possibly be.

And one of the ways of doing that is to talk to a lot of different stakeholders, not just one set of stakeholders who clearly . . . And I think they have the best interests at heart, the public interest they say, but we need to make sure we take a look from

all different angles. In fact that's what auditors and accountants would probably say to us — make sure you take a look at this from all different angles and not just one angle. And I think that's important.

So who else did they consult? What things did they hear from those people? Did they consult at all with others? Now it might be the universities or the institutes from which accountants are trained in. They may have some input into this. Some large financial institutions might have some input into this. It would be interesting if our own auditors had some input into this.

Did they go out and cast a wide net for more input on this? Because I think once we pass this, then our part as legislators is done. And we won't have a chance to take a look at this again until they start to find the mistakes and the oversights that they did. Then it comes back to us as an amendment, and I hope that's not in a year or two. Often that's what we see. In a year or two after the fact with this government, there's been amendments come back.

So we have a lot of concerns about that. And of course once it's passed here then we go into the regulatory, the regulations part, and we don't have a lot of input in that. We ask, we can ask in committee, but generally the work is then done by cabinet and it's removed from the public scrutiny to the same extent. So we have a lot of questions about that.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I do take an interest in and that is around the discipline section. And it's fairly significant and that's a good thing. I am interested in this one particularly because, you know, I did talk about this last night about the legal profession. And I made remarks in terms of the teaching profession in terms of how for the teaching profession they went to a medical doctor for input on how they should discipline themselves. They didn't do that with the legal profession. They didn't go outside the profession for an outside opinion, and I don't know if they went outside the profession for an outside perspective.

Now clearly this government is making, breaking new ground in terms of the report on the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation]. And I think it was an interesting report. But I think it's important that, you know, when we're doing this kind of thing, particularly when it comes to discipline, how has this particular section been scrutinized? Has there been an outside body take a look at this to say, okay if we're looking at other disciplinary processes in professional organizations, how does this stand up to that same standard?

Now in education clearly, when there's children involved, they have a unique benchmark that they must meet. That's a unique benchmark, and I understand that and I appreciate it. And it's very important as a teacher, I think, that we have to always strive to do our very best when it comes to the situations that involve children. Parents absolutely must have confidence in that. And this process must be transparent and accountable and in fact there is some value in the public right to know.

Here in terms of discipline, and the minister did talk about the concept of consumer protection, and I refer back to the housing crisis that happened in the States: Enron, the large corporations that have failed. And there's been examples here in Canada.

I think that there needs to be — now I'm not sure, maybe it's in here — but the public right to know and how is that carried out. There are public appointees, and that's important. And I think almost all professional organizations have public appointees. But the question really becomes, how is their work communicated to the public? How is their work communicated to the public? Quite often they do their work and they do good work, but it's not communicated at all. And in this case, well how is the public aware of the things that are happening in terms of the accountants?

I think it's a very important question because we have the Act open now. And it would be one that I hope we ask and we get answers to in terms of so what happens with the discipline because that's a big, big thing. Money is being invested and money moves around fairly quickly, and that's because people want to take advantage of good opportunities. And if there are situations that are problems, we want to know about it right away.

I think of only the White Bear situation with their accountant. We've read about that in the media where their accountant actually went back to Central America but came back. And we have yet to see how that plays out. But clearly this is a big, big issue. And when you have non-profits, you have reserves, you have a lot of organizations that are working with money that is precious, absolutely precious, and their work is significant in the health of our communities and in our families because of investments, particularly when it comes to retirement, it's important that the disciplinary action is even more than just transparent, but it's readily accessible.

And I see that there is a section 35, a duty to report, and I will just take a minute to see what that says. I think that it will be . . . and it will report its findings. And I'll read what it says:

If the professional conduct committee in its investigation pursuant to section 28 or the discipline committee at the conclusion of its hearing pursuant to section 31 believes that the registrant whose conduct is the subject of the investigation or hearing may be guilty of a criminal offence . . .

may immediately discontinue its investigation . . .

So this is a case of criminal misconduct so it's, report of its findings to the president of the institute and the Deputy Minister of Justice.

So there you go. That's what they do if its criminal. But what do you do if it's otherwise? Now it may be that pretty much, and I would almost think that pretty much all their work if it's not done well could be the nature of a criminal offence because of the severe . . . the seriousness of their work. But I think it's important. I think this is something that, as I said in the case of Whitecap, you had a major impact in terms of, I believe, the loss was well over \$1 million, and it's a significant one. So this is something that we really, really need to take seriously.

And once we have the Act open like this, it's important that we take some time, scrutinize it. Clearly it's come from three credible sources and I think that bodes well for it. But we need to make sure that . . . It is our responsibility, you know. We are

a body that scrutiny is so, so critically, so critically important. And so we will be checking with folks about this.

And it will be interesting to see, it will be . . . You know, might be even interesting to see what the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] have to say about accountants. That would be interesting if they have any in terms of their work. Now I would imagine 99.9 per cent would be positive but, you know, in terms of the kind of fraud or crime, it might be of worth, interesting to see what they would have to say about this.

So I just want to take a minute as well just to review what the Minister of Finance had to say. And of course he talks about the three organizations: the CAs [chartered accountant], the CMAs, and the CGAs all represent the professional accountants in Saskatchewan. And there's approximately 4,400 members and 970 students. So there were extensive consultation, and of course there was a supportive vote to merge together. And this is something that, as he mentions, is happening right across, right across Canada. So that fits well as we know that we want to establish standards that fit right across, right across Canada. So he talks about the accounting profession and the regulatory system they have is internationally recognized as being robust, competitive, and consistent, and that supports our economic objectives. And truly, truly, that is . . . And that's why this is so critically important that we get it right.

And the merger into a modern streamlined regime will have benefits to the public in that we can know the CPAs are trained, licensed, and regulated by the professional accounting profession. Now that's really critical. And I know at some point sometimes we're always wondering which level, a CA or a CPA or a CGA, is which better for our processes. And that's very good.

It talks about better protection to the consumer: ". . . that they can feel assured that accountants are qualified to provide a service in their designated speciality."

And so I hope that will be easily understood though I do worry about sometimes when we get overly complex. And we know that this government last year, a year ago, brought forward the employment Act where they were forcing unions to have audited statements. And because of that language, all of a sudden the costs for some organizations were going to actually be higher than the amount of money that they actually gathered because some of the locals were very small. And so I do worry that sometimes we . . . There is a balance, isn't there. Because we want to make sure the records are robust. They're transparent. They're accountable. People can have access to them and they're easily understood. But at the same time you don't want to overdo it where you're paying more for work than you're actually . . . the value matches the amount of money that's being involved. So that's very, very important.

So it is important we have the protection for the consumer but, as I said, the section around discipline, we'll have questions in terms of the accountability and the reporting out of that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know other people will want to get up and speak to this. Of course this will be interesting to see how this plays out because we'll have time in the House to discuss this further, and we'll have questions in committee. But of course as

with any piece of legislation, the devil will be in the regulations and how that all plays out together. That will be interesting to see how that happens with this Act as you merge three designations and three organizations and the way they've done it before. And if there's any group that was ever a stickler for detail, I imagine it would be the accountants and that they could anticipate concerns.

[15:15]

So we do have questions. You know, as I said, were there other bodies that were consulted, and what was that? You know, generally this makes sense off the top of it. But as I've said, it's our duty, it's our role to make sure there are no unintended consequences and that we don't have to open up this piece of legislation next year because something was forgotten. Let's talk about this right now.

And as I said, I am interested in having the discussion about the parameters of the term public interest. What does that really mean? It's a term that can mean an awful lot to a lot of different people. I know that there are examples of where the definition of the public interest has been defined in a really helpful sense, but this is not the case here. It's a general term, and we really want to make sure that it's as clear as possible.

And you know, interestingly I was up on the floor last night in the legislature. *The Legal Profession Act* talked about how the public interest had priority over the individual lawyer's interest. So there was a discussion about that. We don't see that reference in here. Whether that's something that should have been in here, I'm not sure.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that, as I said, many others will want to rise and debate this bill . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They're that close, very close. Well that's interesting . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We've talked that long? Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move adjournment of Bill No. 112, *An Act respecting the Accounting Profession and the Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. I do so move adjournment.

**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 member for Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill No. 99, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2013*. Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation

is quite a short piece of legislation, and there's maybe not a lot of content to it, but often what we find is when we look at legislation that doesn't appear to be that significant, there's maybe more going on here than is recognized.

Now I know when the minister brought forward or set out his second reading speech on November the 12th, it was actually quite a short speech, even though this plan affects 53,000 members in the public employees pension plan. And there are 79 different employees, and there's \$5.6 billion in assets in this plan right now. And all members of the legislature and the staff of the legislature, we're all members of this particular plan. So I think it's important that we take a look at what is being contemplated here in this amendment, and there are a number of different amendments.

Now normally when the minister brings forward a bill, we have somewhat of an explanation about why these amendments are being brought forward, who called for them, and what was the reason for the amendment. Now some of them we can I think maybe surmise what the reason is, even though the minister didn't say directly. I think his comment was, the world is always changing and therefore investment options are always changing, so therefore we have to change the Act. Now that may be a laudable point. But what's the actual reason?

And so the first amendment that's being brought forward here is in section 4, and basically it's . . . In this particular amendment bill, it's section 3, but it's amending section 4 by adding section 4.1. And as far as we can tell, this relates to the decision making made by the board of the public employees pension plan.

We have no indication from the minister why this particular provision was brought forward. And so I've been trying to figure out, well what is it that's a concern? It looks as if they ended up with some problems around getting 100 per cent agreement on some of the decisions that they were making on that board. I think it would be helpful for all of us if we knew what kinds of decisions where they were having to invoke a majority rather than unanimity or consensus decision making.

I think for many years this particular pension plan has operated on a consensus basis and part of the reason for that is that it has representatives from both the employers' side and the employees' side as well as some independent people. And so in a situation like that, you end up wanting to have consensus as your governing model. And so in this particular situation, the amendment coming forward is saying, well let's get rid of that method of decision making that we've used for a long time and set out a method whereby decisions can be made by a majority of the members of the board present at the meeting. And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what particular issue arose or what particular situation arose that generated this change on the board.

Now what's even more curious when you look at the new provisions that's coming in, which would be section 4.1(2), is that it sets out that:

No member of the board is liable with respect to a decision or an action taken at a meeting of the board if:

in the case of a member who was present at the meeting,

the member:

(i) did not vote for or otherwise approve the decision or action taken at the meeting; and

(ii) requests that his or her dissent be entered into the minutes of the meeting; or

the member was not present at the meeting at which the decision was approved or the action taken.

So obviously on this board, there's been some number of disputes. It may be one dispute. It may be a whole string of disputes, but we have no information from the minister about what it is that generated this particular change in the legislation. And that's somewhat troubling because he's asking for a change in legislation that affects billions of dollars of investments and many, many employees. I think it was 53,000 employees and 79 different employers.

But practically, I would have expected we would have had some explanation of what the reason is for this particular change. And I assume we'll maybe get a chance to ask more about it in committee, but, but practically this is one of the downfalls of the present government's limiting of this length and explanations that they set out in their second reading speeches.

What I know as a lawyer is when you have difficulty with legislation that's passed five years, ten years down the road, one of the first places you go to look at the meaning of the legislation or trying to interpret what the minister and the government was trying to do is to go and look at the second reading speech of the minister when it was presented in the legislature.

And Mr. Speaker, the speech that we got on this bill doesn't provide any enlightenment on this particular section and practically on the other sections as well. What we will also . . . in this situation then, probably having to go to the speeches that we provide on the opposition side and then to the answers that we get to questions when it gets to committees.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the next change is section 4 of the bill. And what section 4 does is amend section 5 by adding a clause after (g), 5(g), which becomes 5(g.1). And what's stated in the explanatory notes is that this is for the purpose of undertaking short-term borrowing. And effectively this is probably brought forward by the investment managers, but once again we have no explanation around that as to what particular problem has arisen that requires this kind of a change.

And so I make the plea to the people who are working within the departments and preparing the documents for the legislature that we have more information in the second reading speech of this minister, but I would say frankly, Mr. Speaker, on all ministers generally we do not have very thorough explanations.

Then we go on to the next change in this bill, and that would be section, I guess it's section 5 of the bill itself. And in that there are two clauses. And effectively what's supposed to be happening here is setting up a default fund for the public employees pension plan. And I think this is something that I

think the minister could have explained to us why it's being done.

But it's clear, it's clear that what's happening here is that when the plan was changed to have a whole number of choices around the funds in the plan itself, it became clear that some people just didn't make a choice. And so effectively what the plan managers needed was some ability to designate a choice for a person who didn't want to make a choice. And so what we have is a situation where there's no longer a requirement for an election of a particular fund for the investment, and then the ability to have a default fund, a standard fund that everybody's money goes into.

I think some people who have been part of this plan, that was the original way the plan worked, that there really wasn't much choice and everybody went into the same plan. This is I think a reflection of a change, and it relates to the size of the fund, the number of employees, and also clearly the number of employers that are part of the particular plan. So this one doesn't really have an explanation in the minister's speech, but it's a little more understandable of what's going on.

Now the next provision in the legislation is section 6, and that relates to an amendment to section 10. And basically this particular clause relates to the fact that the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the government can by regulation permit this plan to accept members and funds from a registered pension plan and include them in this public employees pension plan.

Now there must be some opportunities or some changes that are happening that require special provision for this. There was no provision like that before. I think the advantage of this is that the plan can expand. I know people are quite envious of the efficiency of the management of this plan and how various things are done. So this is, clause 6 is allowing for the plan to receive new members.

Now clause 7 goes to the regulatory clause and effectively adds a whole section of regulations that relate to the opposite of accepting funds. It relates to the fact that you are going to terminate members or transfer members out of the fund to someone else. And so what clause 7 does is says that section 26 is amended, and put into there are provisions whereby people can transfer money out of this fund.

[15:30]

Now I'm not totally certain, but I assume this relates to the Information Services Corporation, ISC, where a number of members are being transferred out of the public system, or some other preparation for the downsizing or changing of how benefit plans for public employees are done when the government privatizes or sells off a portion of the government. I think this would have been an area where it would have been helpful for the minister to explain why this particular provision is being added here. I think that there is an explanation owed to the employees, clearly, and possibly even to employers as to why this provision is being added.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are, as I've explained, a number of relatively straightforward changes being proposed, but we don't know exactly who asked for them, and we don't know what

particular problems are being addressed or issues that are being resolved.

When we look at pension legislation in general, what we know is that this is a method of deferred income. All of the people who have pension plans under our federal and provincial income tax Acts are allowed to take a certain portion of their present-day earned income, set it into a fund so that it can then be accepted later and with tax paid at that later time. This is a public policy which is a good policy, and it recognizes that, where possible, employees should have a plan that does this.

In Canada we have a whole number of levels of deferred income methods. Some of them are right part of your employment, like this public employees pension plan. Others are ones that are generic. They go right across the board. I'm thinking here of the Canada Pension Plan. Unfortunately that Canada Pension Plan has not kept up with the cost of living that's present today, and there have been quite a number of discussions on a national level to improve the Canada Pension Plan, both on the contribution side but also on the benefits side. That's tied in with this type of legislation because they all work together.

Ideally you'd end up with a generic or across-the-board plan for all workers and all employers that then would allow for something like the public employees pension plan to be a layer on top of that. We also have our methods of old age security and the supplement for low-income people, and we also have obviously registered retirement savings plans and the tax deferred savings plans that are other adjuncts to what happens.

But on a straight policy basis, it's been disappointing to see that our present government here in Saskatchewan has not been as adamant about improving the Canada Pension Plan system across the country. We know that some of the other provinces have shown some leadership on this, but clearly Saskatchewan has sort of stepped back and not been as strong an advocate for all of the people of our province.

Now when people have a good pension base so that they can plan for the long term, it makes a big difference in confidence around how people are going to live in the long term. We know that the financial crisis in 2008 put a chill over all kinds of pension plans like the public employees pension plan that are defined contribution plans rather than defined benefit plans.

In Saskatchewan, changes were made in the public service plan to go to a defined contribution plan which, in other words, it designates exactly how much you put in that goes to your credit, and then after your years of service, that amount plus whatever income has been earned on that is what you have available to purchase the pension plan for yourself. The previous plan would be that everybody would put in their percentage of their income and then the benefit would be calculated based on years of service and other factors. And that kind of a plan has many advantages to it, but it also has disadvantages in a time of high inflation.

But for better or for worse, we have a fully funded plan here in Saskatchewan. There are very few if any present employees of the Government of Saskatchewan that are on the old defined benefit plan. I think most people are on this defined

contribution plan.

But what that does mean is when the assets of the plan take a hit like in 2008 or at other times, then it changes people's options. And what we've seen is many people who thought they were ready to retire in 2007, by the time they got to 2008 and early in 2009, there were many plans that had to be changed. And that's unfortunate because it affects many people within the system, those people who decide, well maybe I can't take early retirement or move to a job-sharing arrangement or something. That means that younger professional people or younger employees don't have the same options to move into some of those jobs.

And what we've seen then over the last five years is that that decision or those decisions that are based on the security that people have around their pension plans have affected not just the people who are getting the pensions themselves but their families, the other employees at places where they work, and all of the whole community. Now practically there's been a recovery in some of, many of the investments in these plans, but when you have this particular legislation and it affects so many people, we have to be really careful about how we examine what's here and how we understand what's being done.

And so I make a plea once again to the minister and to all the people who are providing advice to the minister. It's very important in the second reading speech to set out the reasons that you're making all of these changes. And even if it sounds like it's obvious, what we need to have on the record from the minister, from the government, is the rationale for these changes. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a failing of this government over a number of years, and no matter how often we mention it on this side, it doesn't seem to get any better.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it's helpful for the members of the legislature. It's helpful for the public. It's helpful for judges and lawyers who have to later interpret this. It's helpful for people who are managing plans to actually have some of the rationale set out when bills are prepared.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this point I don't have any more comments to make, but I will be looking forward to trying to fill out the information gap that's here in the second reading speech in the committee. I know that a number of my colleagues still want to speak about this legislation because it affects each one of us, but more importantly it affects 53,000 people across the province. And so, Mr. Speaker, with that I move to adjourn debate.

**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 Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am joining in to debate the bill on 98, *The Child Care Act, 2013*.

We know that child care is very important to working families, single parents. We know that there's not enough. You know, government keeps talking about the economy is growing. People are working. But there are strugglers.

Families are struggling out there, Mr. Speaker, with child care, whether it's during the daylight hours . . . And we know that there are some daycares that are operating, and I think some of them operate 24 hour for those individuals who work evenings and night shifts, late shifts in the evening. And there are . . . whether a different industry where those opportunities are there for those individuals to work. And we have many people working late hours rather than regular hours we'll say are from 8 to 5 or 9 to 5, 9 to 6. There are many people who have to work and some working two jobs to make ends meet. And they have to make sure they have affordable, you know, child care for their family.

And I want to be very clear on it. We're seeing the challenges out there and sometimes families struggling if they don't have a family member, you know, a grandma, a grandpa, an aunt, an uncle to watch those kids. If they're not in a situation where the family has the one spouse is working, and the type of job the income is well, and they can take care of their family. Everybody wants that in this province, and people expect that. But having said that, sometimes that doesn't happen. And when it can happen and a family member chooses to stay home and raise the children, we think great. That's great for that family, you know, and that's fine. But when both family members have to go out or if it's a single parent, they need affordable daycare.

And unfortunately we've been hearing from lots — whether it's in the North, the urban, the rural — the challenge when it comes to daycare, finding affordable, and daycare that you want to make sure that you leave your children are there. And that's the struggle, Mr. Speaker.

The government hasn't done enough. It needs to do more. And you can announce all these spaces they want in the world and say, oh well, we're opening more. But they have to materialize and you can't just say, you know, they're there and make announcements. So let's make sure that those spaces are available for, I guess, working families and individuals who need to have daycare. It's very important. And we'll get into a bit of the changes here that's been requested with Bill 98.

But having said that, I want to be focused a little bit on the families and the struggles that are going on with individuals trying to find a suitable daycare for their children. It's important and people want to make sure their children are safe. They want to make sure that organizations that are running . . . whether they're a board, whether it's, you know, a home daycare where somebody is running a private one in their home. We have those too and they do great work and nobody wants to take that away.

We have to make sure that the regulations, people understand the regulations, whether it's in English or — we have two official languages — French. We have to make sure that at the end of the day that people have . . . and if it's a francophone person and they're operating a daycare, they have to make sure they have that language available. If it's their first language that it's in French and we know that that's what they're requesting and that's important. But having said that, we'll see some of the changes and provisions that are coming in here.

But I want to, you know, go back into making sure that people that are watching and what we're hearing, people who are bringing concerns forward saying there isn't enough daycare spots to cover the need. And I think the waiting list in some communities when they have a community daycare, the list is ongoing. And I want to commend the schools. Some of the schools are having daycares right in the schools and that's a good thing. And we think, you know, not only is it for students, for community members, but it gives that whole community atmosphere in the school and it has a daycare providing that type of service for community members whether they're students, whether they're working there, and I assume workers have the opportunity to bring their children. So there are opportunities. There might be a priority list that, you know, maybe it's students first, maybe it's community members first, then staff, however it is. But at the end of the day it's a service that's provided and a good service.

And there's home daycares and I know a lot of people use home daycares. They have their children going there and it provides a good service. We have to make sure, whether it's in English or French, that that home daycare . . . And it might be someone who's a francophone and they want to make sure the regulations, they understand that those regulations and the bylaws and the rules, that they're adhering to those and following them, that they make sure that they're available to them in the language of French or in English as we see the regulations right now for daycares.

[15:45]

So having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's important that we, you know, we make sure we have enough. And I've said this. The government hasn't done enough to make sure there's lots of daycares, and the waiting list is so long, and it's getting longer. And I think government needs to do a better job when it comes to daycare spaces.

But having said that, also, you know, this has been supported by the francophones and they've requested this. And I think there's about six, maybe more, daycare centres that are operated for francophone families. And it is their first language so we want to make sure that — you know, as official languages we have are French and English — that we make sure the legislation is in French and the regulations and rules, that the francophone families and the French-speaking community and members of this province have access to that to make sure they're interpreting the rules and regulations properly so they're not confused.

So I guess basically you look at these changes. It's supportive. We're supportive. And it's good and it's giving a chance to give opportunity to, you know, individuals, individuals that want to

speak their language. And if French is their first language, that's their choice. The regulations are in them. And I think it's something that has to be provided, you know, within the Charter and the constitution and making sure the language is there.

So having said that, you know, I don't have any further comments about it. I think it's a good thing. It gives them opportunity to see the regulations in French, and this is a good thing. And we've said this on this side of the House. When we see legislation that we can work with, we'll work with the government when it makes good sense, common sense to do so. We'll work with that.

In this case it's a group requesting it. We'll work with them to bring it forward and change the regulation so they can have, you know, the daycare regulations in their language. And of course French is the language that they were requesting it be put into. We support that. There's no reason to think not. I don't think this gives any more . . . There might be some minor changes in the legislation, and we'll have to, you know, if we have more questions, we can talk about it in committee once it goes there.

But I know other colleagues have more to talk about on this end and we'll bring forward some of their concerns and comments. At this point, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on this bill.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of 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:** — 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 Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to rise today to speak to this bill, Bill No. 100, the Act to amend *The Assessment Management Agency Act*.

What we see in this bill is a number of proposed amendments that are accomplishing several goals as pointed out by the minister in his introductory remarks. As I read through the changes that are being proposed, it struck me about the complexity of the work that's provided by the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency and the important role it plays in the property taxation system in our province, Mr. Speaker. And also the, I guess, the changes that came prior to my arrival here in the legislature in relation to the role of schools and the taxation, property taxation rules as they affected schools.

And it's apparent to me, as I read through this, that those were some significant changes in the way business had been done in relation to property taxation in this province for many years. And I know other members of my colleagues on the official opposition were around during those days and some have commented on it already and others will provide more comment. But certainly as I went through this I could see there's a number of things going on here.

Once again, I think much of what's being brought forward is at the request of SAMA or the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency. So those changes . . . As we know, we've got good people out there doing hard work to make sure these organizations and agencies function properly. And from time to time, amendments to legislation are required to make sense and to reflect modern practices.

I guess the substantive part of this bill, as far as this government is concerned, is the changes to the way the assessment agency is funded. And as we know, SAMA — I'm going to refer to it as SAMA, Mr. Speaker, but that's the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency — SAMA was a part of this bill being introduced.

SAMA was funded on a 65/35 sharing split between the province and the municipalities of Saskatchewan. And what the minister indicated in his comment was that the change would prevent SAMA from seeking greater funding from the municipal sector. I'm not sure why that's an issue, and certainly would have appreciated more comments from the minister in his remarks to indicate why this type of change was necessary. There's no explanation or justification for this statement other than just simply stating that the goal is to prevent the agency from seeking greater funding from the municipal sector.

I'm not sure that's accomplished by this bill because it seems to me that the agency can make certain demands on the municipalities here. And now that it's separated from the provincial requirements for a revenue split or a split sharing of the funding, it's not clear to me how this is going to meet the minister's stated goal in his comments made on November 12th, Mr. Speaker.

He went on to say that there are other financial amendments, that I will talk about in a minute, that will give SAMA a greater flexibility respecting increases to municipal requisitions, providing timelines that are achievable and ensuring a properly funded agency.

So without more clarity and more explanation from the minister, there seems to be a bit of a disconnect between those two paragraphs. But perhaps we can tease that out a little bit more as we continue the debates and also have opportunity to question him when this bill is presented to the committee after the debates are finished.

And finally he talks about some changes that are being proposed of a non-financial nature, which would reflect the roles and respond to the responsibilities of the ministries of Government Relations and Education. And again I think this sort of points back to the time when the Ministry of Education was much, much more involved in the property tax assessment than it is now. And certainly in the explanatory notes that were

provided, we do have some guidance as to why some of these proposed amendments are being put to the House.

So just quickly going through some of the proposed amendments, we know the first one is — and we see this one throughout the bill — wherever we see the words executive director, there's now a substitution to chief executive officer. And this was an amendment that was requested by SAMA, and there's no issue with that, Mr. Speaker. That's more a modern parlance issue and there's no issues with making those kinds of changes.

The next section that's being look at or amended is section 11 of the existing Act. And a number of those clauses are being repealed, subclauses (4) to (7). And this was a request as well from SAMA because subclauses (4) to (7) dealt with a technical advisory committee which, according to SAMA, has fallen into disuse. It's not being used anymore. And certainly the power of the board to establish committees under 11(1) is, according to SAMA, is sufficient. So this is a request from SAMA, and again there is no issue, I don't think, with that kind of request.

The next change is found in the existing clause 11.1(1). Again this is a change to process within SAMA's . . . the conduct of annual meetings, and SAMA just wanted an ability for resolutions to be made from the floor. And I think that's a reasonable request, and certainly I think the suggested changes in that clause achieve that goal. So it's reorganized a little bit, but I don't think there's any real significant change that requires comment.

The next one is section 12 which is now being amended. And what we're told there is there's a number of changes that are in relation to the reference to schooling. The first two, there's a repeal, and a repeal to some of the powers and duties of the board in relation to how assessors are trained. And we're told that this is more the responsibility of rural municipal administrators and urban municipal administrators, as well as the University of Regina which has a course related to that. So apparently the way the Act is written now, that the training sections are not reflecting what's really on the ground.

Clause (k) is being amended to follow up the changes to the funding of the education system in 2009. And any reference you see to the Minister of Education is being removed in the Act now as the government has changed responsibility to the Minister of Government Relations, so that's a clause amendment that reflects that.

I think one thing that's of interest, and I would question the minister, is why he hasn't made the same change to clause (m) that he has to clause (n) of section 12. And the changes that are being proposed to clause (n) is to remove the reference to school divisions where it shows up a couple of times. But for some reason the minister has chosen to leave school divisions in clause (m), and it doesn't seem to be consistent with the rest of the goals of the amendments. So I would really question the minister in that clause and query why that hasn't been struck out as well. Because it doesn't make . . . In my view, it isn't consistent with the changes that are being made to clause (n). So we would want some clarity around that, Mr. Speaker. And perhaps it's just an oversight in the drafting changes that perhaps needs to be looked at.



Going on then. The next clause that's being amended in *The Assessment Management Agency Act* is in clause 12. And really there's just a clerical change there that is very minor. The same with the changes to clause 13 and 14 — these are very minor changes that are being proposed, again referring to the chief executive officer instead of the executive director. So those are very minor changes.

In clause 16 there's the borrowing changes that are being proposed. And what this does is give SAMA an ability to borrow . . . The maximum term for borrowing is being increased to five years, and this is more in line, we're told, with funding initiatives such as its capital funding programs. Again this was requested by SAMA. It seems to be a reasonable request to extend the term of temporary borrowing from three years to five years. And there were some other minor changes in that clause as well.

In clause 18 we see sort of the meat of the changes to this bill starting to be reflected. And what happens is clause 18 of the existing Act deals with the annual funding, which is based on a four-year plan, and then clause 18.011 is the formula for funding by the Government of Saskatchewan. Now what's happening in the amendments that are being proposed, under 18(1) we're changing the date to September 1st from July 15th, and apparently that will give SAMA more time to prepare its plan for the annual provincial budget cycle. So that appears to be in order.

And then in 18.01(1) there's been significant changes that we find. And what the government is attempting to do here is to split out the funding formula. Rather than the 65/35 split, we now see two separate clauses that describe how municipalities will fund SAMA and how the Government of Saskatchewan will fund SAMA. I think it's a lot of numbering changes and rejigging of the way the words are ordered.

But I think that the big change you will find is previously in the existing clause 18.01(3), we see the government's 65 per cent share. Now it just simply will say the Government of Saskatchewan shall provide annual funding to the agency that reflects the provincial interest in . . . And there's a list there of five things. Originally it was assessment research and policy development, maintaining a central database, providing assessment information pursuant to clauses 12(1)(m) and (n), assuring the quality of assessments, and used to be for funding education. And that was still there, Mr. Speaker. It's being proposed that that be struck and it's now going to reflect a new subclause (e), "the property taxation system."

So it's I think a significant change. And this is I think the one that needs the most attention, and we'll certainly want to get more comment from our municipal partners and also from SAMA itself to make sure that this is reflecting and will meet the needs of SAMA because when you have the government and municipalities tied to a sharing formula, I think that implies commitments on the part of both. And now that that relationship is severed and you have municipalities doing their funding and the province doing its funding with its own objectives and initiatives, there may be a significant impact on SAMA and there may also be a significant impact on municipalities.

So it's certainly something I think we're going to want to ask

more questions from the minister when we have the opportunity in committee.

[16:00]

So this is the heart of the changes, for those that are listening. Take a close look at clauses 18.01 and 18.011 because I think that really is where the substantive changes to this bill exist. Throughout these changes there's always a reference to funding education. Any time it exists it's being removed. So that's certainly something I think that also reflects the change in approach from this government in terms of assessing property taxation values in the province.

18.03 is also substantively changed, again to reflect some of the fiscal year requirements, and the references to the funding sharing is also being removed. So these are things that I think will make for more orderly flow of the money to SAMA. Apparently it has cash flow issues from time to time because of certain dates that are referenced in the Act. So the attempt here is to update the dates to make sure that municipalities pay SAMA on time and in a fashion that allows them to avoid those cash flow problems. Seems to be reasonable changes on that part.

18.031. 18.031 there's a minor change there, and in terms of the explanatory notes, these are again requests from SAMA to clarify interpretation of this particular clause. And so I think that that certainly is in order.

Next clause that's being changed is 18.04. It's just a change removing an actual date reference of September 1st and inserting a 60-day requirement that seems to assist SAMA again in making sure that they're not tied to a specific date in terms of the confirmation of assessments and the payment of such.

A few more changes being made. Some redundancies in 18.05 that are being taken care of and then some numbering issues that are being taken care of in clause 18.1. In clause 20(1), again just some renumbering. And reference is being removed in relation to the funding share agreement.

We see in section 22 references to *The Education Act* being removed, again reflecting the changes this government has made in terms of how property taxes and education taxes are being handled. And again I defer to my colleagues who were here in 2009 in terms of the impact of those policy decisions on the municipalities and on SAMA, of course.

Another redundancy in clause 22 that's being dealt with, just a number of small changes. No issues there. Again in clause 22 there's some references to school divisions that are being changed to refer to the minister. And the explanatory note there gives us some discussion about what happened in 2009. And in there we read:

In 2009, the funding of the education system changed with the province now establishing provincial mill rates. School divisions are still recognized as the 'other taxing authority' in the municipal Acts, but [here it's saying] the ministry [now] has a stronger interest in terms of what occurs to the assessed values of any given municipality [rather than the school boards] . . .

Amendments are being made to replace reference to school divisions with the Minister to reflect the change in responsibilities in terms of education funding.

And this particular clause 22 is on appeals of secondary audits. So this is where a municipality or the appraiser can appeal the findings of SAMA on a secondary audit. So any time that happens, notice is going to now be provided to the minister instead of the affected school division.

In section 24.1(3) there's a small change being made. Just a note to the drafters and to the people who prepare the explanatory notes, the wrong clause is included in the explanatory notes. They may want to fix that and make sure that they make proper reference. They are referring to clause 24(1) when actually it should be clause 24.1. So there's an error in the explanatory notes there. It just makes the English teacher in me happy when I find something like that, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad to share that with the legislature.

Then there's a few more clauses that are dealing with some other minor changes and there's really nothing of any import in those.

So on a general review of this Act, the requests by SAMA to update language and to reflect current practices, to provide them some of the flexibility they need in terms of time frames and dates, makes sense. To extend their borrowing capacity of short-term borrowing from three years to five years makes sense.

In terms of the changes to the split in revenue sharing, I think that's something that we will need to talk more to people to find out if that's appropriate, to find out if that's meeting the needs of SAMA, and whether this is an example of the government off-loading some of its responsibilities for ensuring proper assessment to the municipalities. And we know that they talk often about how much more money they've provided to municipalities over the past few years. Obviously we know there are other costs and charges that are being put on the . . . for the municipalities to be responsible for. So is it a net balance? Those are the kinds of things that I think, Mr. Speaker, we need to determine and take a close look.

So at this point I think that would be the extent of my comments on this bill. I know that other of my colleagues are wanting to weigh in on the debate as well, and I would like to move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 100, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2013*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to rise to speak to Bill 101, *An Act to amend The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*. Mr. Speaker, this bill is I think rather straightforward, and it includes a number of changes that have obviously been requested by the university and by the officials that are trying to make sure that the Act complies with what they are doing at the university. But I think I'll go through a few of these provisions with my perspective on them and provide some comments that hopefully will be of assistance in using the legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the first amendment is section 3. And effectively it acknowledges that the university has many functions, including conferring diplomas on people as well as degrees and certificates and honorary degrees, and also what they call admitting graduands into the convocation. And so, Mr. Speaker, that seems like a reasonable request because there are many people we know who have received diplomas from the university, and it's been an important part of their careers in a whole number of areas. So we don't have any great difficulty with that.

Then we get into the changes that are being proposed in section 4 of the Act. And effectively they're adding in some changes to make it clearer about who's part of the convocation and where these people are and how they can serve in the senate of the university. I think there have been some difficulties that relate to the election of the members of the senate and how they fit into the overall structure of the university.

At this point I'll maybe digress a little bit to say that universities are interesting organizations because of their long history. And so many times the rules that we have set out in legislations which incorporates a university don't always capture 1,000 years of tradition or various adaptations and accommodations that have been made by an institution that reflect how that particular institution works. And this legislation has I think served the people of Saskatchewan very well for 100 years or more. But clearly there are different expectations and understandings of how the university should be operated.

Now one of the things that we need to make sure when we look at legislation like this is to make sure that some of those traditional checks and balances that are in the actual structure of the university are not in any way damaged or changed in a way that is a surprise to people who are part of the community. When some of the management structures that are brought in to a university are more reflective of corporate structures or maybe co-operative structures in other places, there can be misunderstandings of how some of the traditional ways of running the university have operated.

And so when I look at some of the changes here, I recognize that they are addressing concerns that are held by the people who are running the university, but I think we also need to make sure that we're not in any way creating further problems by some of the things that we're doing.

So then when we look at the legislation, the next section, which is section 7, basically deals with the length of service in office by members of the board. There were some discrepancies between the length that different board members could serve, and this I know created some consternation within the university community. And I see that here it's being fixed by making sure that everybody has the same kind of term. And obviously there are transitions, provisions that are needed to make sure that these things are done in an orderly fashion.

Now the other provisions, as you move on in this whole area of section 45, is that there are some changes around the numbering in the Act. But once again, it reflects what's happening, you know, how these changes are dealt with to make sure that the terms of the members are of the appropriate length.

Now when we get into section 8, I guess it would be, in the legislation, we get into an amendment of the powers of the council. And effectively there we're adding into this whole section a further provision around members of a council to deal with particular problems for students. There hadn't been an adequate reference to the students and to make sure that they're included in this particular provision, but now it's being changed to move the requirement for students on the committee to be members of council.

The effect of this is similar to what we saw when we were looking at *The Legal Profession Act*. There aren't necessarily sufficient numbers of members of the council to serve on all of the committees that might be designated by the legislation. And what we're seeing here is a situation that will allow for an appropriate panel of students who would be available to serve on some of these special committees. That process would be allowed to make sure that the provision, that there's a student on every one of these committees, is there. I think originally there wouldn't have been the need for as many of these review councils or whatever to take place, but clearly as an institution gets bigger and bigger, there's more and more requirement for that type of thing to happen.

[16:15]

Now the final section in the legislation is section 9, and it talks about the execution of documents. And this is a bit of an interesting one because it basically removes the requirement for a corporate seal. And this is not an unusual provision in present-day legislation because the use of corporate seals and similar kinds of things has changed quite dramatically in the last 30 or 40 years, as many more documents are no longer paper. They're no longer created in a single copy, and so when you have all kinds of documents that are very . . . have legal status without any even signatures sometimes, to have a provision in the legislation that requires that the corporate name and the seal of the university are fixed to any of these documents is clearly somewhat anachronistic and not of use anymore.

It is interesting to think how much of a change we've had in our society in the last number of years. Practically when I started my own legal career in the '70s, there were many times where documents that today we'd send by email or some other very quick method had to be taken physically to another place. So if you had a document where you had one party to a contract, say

located in Saskatchewan and the other party in New York, well you had to take that document to New York to get it signed or send it there and wait for it to come back. And sometimes where time was really crucial, the job of officials or clerks or people that you had working with you was to make sure a document got to a place and was assigned appropriately.

Now we have rules that allow for electronic acknowledgment of documents. We have many things that are done at a much, much different pace. And this amendment in this legislation reflects that they probably hadn't followed this rule for a long time at the university, and it's time to update the legislation to reflect that.

So practically my sense is that this legislation does reflect requests from the University of Saskatchewan. There may be some things in here that we need to have a little more discussion about in committee, especially as it relates to the members on the board and their terms and also the whole issue around students being on these council committees. But other than that, I think that the provisions do reflect what is required in this situation.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know some of my colleagues will want to make some comments as well, but I will adjourn debate. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of 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 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 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. 107, *The Wildfire Act*. It's interesting the way that this particular piece of legislation has evolved in terms of the way that it was first brought up with certain of the partners that would be affected by this, but particularly rural municipalities and First Nations throughout the forest fringe, Mr. Speaker.

And also of interest to me is the way that we've seen the members opposite, the way that their position on this has evolved from previously a different sort of agitation that was engaged in around riparian management, dating back, you know, over the last part of the past decade. But as well, Mr. Speaker, with this latest iteration the way that it came forward and the way that rural municipalities — again, I'm thinking about those throughout the forest fringe — took the measure of this legislation and properly called it for the off-loading involved in it as regards the prevention and fighting of a wildfire, Mr. Speaker.

We're glad to see that some common sense has prevailed. I think of the work that was done by the member from Nutana, certainly an individual with a long-standing connection to the boreal forest and particularly in and around the Nesslin Lake recreation area, Ness Creek, Big River — that neck of the woods, Mr. Speaker. But I'd also like to say as well that the municipalities themselves, the way that they came forward, the way they marshalled their case was of particular effect. And as well, individual First Nations and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, I know that they certainly had an opinion on the legislation that was first brought forward. And one of the challenges that we'll be engaged in, Mr. Speaker, is to assess whether or not those concerns have been adequately addressed in this latest iteration of the legislation.

Again in looking through the minister's second reading speech, and again that's where the minister gets to state first principles for the legislation, gets to talk about the cause for bringing forth the given piece of legislation and also some of the consultation that has gone on, the different stakeholder groups that have been reached out to in the process, I see that the minister is referencing the full support of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, SARM. And again, Mr. Speaker, it's a welcome change from the reaction that had previously been elicited from places like the RM of Buckland and the way that those RMs saw this as off-loading costs onto the backs of the rural municipal ratepayers.

So again we're glad to see that being referenced, but we'll certainly check to see if that is in fact the case. The minister references other stakeholders, but there's no specific mention made, again, of how the concerns that have been raised to date by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and relevant First Nations through the area . . . I think of tribal councils such as the Prince Albert Grand Council. I think of the Agency Chiefs Tribal Council. I think of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council, and the different First Nations that are party to those tribal councils, Mr. Speaker, and many of those individual First Nations having had a long involvement, not just in the forestry side of this business life in Saskatchewan but certainly in the management of that forest resource, the stewardship of that forest resource. And you know, be it as far back as to the trapline or beyond, Mr. Speaker, these are First Nations that have had a historical and ongoing involvement with the forest and with the approach around prevention and fighting of wildfire.

So again their voice should carry significant weight on these questions around *The Wildfire Act*. We'll be looking to gain some measure of assurance from them that the concerns they have raised have in fact been addressed in this latest iteration of the legislation being brought forward here today.

Again, as the minister brought forward the legislation, in terms of the work around the balancing of responsibility and accountability, reducing the likelihood and consequences of wildfire being appropriately shared by governments with individuals, industry, Crown corporations, and municipal authorities, again that shared responsibility is something that we think is as it should be. But alongside that, Mr. Speaker, again that there's no mention of First Nations in this regard. Again we'll be doing our due diligence, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that that consultation, that work has taken place as regards

something that is very important to First Nations.

I'd also note parenthetically, Mr. Speaker, in the federal Auditor General's report that came forward today, one of the things that came up for mention is the way that the federal government has been falling down around working with First Nations, not just on the fire prevention or the firefighting side of the equation, Mr. Speaker, but on fire prevention as well. And how that interacts with this particular piece of legislation is something that we'll be looking to gain a better appreciation of, Mr. Speaker.

Again that this is part of the results-based regulatory framework championed by the previous minister of the Environment, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, and now carried forth by the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs. Again we'll be looking to see how this lines up with that, what this will do to satisfy questions around not just the prevention and the fighting of fires but also questions of liability, questions of the joint responsibility that again is mentioned in different places in this legislation. But again that talk demands certain resources be brought to bear and how that relates to this legislation.

We'll be interested to see how the property loss and the changes around the level of liability as regards the Crown provincial forest, how that is brought to bear. And we'll be interested to see how the Act works in the field and how burn notification or the different notifications being issued forth under the authority of the Act, how those will be considered.

Another thing we'll be interested to see is in terms of the status quo being retained on the 4.5 kilometre, 3-mile buffer zone adjacent to provincial Crown forests and the clarification around the way the costs can be indeed shared, close the quote from the minister's second reading speech. We'll see how that works again, Mr. Speaker. I've been around this House long enough to have seen different of members currently sitting opposite, some who've gone on to different movies, Mr. Speaker, get out across the North, raise significant concerns around the adequacy of that buffer zone only to, once they became government, Mr. Speaker, embrace that which they had once decried. So again interesting to see that there, Mr. Speaker, but we'll see how this shakes out around how the bills actually come due.

[16:30]

I know that other of my colleagues have a great interest in this legislation, Mr. Speaker. I know that. And again I'd return to a bit of where I started in stating my appreciation on the record for the work of the member from Nutana in her role as Environment critic. My appreciation for the good work that has been done on the part of the affected rural municipalities throughout the forest fringe that again took the measure of this legislation in a previous iteration for what it was, which was off-loading the responsibility and cost onto municipalities. Not working in a spirit of partnership. Not working in a spirit of co-operation.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I still have concerns about how this has engaged First Nations as regards the concerns that I know were out there and concerns I know that were raised with the minister. The fact that they've not been referenced to date in the

public comments on the part of the minister gives me some concern around that, that they've not even been countenanced in the second reading speech, again, in the speech in which the Minister of the Environment introduced this legislation into this Assembly and to the public. But we'll certainly be following up with the affected parties to make sure that both those mentioned and those absent from the minister's remarks have been in fact adequately consulted and met, in fact their concerns have been addressed.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I say it again. I know I've got colleagues with a great deal of interest in this legislation. I know that other of them would definitely like to participate in this debate. So with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 107, *The Wildfire Act*.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 107, *The Wildfire Act* be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 111

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter discussion as it relates to Bill No. 111, *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013*. This responds to some of the pressures in long-term care. Or I guess more appropriately, this doesn't impact specifically government-owned long-term care, publicly funded long-term care. This relates specifically to the private homes across the province.

It is my understanding from what I've read from the brief comments from the minister, the minister's suggesting that this legislation will provide better accountability, better communication to residents and their families about inspection results. Certainly that's something that we would support. We believe and we've been pushing in this Assembly better treatment for our seniors, better supports for those in long-term care, in seniors' care. A lot of that focus has been on the government's operations in publicly funded long-term care, where government has clearly dropped the ball in a significant way. And the impact, the price, the consequence is being paid for by our seniors through their quality of life, through their quality of care.

This bill relates not to those facilities, not the ones that are funded by this government, not the ones that are managed by this government that are in crisis across this province but of the private care homes across this province. So I want to make sure that there's that distinction. Certainly I think it's appropriate and fair for the inspection results to be shared with the public of these facilities and for residents and their families to have better

access to the information contained with them and better transparency on these fronts. And those are something that we would support.

But I would, you know, certainly say to the government opposite that this goes no distance and doesn't make any improvements to addressing the crisis and the challenge that we see in government-owned, government-funded long-term care. So this relates directly to the private home operators. They play an important role in providing care, one I wouldn't dismiss, and I'd thank the many good homes and operators for their work in providing care and dignity to seniors.

That being said, inspections are important. Dignity and quality of care in those facilities is very important as well, and on that front this legislation, this mechanism to communicate to the public and to families is something that we would support. But the problem being, this only focuses on those private operators. And it's this government that needs to stop shirking responsibility for where it has direct responsibility, and that's the countless facilities, the many facilities directly related to or involved in the long-term care that government has a hand in or that they're funding, the public long-term care that we're hearing in so many cases is in crisis under this government.

And we hear stories that simply aren't, simply aren't dignified, aren't appropriate, aren't acceptable for the seniors, the pioneers of this province who have built communities, who have built their lives in this province, who have contributed so much to our province and now aren't being afforded the very basic level of care and decency that they deserve by that government. So that's something that we are making as a critical focus in this Assembly. We see a crisis in long-term care across this province, and we're disappointed by government shirking responsibility time and time again, seeming to only be ready for excuse after excuse when our seniors in this province deserve better.

We hear of circumstances where seniors have been left on toilets, Mr. Speaker, for hours on end without care. We hear circumstances where call bells are left unanswered. We hear circumstances where facilities are in disrepair, where staffing ratios don't allow the professionals to provide the kind of support and care that they need and want to provide or to provide the kind of care and support that families expect for their loved ones in care.

And when we're thinking of our seniors, when we're thinking of the pioneers of this province, when we're thinking of those that have given so much, these are our grandparents. These are our parents. And we need to do better, Mr. Speaker. And that government is dropping the ball on this front. It's failing seniors across this province. It is not stepping up to the plate and taking any level of accountability and not taking meaningful actions to address the harsh challenges facing far too many seniors right across this province.

We know government went out and did a little bit of a tour and a report back in. They haven't acted on the vast number of recommendations that are there. And we know that government sort of wanted to I guess do a little bit of a PR [public relations] band-aid of sorts on this issue by putting forward a one-time, inadequate fund that is barely a drop in the bucket to address

the hard and real challenges facing seniors and senior care facilities, long-term care facilities across this province. And we know the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region has spoken to how these dollars that have been brought forward by this government are inadequate to address the staffing shortages in place in these facilities.

And so this government, what they've brought forward has been an inadequate response to a crisis in this province and one that, if you look at the demographics of this province, if you look at the trends in this province, if you look at the number of seniors that are going to be entering the system, we need government to be ahead of the curve on this front, not in a circumstance of crisis as we see here today.

And the challenge for many on this front is they recognize the good times for Saskatchewan or for the government on a lot of fronts, with its revenues, with the economic strength, with population growth. And it's leaving so many of those that have built this province left to wonder why they're being forgotten at a time of economic opportunity, at a time where those critical investments should and can be made, and at a time where certainly those investment are going to be required for the demographic pressures and those that are going to be entering the long-term care in a significant way.

We still don't see any of the smart investments that are required as well into home care to alleviate pressure. And we know the consequences and the impact are felt in a big way by the entire health system by this government's crisis in long-term care, where you end up having all sorts of individuals, seniors, and families that are taking space that's not the appropriate space for them into hospitals, causing overcrowding, causing pressures.

And we know the impact of that where now, if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, here in our Queen City, here in Regina at a time of economic opportunity, at a time of population growth, we have an emergency room that's being closed, Mr. Speaker, through the evening, through the night. Two hospitals that have served Regina for a long period of time, two emergency rooms that have provided services and supports to southern Saskatchewan for a long period time, and that government, during a time of unprecedented economic opportunity, with a growing population, can't keep the emergency room open and are forcing closure of an emergency room in this province. And when you think about the importance of an emergency room here in Regina and in southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, you can understand why families and communities see this as it being entirely unacceptable and certainly a raw and real case of mismanagement by that government, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, the Deputy Premier, of course, he gets loud, Mr. Speaker, and he shouts across the floor. I wish he'd take that sort of passion back to the table to ensure that they can bring forth some real solutions for the seniors of this province, for the families of this province to address the pressures that are being felt and to ensure that the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital doesn't close, Mr. Speaker. Because I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker, that emergency room, when someone goes to the doors of that emergency room, it's a matter of life and death in many circumstances, and it's a place where minutes matter in someone's life. And the fact that they're talking that they might

shuttle them around with an ambulance to another space, Mr. Speaker, doesn't cut it. They deserve emergency room doctors, and they deserve a full range of supports, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the kinds of examples, Mr. Speaker, that has the people of this province questioning this government. All of this opportunity that that government's been presented — the economic strength, the population growth — and they can't get it done, Mr. Speaker, for the people of this province. And we see it, as they say, in the crisis in long-term care across this province, in the facilities that that government has direct control over, in the facilities that are funded publicly by this government. We see that crisis and we see the impact that it has on the rest of the system, back into our hospitals, back into the circumstances of overcrowding. And we know of course that Saskatchewan people deserve better than that.

So when we look at health care in this province under this government, it's understandable why families all across this province are concerned. And we know that Saskatchewan people deserve better than what they're getting under this government on this front. And provided all of the opportunity, all of the economic strength, this government's failing to fulfill an important promise to the people of this province, failing to make good on the opportunity presented to them, and are putting too many residents at risk, too many families at risk, the health and security and safety of families at risk, and certainly the dignity, compromising the dignity and peace of mind and care that the seniors of this province, the grandmas and grandpas, the mushoms and kohkoms, the moms and dads of this province, that they deserve.

So this piece of legislation . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You know, they can heckle all they want, Mr. Speaker, and make a whole bunch of noise. And you know, members from Regina, to be shouting across the floor when we're talking about something as critical as the inadequate care for our seniors in this city and in this province, and to be talking about the unprecedented closure, the unprecedented closure of the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital in this city, and for them to shout across and for others to be laughing, for others to be making a whole bunch of noise, goes to the arrogant dismissal we see of this government on issue after issue in this province that Saskatchewan people are bringing forward.

So you can make all the noise you want. You can ignore the emails that are coming into your offices. You can ignore the phone calls that you're receiving. You can ignore the needs of Saskatchewan people and brush off the real and hard concerns people are facing. But the official opposition of Saskatchewan, the New Democrats, will stand strong as it relates to health care. We'll stand strong as it relates to the unacceptable, unacceptable closure being forced of the emergency room in Regina, and particularly focusing on the needs in long-term care of this province, Mr. Speaker.

But this bill that we're looking at here today, as I say, doesn't relate directly to the needs in the long-term care system . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. The football game is over. The team has left. No need to replay the Grey Cup here on the floor. I

recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker references the football game here this week of course that we all cheer for in a feverish way. But I think it's time for government to realize there are some realities going on in this province, to get their attention back to where it matters in the life of our communities and the lives of our families, and to step up and to act to ensure that the Pasqua Hospital, that their emergency room isn't forced to close, putting at risk families across this province.

[16:45]

And as I say, Mr. Speaker, when you think of those that are going to the emergency room and you think of your own wife or you think of your family or you think of your dad or you think of your mom or you think of the loved ones or you think of your neighbour, you think of those in your communities. When those individuals are going to receive care at an emergency room, they're not going, Mr. Speaker, for a basic checkup. They're going there because there's a crisis within their life and minutes matter at that point in time. And it just doesn't cut it to be shuttled around or to have inadequate supports or to not have emergency room doctors to tend to their needs, Mr. Speaker. And it's a matter of life and death for many, Mr. Speaker, that are connecting with these emergency rooms.

And it's absolutely unacceptable for a government, during a time of such opportunity and economic strength and population growth, to be failing the residents of this province and our city in this matter, Mr. Speaker. And we call on government to step up to the plate, to not sit idly by in this Assembly, but to make some meaningful actions and investments to ensure that that emergency room doesn't close.

As it relates to the crisis in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, this bill relates to the private operators, not the crisis we see in government-funded long-term care where there's a direct responsibility for this government. Certainly we support provisions of better transparency and accountability and communication of inspections, but again this government is shirking its responsibility on this front and failing to step up to the plate with a meaningful action plan and investment to address the crisis facing far too many seniors in far too many communities right across this province.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan New Democrats will continue to make the case of why seniors matter, why long-term care needs to be improved, highlighting the crisis. And certainly, as it relates to the absolutely unacceptable closure of the emergency room at the Pasqua Hospital here in Regina, we'll be calling on government every opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

You know, and members shout about other hospitals, Mr. Speaker, when they can't even keep open two emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker, in our Queen City, Mr. Speaker. At a time of unprecedented economic opportunity, it speaks directly to the weak management and the wrongheaded priorities of this government.

But, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time as it relates directly to

Bill No. 111, *The Personal Care Homes Amendment Act, 2013*, I adjourn debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of 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 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 Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to enter Bill 108, *The Athletics Commission Act*.

It's interesting. We want to support different I guess activities and sports events in the province, and we know the federal government has made provisions now to open it up and has given the opportunity to the provinces to do that. And the government is introducing legislation that will bring I guess regulations, licensing, rules, and a commission, and I will talk about that a little bit.

But I guess I want to talk about . . . You know, it reminds of a young man back home who truly wants to . . . He graduated, he's working. He's a young man. He graduated a couple of years ago, a year ago. And he's thinking about doing some type of a trainer and he likes martial arts. And the different things, the different activities he really gets into, and he talks about it. And when you talk to this young man, he talks about, you know, his vision and what he would like to see to get young people involved for the idea. And he talks about it, and it's about discipline and he talks about what he sees.

And when you listen to him talk about the event . . . And as an athlete he talks about conditioning oneself to make sure that you can handle the activity that he wants to engage in. And watching him talk about and present what he would like to see happen, this is something I know where he will think about it and say, hey maybe there's provisions to bring this up north, whether it's a promoter to bring it in, whether the commission.

So I just want to talk about this individual and his heart that he has and what he wants to do. And he wants to mentor or he wants to use it to take young people and make sure they understand. And I asked him about this, well you know, whether it's fighting . . . And I referred to it as fighting. And it was interesting to watch him, Mr. Speaker. He talked about, well no, it's teaching young people discipline, knowing how to handle the responsibility, you know, not using it in a bad way if you've got training. And we see that, whether it's judo, karate — different activities going on that athletes use for training.

You know, in La Ronge we know that we have that. But we don't see those individuals as students going out and causing

grief. They're trained. They use discipline. And if you get that training and if you get an instructor, someone who's teaching you to make sure that you understand what it is you're doing and you respect the training that he provides for you . . . And we know that there are many instructors, many people who teach young people, whether it's karate, judo, tae kwon do. There's many different ones that people are bringing in.

And you know, we'll talk about a little bit about the commission, but watching this young man talk about getting his own training program, his own, whether it be as an entrepreneur, a business, watching him develop a business plan and what he sees it doing, whether it's going to add . . . And he knows that he has to bring in more than just one area, so he has to make sure that there's opportunity. Maybe he's going to sell goods. So there's different opportunities, Mr. Speaker, for him to do, and he's going to move forward. So it's kind of encouraging to see a young person come forward, especially the timing of this, that the federal government made provisions and now provinces will too.

And I think the minister refers to I think there's three provinces, and I don't know if that includes ourselves, that currently do not have the regulations, the legislation that's needed to come up with either a commission or some form of a body that would look after sanctioning, regulating, ensuring that there's certain provisions that have to be met. And in here it talks about the commission, a body of five that would be a commission would be appointed to govern and to make sure licensing . . . making sure that the promoters make sure they have the licence but also that they are going through the insurance, the liability insurance that the fighters and those that are competing, whether it be in an activity.

And they talk about a lot of different activities and whether . . . They talk about also testing, making sure blood testing, making sure the insurance is there, having a medical for the individual. But when they're in the ring and they're competing in their events and they're promoted and everything else, they're making sure that the trainers and the people that are assisting them in those events are trained properly and they're regulated to make sure that they're taking good care of the individuals that are competing in the competitions, whether, you know, it's martial arts or whatever, MMA [mixed martial arts], whatever they're going to do that they develop.

But at the end of the day, I think it's to make sure that the sport, you know, has that commission to ensure that safety is number one with the individuals competing. And we wish them well. And if it develops, I think they're going to have to do some educating to make people understand what it is. I mean a lot of people watch different fights and, you know, whether it's boxing here in the province, you know, we have that. But this is opening it up so that they can, a commission could sanction, you know, and give the licensing to promoters to promote certain activities. And it could open it up and this could be good for the province, for the business people, hotels, for, you know, economics and our entrepreneurs. And this could be great. You know, we could sponsor or host certain activities, events.

So we're not, we're not opposed to this type of a, you know, commission. But making sure that the regulations and how that commission conducts itself I think is some . . . We will have

some questions making sure that the public's well aware, making sure that people . . . it's safe, making sure that the provisions are in there, that the commission would follow, you know, the regulations. And making sure, enforcing the rules that, you know, are developed by legislation or powers that are granted to the commission to carry out, to make sure that those promoters, the licence, they've complied to the licence, the regulations.

And it's about safety. And I want to make it very clear. It's a sport. It's, you know, athletics. It's encouraged. People want to encourage that. It has a lot of potential. But we have to make sure, number one, safety of residents, safety of that type of a sport is clearly there. We want to, you know, we want to make sure that, you know, people are protected and that's important that the athletes have the protection so you can do what you can do.

And we know like some of the sports and we see some of the injuries that certain sports have with them. And we want to be clear, Mr. Speaker. We want to make sure safety is number one. So having said this, I know there'll be a lot of questions and on, whether it's my colleagues or it's in committee. And they'll be, you know, regulations or commission may ask what do they think; what are other provinces doing in Canada and maybe around the world to protect the athletes and to make sure the promoters, you know, are in compliance with the licence, with regulations, regulating the industry.

This is some opportunity, and it is. It's opening it up. But we think, you know, let's make sure at the end that you open up, that we want to have that competition and we want our province to do well. And we encourage business and we, you know, we want to make sure that those, that industry and sports . . . And we've seen that. You know, people want to watch the sport and then they talk about it as a sport.

So we want to make sure that it's done correctly; the proper training's in place. We want to make sure the proper training's in place to protect the athletes, to make sure that the facilities, to make sure the equipment, whatever it is they're needing, that the commission that would sanction these events are making sure that the promoters and everyone else that's part of it covers the liability and make sure that they have enough insurance, that there's protection should something go wrong, that, you know, with an athlete, they're protected with some liability. Or if something would happen at an event, God forbid that that would happen, where there is some liability to protect people that are there even watching it or whatever. So that liability is clear. It talks about that. So there's a lot of different, you know, talking about the commission, you know, and the powers that they will have. And it's going to be a five-person commission, and we'll see where it goes.

And I think they talk about, they refer to the five of them. And there'll be a commissioner appointed, and I think they referred to about three individuals. And then there also will be . . . Now let's see. I just want to make sure as I go through that. There would be five of them. It might be someone who is involved in that, within the industry itself that gets appointed to that commission, so that they would have an opportunity to . . . Adjudicator might be one of the ones that would be involved in that. And I think they referred to that individual as well. So



you'd have the commissioner, adjudicator, and maybe three others that would sit on that. So that would be very important to have. And they would oversee and make sure that this body would have the powers with regulations to oversee these events. And there could be some good events.

And some people might have concern. And I think if they have concerns, they need to bring them forward because there may be residents out there that are concerned about this. And it might be that the industry will have to educate people at what it is and what it isn't to make sure people understand. It's about athletes, and they're asking this and they want to be able to bring in those activities. So there might be some education, some work to do as promoters, you know, as an organization, as they bring in the activities. So they're going to have to do a lot of work educating maybe some of the residents that do show concern.

And if there are concerns, I encourage those individuals to get a hold of the opposition, to raise those concerns with the government and with the minister to make sure they understand. You know, if there are issues or concerns that people have in the province about bringing this in and allowing a commission to carry on certain activities, I think it's important that they share that with the government, share that with the opposition to clearly bring that forward. But at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on this bill.

**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:** — It now being close to the hour of 5 o'clock, this House recesses to 7 p.m.

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

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