



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

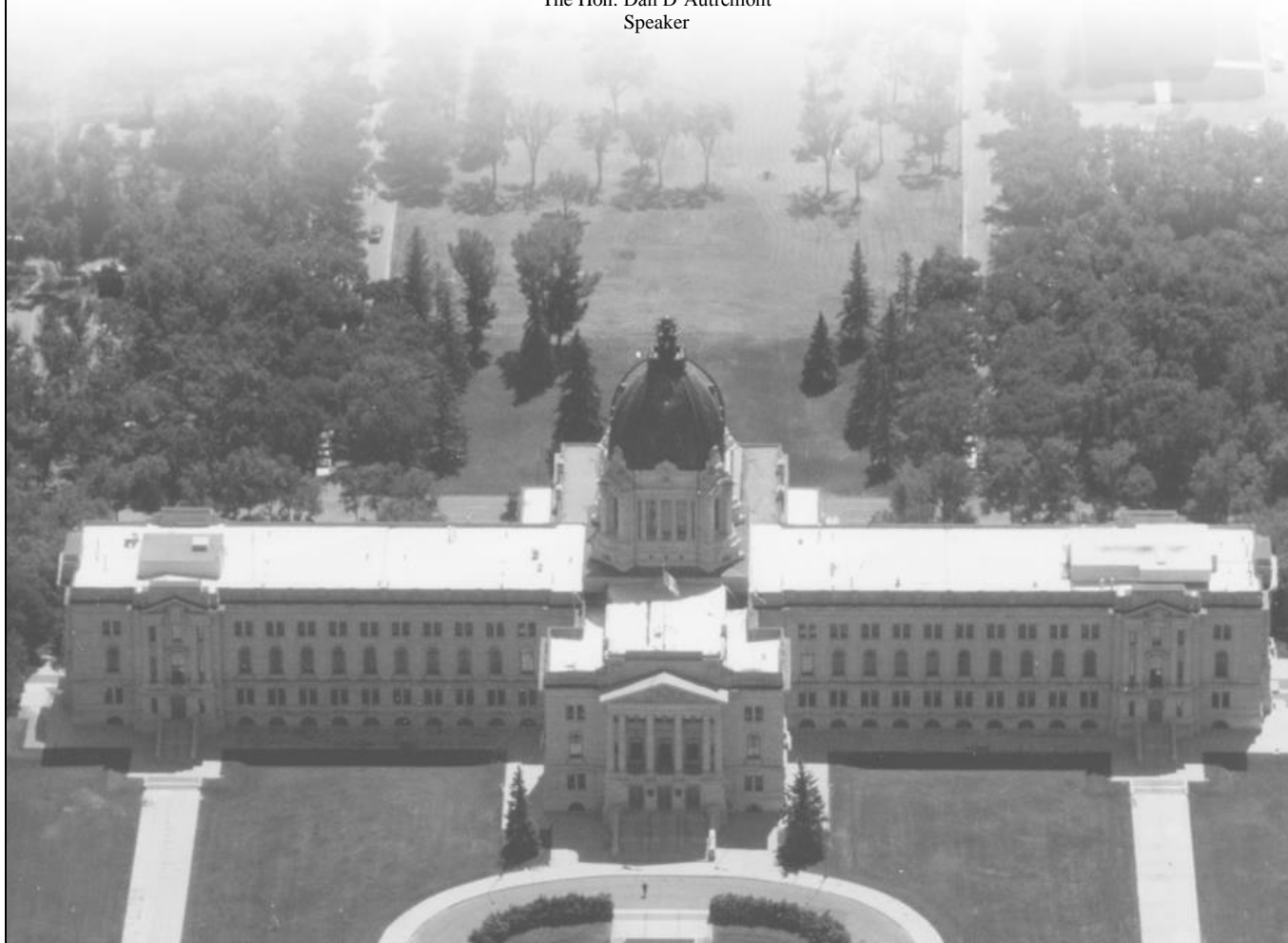
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
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: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was contemplating requesting leave for an extended introduction, but I think we can manage with the regular time. Mr. Speaker, there'll be a number of members who wish to introduce guests that have joined us today.

Today is one of the highlights for any spring sitting of the Legislative Assembly because today we are able to honour volunteers in the province of Saskatchewan, and specifically nine amazing Saskatchewan people who have done much for their communities for various causes and for the province of Saskatchewan. Members from where these folks reside are going to get a chance to put their names, read their names onto the record. We had a chance at Government House to recognize them and honour them with a medal under the leadership of course of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. Speaker, Ralph Waldo Emerson said that life was actually not about trying to be happy. He said the purpose of life is “. . . to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” Well here's the good news, Mr. Speaker. These nine have realized, figured out long ago that if you were to do those things, you indeed will be happy and, more importantly, you will improve the lives of others. You will make so many other people happy.

And so on behalf of a very grateful province, on behalf of all members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, we say to these nine, thank you for serving this province. We hope that their family also recognizes that we appreciate their support and their contribution to the leadership represented here. And, Mr. Speaker, I would with that ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to welcome these nine recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, it's my pleasure to join with the Premier in welcoming the recipients of the volunteer medals today and their family members.

Mr. Speaker, these are individuals who time and time again over many decades have contributed so much to making our province the great place that it is. And none of them have done what they've done wanting to be recognized. In fact chatting with them post-reception, most of them felt quite uncomfortable about the attention that their work was drawing. But to that we say, too bad. We are proud of you. We are so thankful for everything that you've done and just want to say thank you also for the work that you have yet to do, because no one there, Mr.

Speaker, is calling it quits. They're still working very hard for the province of Saskatchewan. So on behalf of the official opposition, thank you and welcome to the legislature.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce Dr. David Buettner from Saskatchewan Rivers who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce Barb Butler from the constituency of Regina Wascana Plains who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. Morley Gusway from the constituency of Regina Coronation Park who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Marchuk: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mrs. Maisie Hanna from the constituency of Regina Douglas Park who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Ms. Betty McDougall from the constituency of Swift Current who has this day received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce Mr. Ted Merriman from the constituency of Saskatoon Northwest who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mrs. Margaret Sandison from the constituency of Regina South who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mrs. Beverly Wilson, niece of the late Mr. Walter Thiessen from the constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland who today posthumously received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce Mrs. Pansy Taylor from the constituency of Moosomin who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today it's my pleasure to introduce, sitting in the west gallery, a group of 16 students, all grade 8, from the Mother Teresa Middle School. With them today is Jane Brundige, and the teacher is Dave Nelson. And, Mr. Speaker, this group of 16 is the first graduating class of grade 8s from Mother Teresa School. I just wanted to recognize that.

And they're also, these students are especially involved in their community. They won first and third place in the Me to We video that brought awareness to mental illness. These students are an example of the unique approach that Mother Teresa Middle School provides to Regina's vulnerable inner city and youth. I'd like all members to help join me in welcoming them to their legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'm very pleased to recognize the University of Regina's Hill School of Business, JDC [Jeux de commerce] West champions. They are the best business champions in Western Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, JDC West is among the very best of Western Canada's large business school competitions. We'll be hearing more about that from one of the members in a statement. But importantly, the University of Regina and city of Regina hosted the JDC West competitions earlier this year and did a remarkable job.

And so I'm pleased to introduce the following JDC West champions and some of those that supported the team: Emily McNair; Ashley Dennison; Mason Gardiner; Alex Piniach; Brady Kapovic; Derek Fleck; Taryn Gullickson; Clarke Westby; David Senkow; Bob Kayseas; Saqib Khan; George Peng; Doug McNair; Scott Cheston; Jeremy Swystun; Ernest Johnson; Randy Linton; Lisa Watson; Victoria Johnson; Greg Elkington; someone who we're familiar with, Ellen Glaze; and of course the dean, Dr. Andrew Gaudes.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members on each side to join me in welcoming these remarkable students to their Legislative

Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite and indeed with all members in congratulating these Hill School of Business, University of Regina, best in the West JDC champions. Congratulations. We're very proud of the work that you've done. I note with interest, Mr. Speaker, that the debate team had Tommy Douglass on the squad. So I don't know if that was what tipped the balance, but I'm sure it was in all sectors where the students and the prof and the advisers were working very hard. And again we're very glad to see this victory for the Hill School of Business.

The University of Saskatchewan placed second. They had won last year, which again is something to be proud of, Mr. Speaker, but certainly the University of Regina Hill School of Business, best in the West. We'll see where it goes from here, but JDC champions, I'd like to again join with the minister in welcoming these tremendous individuals to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all the members of the Assembly, I want to introduce my uncle, Dr. Bob Kayseas. He's a professor at the U of R [University of Regina]. And he's one of the trailblazers in indigenous economic development, and he's consulted on many business development projects in the province. And he's also one of my mentors and role models, so I'm very proud to introduce my uncle. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think it's important on a day like this, when we're honouring these nine who have received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal, and we've mentioned their families at the ceremony earlier today, but I think it's important that we recognize them. So I would just ask for all of the family members of the recipients just to maybe stand, those that are here.

Some have travelled a long way. I think the Buettners have three daughters here, three of their four. All of them actually are now not living in the province, three in Ottawa and one in Edmonton I think, so this should also be a bit of a recruitment mission for the province of Saskatchewan. But mostly we just want to say thank you to the family members and friends who are here, who've supported these recipients. And maybe we'd ask them just to give us a quick wave so we can welcome them to their Legislative Assembly as well.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition against Saskatchewan health care laundry privatization. And we know that in May 2013, the

Government of Saskatchewan announced its plan to privatize health care laundry in Saskatchewan, handing it over to a for-profit, Alberta-based corporation, K-Bro linens. And we know that the privatization of health care laundry will put patient care at risk as health regions lose direct control over health care laundry services. And we also know that the privatization of health care laundry will mean that fair wage jobs will be replaced with poverty wages and public accountability will be lost.

I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly be pleased to cause the government to reverse the misguided decision to privatize Saskatchewan's health care laundry which will result in the devastating loss of over 300 jobs in the communities of Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Yorkton, Weyburn, Regina, and Saskatoon.

And moreover, the privatization of health care laundry will misuse vital taxpayer dollars by taking money out of Saskatchewan's health care system to boost the profits of an Alberta-based corporation; and, furthermore, the privatization of health care laundry will put patient care at risk as Saskatchewan's health regions lose direct control over laundry and thereby will have a significantly reduced ability to quickly and effectively respond to infectious outbreaks in health care facilities.

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 rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents as it relates to the lack of safety on Dewdney Avenue and the dangerous heavy-haul truck traffic that needs to be rerouted from Dewdney Avenue. The residents in the community note that this was a problem created by that government and any further delay to address that problem and bring safety is entirely unacceptable. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the provincial government to immediately take action as it relates to the unacceptable danger, disturbance, and infrastructure damage caused by the heavy-haul truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue west of the city centre, to ensure the safety and well-being of communities, families, residents, and users; and that those actions and plans should include rerouting the heavy-haul truck traffic, receive provincial funding, and be developed through consultation with the city of Regina, communities, and residents.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I present a petition. The prayer reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to restore the rent-to-own option for responsible renters of the social housing program and to reinstate the remote housing program.

Mr. Speaker, and the people that have signed this petition and many other petitions, Mr. Speaker, are primarily from Ile-a-la-Crosse and Patuanak. And I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition for real action on climate change. And the undersigned residents of this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: that Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gas emissions per capita in all of Canada, and that these emissions have continued to grow to 74 million megatonnes annually as reported by Environment Canada in October 2013 and show no signs of decreasing, and slashing programs such as the Go Green Fund and the EnerGuide for Houses energy efficiency program has set the province on a backwards course.

[13:45]

So in the prayer that reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this is submitted by people from Saskatoon. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Remembering Jim Flaherty

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was with great sadness that Canadians learned about the sudden and shocking passing of Jim Flaherty on April the 10th. We express our deepest condolences to his wife, Christine, and their sons Galen, Quinn, and John.

In his nearly 20 years of public life, Jim held many portfolios in Ontario, including Attorney General, Finance minister, and deputy premier. Federally he served as Finance minister for over eight years. Jim served the public selflessly and with the utmost distinction.

His ideals of public service and integrity radiated throughout his life. To me, Jim was a friend. To Canada, he was a steady hand guiding and shaping Canada's financial future. Internationally

he was recognized as the best of his class, leaving Canada in an enviable position through the global financial crisis. As Teddy Roosevelt once said:

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Jim was truly a man of the arena. May he rest in peace.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, on Thursday we were shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden death of Jim Flaherty, who served as Canada's Minister of Finance until just last month.

A speech that Jim Flaherty gave to students at the University of Western Ontario a couple of years ago was widely shared through social media over the weekend. And it's worth quoting here because it speaks to his view of the incredible importance of public service:

Public service is good for you. You will have opportunities to change the world around you in varying ways and to different degrees, large and small. You will get opportunities and to use your talents to implement your thoughts and beliefs. In concert with others, accomplishments will follow. Great adventure this, for disappointments and failure will follow also. Boredom, however, is not on the agenda.

He went on:

It is the most satisfying and personally enriching career you will ever find. This, my friends, is priceless.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of political stripe or policy difference, I ask all members to join with me in saluting Jim Flaherty and to extend our deepest condolences to his family and his friends who deserved time with him following his public service.

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

Congratulating Hill School of Business

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize the University of Regina Hill School of Business JDC West team. These students competed in the JDC West competition held here this past January here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, JDC West is Western Canada's largest business school competition, where over 600 business school students compete in 10 academic disciplines, a parliamentary debate, an

athletic tournament, and a social competition.

Led by Lyndon Kifferling and Mason Gardiner, this team practised for several months leading up to January's event. Mr. Speaker, their efforts showed. I'm pleased to say that the Hill School of Business team placed first as the School of the Year, as Academic School of the Year. Mr. Speaker, the Hill School of Business also placed first in the Participation, and the Human Resources, and Management Information Systems category. This is the second time the Hill School of Business won the School of the Year award, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan business schools have been able to keep this award in our province for the last three years with Edwards School of Business at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] taking home the honours last year. We should be very proud of our province's business students, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate these students on this great achievement, and thank them for representing the University of Regina and our province at the national level. I would also like to commend the Hill School of Business for hosting such an amazing event. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Protest Supports Equal Rights

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, on Friday I had the pleasure of attending a wonderful, love-filled rally in Weyburn hosted by the community group, Intolerance Free Weyburn. It was a powerful, peaceful protest in support of equal rights. The event brought together community members of all ages in support of equal love for all, regardless of one's sexuality or religious beliefs. I, along with the other supporters, participated in their pro-love peace walk. Intolerance Free Weyburn is speaking out to ensure everyone is entitled to safe environments. The organizers made a tremendous effort to show their community, like others in our province, is a welcoming, safe place for all.

One of Intolerance Free Weyburn's organizers, Chris Brookes, had this to say about the decision to take action when he heard of a controversial speaker at an event taking place in his city, and I quote:

When we first started this movement, we couldn't have foretold the amount of positive energy that we would receive. We were just a few people with a sense of justice and the intentions to craft the community into one that we could be proud of. We are simply expressing our right in an attempt to prove that we are a community full of supportive, compassionate people, a people whose voice may not be as loud as an ignorant one at times, but we have volumes in numbers.

Mr. Speaker, I am humbled by the bravery shown by the organizers and supporters of this weekend's rally. I hope that we will remember this leadership as we move towards communities that are safe and welcoming for everyone, regardless of who they choose to love. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Sod-Turning for New Transition House

Mr. Phillips: — Mr. Speaker, our government has always held that growth is not pursued for its own sake, rather it's approved growth which we seek in order to provide a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan families. I am pleased to rise today to mention one worthy example from my own constituency, a project which I'm very, very proud of. On Friday I was pleased to join the Minister of Justice at a sod-turning ceremony for the province's first new transition house since 1989. The Angel's Lighthouse, operated by the North East Outreach and Support Services in Melfort, will provide a much needed safe place for women and children escaping interpersonal violence and abuse.

With the federal government, we are providing a combined \$1.5 million for construction through Sask Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing. The Minister of Justice will also be providing annual funding for the ongoing development and operation of the Angel's Lighthouse. I would like to thank the federal government for their involvement and commend North East Outreach and its supporters for their tireless work in bringing this project forward.

Mr. Speaker, a project like this is the reason we pursue growth. Now vulnerable women and children have a safe place to escape from violence. I ask all members to join me in thanking the North East Outreach for their valuable work in celebrating this important investment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Country Music Association Awards

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last weekend the 25th annual Saskatchewan Country Music Association awards were held in Nipawin. These awards are a great opportunity to support and promote our homegrown talent in this thriving industry and give Saskatchewan country music artists recognition for what they have accomplished throughout the year.

On Saturday night, I had the opportunity of attending an event which featured many young bands from our province. The highlight may have been the closing performance by the Hart Boys of Tisdale and In With The Old, a Saskatoon-based bluegrass band.

On Sunday night there was the awards gala hosted by Northeast Country Music. Guests were again treated to several live performances from our province's finest country music groups. A total of 17 awards were presented at the event. Major award winners included Codie Prevost who won the Fan's Choice Entertainer of the Year, Male Vocalist of the Year, and the SCMA [Saskatchewan Country Music Awards] Achievement Award; and Saskatoon-based Wyatt, who took home Group of the Year, Album of the Year, and Video of the Year. Other award winners include Jess Moskaluke, the Midnight Roses, the Trudel Family, Eli Barsi, and Yvonne St. Germaine.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating all of the Saskatchewan Country Music Award winners and nominees for their hard work. As well I would like to thank all the organizers

of this fantastic event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Aboriginal Bursary Program

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to share news about a program that is helping Aboriginal students achieve their goal of post-secondary education.

The Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan has renewed funding for its Aboriginal bursary program for the next five years. This program grants up to 85 bursaries of \$5,000 a year, and these bursaries are renewed if the student maintains a good grade point average throughout their studies.

The program started at the University of Regina in 2004. In 2009, it expanded to help students at the University of Saskatchewan, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies], and SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. Lakeland College was added to the program in 2010. The bursaries at SIAST and SIIT and Lakeland are focused in the areas of business, trades and technology. At the universities, the primary focus is on business and engineering.

Since the expansion in 2009, 337 bursaries have been awarded to Aboriginal students in Saskatchewan. Financial demands are one of the top three reasons that students leave their studies. These bursaries will go a long way towards helping reduce that pressure.

CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] has received many testimonials from students, and I will share two of them here today. Single father, studying electronic systems engineering at U of R, said, "This bursary allows me to continue to study on a full-time basis."

A business student at SIAST wrote, "Please thank everyone who made this possible. I am forever grateful. Even after the scholarship is gone, I will have an education, and that never goes away."

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to support Aboriginal students in achieving their goals. Please, I hope all members will join with me in congratulating these students and wish them well. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Health Care Workers and the Lean Initiative

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've known for a long time that this government has created a culture of fear within our health care system. But last Friday, Mr. Speaker, we learned just how bad it has become. Nurses and other front-line health care workers who raise concerns about this government's lean pet project are actually being put in time-out rooms. So health care professionals, Mr. Speaker, that raise concerns during these lean, rapid process improvement workshops are being put in time-out rooms. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, it's an

attempt to make them fall in line and to stop raising their very legitimate concerns.

My question to the Premier: what are these time-out rooms for health care professionals and why on earth is this government sending health care professionals to them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. I noted the same article over the weekend with some concern, Mr. Speaker, because the message we provided from this legislature just last week is that health care workers are welcomed. They need to be welcomed to come forward with respect to their concerns or their support for things that are going on in the health care system that they'd like to see either continue or stop.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and his officials have undertaken at least a cursory — because of the timelines; we're talking about the weekend — investigation of this. We're unaware, he's unaware, the ministry is, of these so-called time outs, but we take this seriously. We're pursuing it with the regions, Mr. Speaker.

The bottom line is we know that the lean initiative has already saved more than it costs. It's giving us a chance to improve patient-centred care in the system. However we need to be open to ways to improve it as we continue with the initiative, and the way to do that is to make sure front-line workers feel very welcome and safe and secure in bringing forward any concerns they may have.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, that's what this government says, but their actions to front-line health care workers tell a very different story. The fact, Mr. Speaker, that we're even having to discuss time-out rooms for health care professionals is absolutely bizarre. And it shows, Mr. Speaker, just how ridiculous this government's approach has become to its lean pet project.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier: who came up with this idea of time-out rooms? Was it the \$40 million US [United States] consultant? Was it the \$70 million kaizen promotion offices? Was it the \$3,500-per-day senseis? My question to the Premier: who came up with this ridiculous idea to use time-out rooms when nurses and front-line workers raise very legitimate concerns?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we're not even sure that these time outs exist. Now we would take it very seriously if they do because the message to the health care workers from this government — and I repeat it again today; it's pretty clear — we need their input. We need their constructive suggestions.

We've seen some very positive comments about lean from nurses, from health care workers, from doctors, from the SMA

[Saskatchewan Medical Association] for whom the member was a researcher prior to elected office. And we have heard some concerns that we feel that we take seriously as we seek to improve the process.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is these so-called time outs have not been directed by the minister, by the ministry at his direction certainly. He is looking into the matter. We're unaware of these examples. If SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] wants to bring forward the specifics, that would be helpful, Mr. Speaker, because it's simply not on.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the problem is the tone being set from the top where there is an agenda when it comes to this lean pet project where people who question are seen as being on the outside, Mr. Speaker, and are seen as working against the interests of this government. And that's why we see actions that don't match up the talk that they're saying. The president of the Union of Nurses, as reported in the media, it says:

They're being told that they have to support lean. And if they're involved in the process and they see that there's an area that's going to impact patient safety in a negative way and they raise that concern, they're actually being told, we don't like your attitude and you have to leave the process, or they're put in a time-out room.

Mr. Speaker, here is the tone . . . That's from the president of the Union of Nurses. Here is the tone, Mr. Speaker, being set by this government. It's no wonder that we now have instances where this government is directing front-line health care . . . administrators in the health care system to monitor the social media and the Facebook accounts of their members, Mr. Speaker. No wonder people are afraid to speak out.

My question to the Premier: how on earth is it acceptable to have managers in the health care system directed by this government creeping on the Facebook pages of front-line health care workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, my friend across the way is getting worked up about a directive that simply does not exist with respect to social media. Again the allegations that came forward in the media at the end of last week are being investigated by the minister. They're being taken seriously. None of this has been directed.

I understand that the Health minister's deputy minister this day sent a letter to Donna Trainor, executive director, Mr. Speaker, for the nurses, indicating the following:

Related to this issue, the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner will be meeting with regional health authorities to discuss the possible application of public information disclosure Act to employees of the region. As deputy minister, I can assure you that any health worker who raises concerns about patient safety or the lean management system will not be penalized.

Of course not, Mr. Speaker. I remember just a few weeks ago when there was a letter to the editor from a retired nurse, now volunteering in the system, concerned about lean, I called her, Mr. Speaker. I gave her a call. She's from Regina here. I wanted to hear directly from her. That is the approach of the government with respect to lean going forward.

And the Leader of the Opposition can torque things for his political advantage. The bottom line is if he's got some additional information about these examples, we appreciate it. If SUN does, we'd appreciate that as well. Because we take the matter seriously. We do want to hear from front-line health care workers.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, once again the Premier is going and dismissing what nurses are bringing, very legitimate concerns, Mr. Speaker. It's bad enough, Mr. Speaker, that this government has been in overdrive, been in overdrive to promote its lean pet project. We see talking notes going out, Mr. Speaker, to health care workers with suggested testimonials to boast and to prove the merits of lean, Mr. Speaker. This is ridiculous enough, but what is completely unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, is to have nurses afraid to speak out and advocate for their patients when they see safety concerns and when they have concerns about quality of care, Mr. Speaker.

It is completely unacceptable to have nurses having their Facebook accounts monitored by managers, Mr. Speaker — completely unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier: how does he justify this? How does he justify creating a culture of fear within the health care system where nurses are afraid to speak out, when they're afraid to do their duty for their patients?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what is approaching ridiculous are the preambles to the member's question, Mr. Speaker, because I've been very clear in this Assembly that there's been no directive on this side of the House, from this Health minister, from the ministry, with respect to social media, Mr. Speaker. I understand in fact that both Saskatoon and Regina health regions have confirmed there are no such things as time-out rooms. Neither are they aware of these ever being used.

Now SUN has said as much. So we'd like to hear from them about specifics because, were we not concerned about the front-line workers, we wouldn't be contacting them directly. And were nurses and health care workers worried about coming forward, they wouldn't be writing those letters to the editor in the first place. There are many who support what they see in lean, some who have concerns. We're interested in both sides as we seek to improve a process that's already recovered more in savings than it cost and that's improving patient-centred care in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this government, this front bench, this Premier, have been obsessed with promoting their lean

project within health care, Mr. Speaker. And it's because of that obsession that we have nurses and health care workers coming forward and stating that they are afraid to speak up for their patients. It's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, that we would have social media accounts monitored by health care managers because of the fact that a front-line worker might raise legitimate concerns and problems with lean.

Mr. Speaker, we have been saying that this government should end the cash cow contract to the US consultant. They should stop flying in Japanese senseis, Mr. Speaker. They should stop forcing health care workers to learn how to make paper airplanes in these workshops that go on, Mr. Speaker.

They should be investing in the basics. They should be listening to front-line health care providers, and that is not what is occurring.

Mr. Speaker, speaking notes are being sent out by the health regions, at the direction of the government, in order to have the promotion of lean. We see health care workers, Mr. Speaker, being punished because they speak out against lean. We see a waste of resources with the monitoring of Facebook accounts. My question to the Premier: when will enough be enough? When will he put an end to this lean nonsense?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the work that we're doing within the health care system and lean, yes, it's the first of its kind in Canada in terms of the scope that we are applying lean to the health care system, Mr. Speaker. We have indicated, as I've indicated just in the last week for example, some of the things that we are doing through lean that is already saving more dollars than it has so far cost the system.

Mr. Speaker, for example, there are 33,000 extra in-patient hospital days that are caused by avoidable incidents or avoidable events. That costs the system \$33 million a year. So we are looking at applying lean to try to reduce this number to save dollars, but as well, Mr. Speaker, for a better experience for the patients that do not need to be in these hospital days.

Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated, we have listened directly to SUN in terms of their wanting some assurance that their members can come forward. The deputy minister has written to SUN this afternoon.

As far as the Leader of the Opposition goes, most of what he's saying is hardly believable.

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

Ministry of Education Sector Plan

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the education plan released on Friday has goals that everyone can agree on. But the government hasn't named one action it will actually take to achieve any of those goals, and there's no timeline. This government's plan does have hoshins, which is apparently a Japanese term for improvement breakthroughs, but the plan has not one new dollar to actually achieve these so-called hoshins.

I don't know the Japanese phrase for resources desperately needed, but that would be more appropriate as far as inclusion in the sector plan. There are huge needs in our classrooms, and this government keeps neglecting what really matters for the success of our students. To the minister: what concrete steps will the government take to achieve these goals, and where's the resources to do so?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in our education system, we've had some enormous successes over the last number of years. What we want to do is identify where those successes are, raise them up, spread them out across the province, have great discussions with people across the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a quote: "For the first time in my 26 years of governance, it's a positive relationship where we can pick up the phone and have the conversation if needs be" — Janet Foord, president of SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association]. Further quote from Janet Foord: "'A year ago, we asked for change in this province. And in a year, we've come a long way,' said Foord. 'We've got a sector plan that has identified two priorities, but . . . we've been able to maintain our local priorities.'"

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do that kind of work. We're going to continue to do it. And, Mr. Speaker, we're doing a good job for the students of this province. We have a lot of work left to do, but we're on the right track.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough that that government hasn't identified any concrete actions, dollars, or a timeline for its plan. But what's especially concerning for Saskatchewan families is one particular detail that the government didn't exactly trumpet on Friday. It's a pretty significant detail. This government is actually planning to freeze education funding after next year's budget. To the minister: with so many needs in our schools, in our classroom, how does that make any sense and how is that fair?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite has got a better pipeline to the Finance minister, I'm hoping he'll share the information with me because he's talking about stuff I've never heard of about freezing this, freezing that. The only thing that's freezing cold outside is some of the air coming out of the folks over there, stuff I've never heard of before.

We're going to continue to fund and support education in our province. We've got a great education sector. This is the first time ever that all of the school divisions have come together. They developed this plan. We accepted it. It's a strong plan and it's going to meet the targets for growth. Mr. Speaker, by the year 2020 our goal is . . . And, Mr. Speaker, they talked about not having a goal. We have a goal. The goal is to increase the graduation rate in our province by over 10 per cent and to close the gap between First Nations and Métis students and non-First Nations and Métis students, to close that gap by a half. And

we're going to work down that road, Mr. Speaker, with the help of the school divisions and with the teachers — the finest people in the province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it would seem that the minister's not even aware of a pretty key and concerning part of that plan as it relates to fixing funding 2017 moving forward, simply tied to inflation and wages at a time, Mr. Speaker, that it should be pointed out that our classrooms are under-resourced and overcrowded, at a time where we have population growth and certainly greater class complexity, and at a time where we have a demoralized and underappreciated feeling amongst our educators.

Listening to school boards, teachers, parents, and students, there are too many examples of inadequacies in the funding from this government. Yet this government is actually planning to freeze education funding because it's satisfied with the status quo locking in those inadequacies, a fiscal straightjacket on our education system.

To the minister: when will this government get its head out of the sand and start addressing the realities that students care about here today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, November 13th of last year the member opposite said, "What this side of the Assembly is simply advocating is that the government start listening to the school boards across the province." An endorsement from every school division in the province is pretty strong and pretty powerful.

On Friday the member opposite said, "When I look at the goals and the plan, they're important goals and to have some of that unified across the province is certainly important." On that much we'll certainly agree.

Mr. Speaker, what the members opposite and the status quo that we don't want is closing 176 schools, having people move to Alberta. We're not going down that road. What the record of this government is, we've added 566 teachers. We've increased operating funding by over 26 per cent. We have 159 more student support teachers. We've increased the number of psychologists by 37 per cent, speech-language pathologists by 26 per cent, social workers up 12 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we have a good record on this side of the House, and we're going to continue.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Two questions on the funding freeze from that government that's contained in the sector plan as background — not a single answer from that minister — essentially something that will lock in inadequacies. There's another area though that is causing a lot of confusion and it's that government's plan for standardized testing.

As it relates to the minister's newest comments that plans for new province-wide testing are being scrapped and were, quote,

toxic, I understand that ministry officials were softening that message to school board leaders on Friday, saying that's not entirely the case, and the government's education plan on Friday didn't describe any policy change as it relates to standardized testing.

There's a ton of concern in this area and there's concern that this government's simply rebranding its standardized testing plan to launch and implement it in the months and years ahead. So to the minister, let me be clear: will there be any new tests that are province-wide for students?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

[14:15]

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the previously proposed model of standardized testing of every student in every grade and every year is not on. The sector has asked for meaningful methods of evaluating our students. We plan to start work on that upon the completion of the student-first consultation, and we will do it with the ongoing support of our sector partners, the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], the SSBA, LEADS [League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents], and individual teachers.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need for assessment in our province. It has to be done appropriate. It has to be done properly. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do it in consultation with the teachers. Those are the ones that are the experts. We're going to identify the strengths that we have in our province and we are going to build on those. And we are going to achieve our graduation rates because we have the best students and we have the best province in Canada.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, instead of, you know, cute words to be chosen by the minister, a cute play on words, how about some straight talk and real answers to the teachers and students who deserve them on this issue? Will there be new tests that will be in place for students across Saskatchewan in a province-wide basis?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we've addressed issues around capital. We've addressed issues around operating funding. We have all kinds of things left to do, Mr. Speaker. We put things on pause six months ago. And, Mr. Speaker, we are working through that with people like Patricia Prowse, Russ Mirasty, and we are doing that in consultation with students, parents, and with teachers. And that program is working out very well for us.

We are going to continue doing that. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read a quote. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue doing those things. They are right things to do, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Occupational Therapy and Other Student Supports

Ms. Chartier: — Saskatchewan has the fewest occupational therapists per capita in the entire country. The national average is 40 occupational therapists per 100,000 people. Manitoba and Alberta have 45 and 43 respectively. But Saskatchewan has just 29 OTs [occupational therapist] per 100,000 people, the worst rate in Canada.

This shortage is hurting many people in our province, including our children. Far too many school-aged kids fall through the gap in services between health regions and school boards and are getting no services. And this government is making the situation worse. School divisions are eliminating OT positions and actually blaming hoshin kanri and lean. To the minister: how is this acceptable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a variety of supports that are available in the classrooms. We work at sharing those between the different school divisions. Mr. Speaker, we've increased all of those since we've formed government. I'd indicated earlier that we've increased the number of teachers and student support teachers, psychologists up 37 per cent; speech-language pathologists, up 26 per cent; social workers, up 12 per cent; English as an additional language teachers, up 17 per cent; EAs [educational assistants], up from 3,546 in '07 to 3,601.

I can advise the member opposite that occupational therapists have increased since we formed government by almost 50 per cent. Mr. Speaker, there is not a lot of them in the province, but we are contracting the service out as well through Regina Catholic. And, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to do that, and we will continue to monitor the situation carefully.

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

Ms. Chartier: — We're joined by occupational therapists today including Coralie Lennea, Lindsay Roysum, and Shawna Turlick. That answer from the minister will not be satisfactory to them. We know of at least three school divisions that have eliminated occupational therapy positions over the last year. Regina Catholic, Holy Family, and Prairie South have all cut OTs because of resource constraints. This is leaving many families, included those affected by autism spectrum disorder or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, without desperately needed supports. To the minister: where are these families supposed to go for help?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member should get her facts correct. Regina Catholic has chosen to contract out this service. There has been no elimination of service. School divisions have the legislative authority to determine staffing complements and classroom supports. We've responded to their need by increasing operating funding.

Since 2007-2008, Regina Catholic has seen an enrolment

increase of 7.5 per cent while there's been an operating increase of 26.8 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, they can apply those funds as they think their needs are, which might be for psychologists, speech-language pathologists, social workers, or a variety of other supports that are there. The fact that they've chosen to contract out this service is something that we accept what they've done, and we believe from talking to them that it's working well.

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

Ms. Chartier: — What Saskatchewan people can't understand is why it is that the Social Services minister had no problem spending \$19,000 to attend a brief FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] conference in Ghana and then had a taxpayer-funded vacation with friends and family, all the while OT positions that benefit kids with FASD here at home are being cut. And what Saskatchewan people cannot understand is why it is that the Health and Education ministers have no problem spending untold millions, untold millions, Mr. Speaker, on the Premier's pet lean project, yet this government keeps shortchanging what really matters in education and health care, things like occupational therapists to support kids with autism or FASD and other challenges for which occupational therapists can be a big help.

To the minister: how can the government possibly justify these misplaced priorities?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the members opposite don't really understand what FASD is because we didn't talk about it for the 16 years before we were in government.

But, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to FASD, we have actually held workshops and youth focus prevention campaigns in the last year. Regina Community Clinic is now providing ongoing services to an additional 45 adults. The children with FASD family support program has got 26 families involved. And we have 1,408 children now having received autism spectrum disorder services in our province.

Mr. Speaker, there's always more work to do in this area. And we continue to work as a government across ministries to ensure that children receive the support they need, whether it's for autism or for FASD. And when we have the child and youth agenda and groups like the Hub and the COR [centre of responsibility] working together to ensure we don't have to just look at one area, we work together, Mr. Speaker.

I am very proud of the work that is done. I know there's always more work to do when it comes to receiving supports for children, Mr. Speaker, and for families. But I assure you this is not an issue that's been ignored by our government, and it never will be.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 132

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 132 — *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into the debate on Bill No. 132, *An Act to amend The Public Guardian and Trustee Act and to make a consequential amendment to The Provincial Court Act, 1998*.

And of course, this is one that we've been waiting for, for seven years. This was first, I understand, asked for by the Children's Advocate in 2007, then again in the report *A Breach of Trust* 2009, early 2009, one of the key recommendations there. And then again for the report that the government had done on this same issue about children in care, *For the Good of Our Children* 2010, and even last year, in the Children's Advocate report 2012.

So annually, pretty much annually, this initiative has been called for, and so we're looking forward to see how this plays out. It is one where we have significant hopes that this can make an impact when children are part of a law process dealing with apprehension. And this will be one that I think will go a long way. It's one that's been called for, for some time.

And I just want to take a minute to review the minister's comments on this bill. And of course he said that this will establish a new program for counsel for children in the Ministry of Justice. And we're looking forward to that because clearly, as we've come to understand the good work that the Children's Advocate has, and what they've called for, that it's one that we think it's really time that it's in place and that it really be supported.

And so it looks like it will be something that the Public Guardian and Trustee will look after and will bring forward. The minister talks about how the program that was announced in the budget, they're going to be spending some \$240,000 to be training lawyers across the province, to make sure that when a lawyer is required to work with a youth and provide them their counsel, that there is one that will know the laws that are at play. And I think this will be very, very important.

So it's modelled on similar programs in other provinces and territories. And under the program, the minister says the Public Guardian and Trustee will establish a list of specially trained lawyers throughout the province who can act for . . . a lawyer for a child in child protection proceedings. And I think that's key.

So we hope that this can get going as quickly as possible, that this training can occur. This will happen, I understand, when the Court of Queen's Bench or Provincial Court orders that a child

be represented.

As well, the guardian and the trustee also has the discretion to appoint a lawyer for a child without court direction if there is a request from another individual. And in fact, we understand that individual could be the Advocate for Children and Youth, could be the child themselves, and that's very important. So we're looking forward to this. As I said, this is something that has been called for for several years now, and I think this is an important, important, important piece.

And as the minister says, that we want to ensure — and we agree with this — that the key part is that there will be direct representation for a child where it "... is satisfied that the interests or views of the child would not otherwise be adequately represented." And I think that that's really, really important.

And the minister has made note of this with the pro bono Law Society law program, as part of the Law Society of Saskatchewan, and he wanted to thank them. And I'd want to join in that because that's important that we recognize the good work that the pro bono lawyers have done over the course of several years. But it's one that really clearly should have been supported by Justice here. And now that they'll fulfill that need, that we should take a moment and thank the good folks who've stepped up to the plate to make sure that children had their interests protected and articulated and brought forward in court proceedings.

It is of interest that the minister talks about how there could be as many as 150 to 200 cases that could be a situation where lawyers may be appointed each year, and that in fact that if a lawyer is appointed at the right time, the appropriate time, that in fact it may save a situation where there's a need for an actual hearing, that it could be settled prior to that. So I think that's very, very important.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do want to underline the seriousness and the urgency of this. This is not something that we can just say, you know, take another seven years to bring into action. We see many pieces of legislation this government has brought forward and money that has been set aside in a budget where it actually hasn't been spent. So we will be asking the minister clearly, what is the timeline? What is the timeline for getting this in place? Are the training sessions already ready to go? Are there benchmarks that they want to see happening right away?

Because as the minister himself has said, that with 150, 200 cases a year, that clearly there is work there. But we do want to underline the urgency of this, you know, because the children in care situation continues to be — continues to be — a situation, a crisis in this province, and this government has not really taken the urgency here seriously. We know, since the *For the Good of Our Children* report was released in December of 2010, here we are three, over three years, three and a half years later, this one recommendation is being addressed when it was not the first time the government heard of this particular recommendation. In fact they heard of it seven years ago. So this is one, while it is worthwhile and very good and we're happy to see it, we really do expect the government to step up, to really take this situation seriously.

[14:30]

You know, we've asked the minister, where we see in her budget that we see over \$5 million cut in budget for salaries and children and families, and the government has yet to fully explain what is happening there. Because as we know, the Children's Advocate has caused, has really raised the alarm around the fact that there seems to be less and less front-line workers in the Ministry of Social Services. And particularly the line is then drawn to poor case management and how the case management is done in Social Services, and we see the tragic outcomes of that. We see the tragic outcomes, whether it's supervision of cases that need much more attention and things fall through the cracks.

We know, for example, Mr. Speaker, that over 100 children have died since 2010 that are supposed to be under the supervision of this minister. And while she will say she takes it seriously and there's more work to do, she really needs to get around to it, Mr. Speaker. We really need to see urgent action on that.

And so while I do want to get on the record of saying this is a good piece of legislation, a solid piece of legislation, there are things that we'll be asking for, a timeline of how we will ensure that this will actually be active and up and running as soon as possible. Because we know that the government can pass legislation; it doesn't have to mean that it'll go into force. The government can set money aside, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it will be spent. How will they guarantee that this will actually, actually happen? Because it's one of those cases where we've seen a long seven years for this government to actually take action on the case of appointing a counsel for children. And this is an important area.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know other members will want to speak to this, but I did want to take a few minutes and just get on the record that we will be watching and urging the government to do all that they can to get this up and running as soon as possible so that the children can have their voices heard in court when it comes to child protection. We think that's a really positive step forward. We know the Children's Advocate's been calling for it for many years. And we look forward to seeing the actual rubber hit the road on this program. So those are all my comments I have for today.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 132, *An Act to amend The Public Guardian and Trustee Act and to make a consequential amendment to The Provincial Court Act, 1998*. And, Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that this bill is being introduced as a budget bill because the Ministry of Justice has some amount of money that was announced in the budget which then allows for this particular legislation to move forward. And so one of the assurances that some action will be taken in this area is the fact that there is money actually set out in the budget and there is a plan to spend that money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this particular legislation meets a need for those situations where children are in protection hearings. And a little later I'll talk about the fact that children are involved in

court hearings in a number of different areas and that this legislation won't deal with that. But this is about protection hearings. So this is a situation where the Minister of Social Services makes a declaration, or through staff, that a child is in need of protection.

And when the children are very young, there's often no question that the interests of that young child can be dealt with by the court, by the judges, and by the ministry staff. But this particular legislation I think deals with those situations where the child in need of protection is maybe a teenager or somebody who has a strong perspective on what should happen to them, and there's substantial concern that that child have its own counsel in a court proceeding. Now there may be situations where very young children also need counsel, but that's I think less often the case.

Over many years of practice as a trial lawyer, as a lawyer in these kinds of cases, I personally was appointed by the court to represent children who are in these child protection cases. It didn't happen that often because there really wasn't a procedure for doing that. One of the advantages of this legislation is it will be very clear that the money that's available will be managed by the Public Guardian and Trustee and that the appointment of the lawyer to get involved in the case will come from that place.

One of the challenges up until this point has been where the appointment comes from, who would pay the bill for that. And my sense would be, and we'll probably find out a bit more about this in committee, is that this type of legislation is actually to some advantage or probably great advantage for the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Services and any other ministry that might be involved in figuring out where and how the resources are available to pay the lawyers who are involved.

Now the Minister of Justice has indicated in his speech, second reading speech, that there may be as many as 150 to 200 cases in a particular year. And you know, I'm hoping it's not that many cases, but I wouldn't be surprised if that in fact happens. That means there is a substantial amount of money. Traditionally, or what's happened I think up until now, is that these bills for these lawyers will come out of the court budget or out of the Department of Justice budget, and not necessarily out of the social services budget even though there's maybe some reason for it to come from there. But sometimes it would come from the Minister of Social Services if the appointment actually of a lawyer comes from that perspective.

So part of the background of this bill is to sort out some of the internal financial issues between the different ministries of the government. And I think that's probably a good thing to sort out how that's done. But I think ultimately the judges of the court, who often are the ones who identify the need for independent counsel for a child in a protection hearing, they will still have some final discretion as to when and where these kind of appointments should be made. And practically when the interests of a child, especially a child in need of protection, are at issue, then the cost of who pays for that isn't necessarily a concern of the judge. And so I think we need to follow that, keep track of that particular issue as this moves forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what kind of a role will the lawyers take in

these particular cases? And I think it's interesting to look at the role of the lawyer. And clearly the lawyer is acting for the child in this situation, but the legislation makes it clear that the child is not a party to the court case. And so in a way that lawyer then is acting as a friend of the court or as somebody who is going to provide some advice. The legislation sets out the fact that this lawyer and the Public Guardian and Trustee, both of them, will have reasonable access to the child. In other words, they'll actually get to see and listen to the child, especially as the child gets older.

They'll also be able to get disclosure from all the parties, in other words, get all of the information that everybody else has in the court case to help make their decisions. And so they also will be able to participate in court on all the situations that are there. And they'll be able to speak to the court and that also they will end up being able to present a position to the court. They'll be able to file written submissions, in other words, they'll be able to take a look at the law, take a look at the facts and the information that they've obtained, and then prepare a brief for the judge, for the court and have that included as part of the proceeding.

They'll also have the ability to call their own witnesses and examine those witnesses in the court, but also cross-examine any witnesses that are there for the Minister of Social Services who would be presenting one side of the case, or for parents or other guardians or others who have an interest in the case. And one of the clear powers set out in this legislation is that if the lawyer appointed pursuant to this amendment to the legislation is not given access to the information, not given reasonable disclosure, is not given access to the child, is not allowed to participate — all those things — then on an *ex parte* basis, in other words without even telling the other side, which includes the government or the Minister of Social Services, they can go to the court and say, we need this information. Will you make an order to get us the information so that we can do our job? And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's an important power that's set out in this legislation and one that we support.

Now there are a whole number of provisions I think in the legislation as well that give some guidance to the Public Guardian and Trustee as to what factors they should take into account when this appointment of a lawyer for the child in the protection hearing takes place. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's anticipated that every court case involving a child in need of protection will have a lawyer appointed for that child, but the Public Guardian and Trustee is given this job to discern whether a difference in opinion between what a child thinks should happen to them and what their parents or guardians think should happen to them, well that may be a factor that allows for an appointment of their own lawyer.

There may be some other issues that relate to the safety of the child or just providing necessities for the child or a whole number of things like that, where a child has the power to give their opinion about that, but also where the Public Guardian and Trustee may say, we need a lawyer in here to make sure that some of these things are done.

Also the views of the children are important. And as I said earlier, as children reach their teenage years, this may be a higher factor than if these children, a child is an infant or a

toddler.

And then another factor which I think has to be taken into account is that some children may say that they want a lawyer just so that they feel like there's some fairness in the process.

[14:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, over the years that I practised in front of the courts of Saskatchewan and was involved in these types of cases, it often was one or other of the parents involved or the Minister of Social Services that was convinced that a child needed their own lawyer. And so one of the challenges that one had as a lawyer getting involved in these cases was to discern what were in the best interests of the child over and against the best interests of the parents, over and against the best interests or the interests of the Minister of Social Services.

And sometimes in situations where the minister didn't have the staff or the facilities or the ability to provide for a particular child, that kind of an interest may be an overriding factor from the Minister of Social Services' side. And then it was a duty of counsel for the child that needed protection and counsel for parents or guardians to say that no, there are some other things here, and it is the responsibility in this particular case for the government, whichever department, to find the resources to make sure that a particularly challenging situation for a child could be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, there are no end of possible permutations of the types of cases that you would get involved in. Now I'm not at liberty to talk about any of the particular cases that I had, but I would say that since the last cases that I had like this are over 19 years ago, when I was elected, I would say that a number of the children who are now in their 30s and 40s, ones that I represented, have come to me and said, the work that you did as my lawyer in a situation like this allowed for some stability in my life and now I'm a successful businessman or a successful teacher or a successful whatever other position in life, or I now have my own family and I'm moving head.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is what this legislation is all about. It's trying to provide some other advice, some other perspective for the child who's in the protection hearing to make sure that there's some stability in what is happening in their life. And I can tell you that these are some of the most challenging cases that you would ever get as a lawyer. But they're also, when they're ultimately resolved maybe one or two or three years later, some of the most rewarding as well.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the information that this legislation deals with, on behalf of the child, is absolutely crucial for the future of that child. And that ends up then being something that's absolutely important to get right. Now when these orders will be made under a more regularized or more organized system, I think that we have to be careful that some of the broader discretion of the court to identify some of these needs is not lost.

When I first looked at the legislation, my hope was that the legislation will address the issue of regular or clear resources, clear funding, to make sure that any time a judge in a court protection hearing or counsel for a guardian or for the ministry

thought that it was appropriate that there be counsel identified and paid for for the child in the protection hearing, that the resources were there.

Now we know that the amount of money that's set aside for this year I think is \$240,000, and that sounds like quite a bit of money. But if we end up with 150 or 200 cases, it will be used up quite quickly. I'm assuming that it's set out at that amount of 240,000 because this legislation will not be proclaimed until a couple of more steps have taken place, so it maybe won't be effective until the mid-year point of the 2013-2014 budget. So in actual fact the commitment, on a financial basis, is closer to \$500,000 a year in a regular year to cover these kinds of cases. It may also be that the \$240,000 is effectively a guesstimate or a marker amount because we don't know how many of these cases will require counsel, and we also don't necessarily know how much each case will cost, given that it's a legislative position at the discretion of the Public Guardian and Trustee as opposed to the system now where the court often will make the direction.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the legislation, and I think it's section 5 of the bill but it's also the part where they add section 64.1, you'll see that the Provincial Court has the power to authorize a direction that a child in protection be represented by a lawyer if they can see in the court proceeding that the child's interests or views aren't otherwise adequately represented. And how this takes place is that the child is referred to the Public Guardian and Trustee who will then appoint a lawyer to represent the child.

Now it looks pretty simple on the wording of the legislation and of the explanation of how this is going to work, but I don't think it necessarily will be that simple because often that need for the lawyer happens in the middle of a court case or in the middle of a trial, and all of a sudden there's a referral. The whole thing happens fairly quickly and then you've got a new lawyer in a proceeding that needs to be brought up to speed on a whole number of issues that are there. This may result in some adjournments but more often it will result in some very heavy work and quick work by all of the lawyers involved in the case to make sure that the perception of the judge that this child needs some special advice and special representation in the hearing is dealt with as quickly as possible. And so, Mr. Speaker, you end up then with this situation where a lawyer is appointed and then is brought in to be an extra set of eyes and an extra perspective on resolving the case.

Now sometimes the role of that lawyer who is appointed on behalf of the child in protection is to actually be an interpreter or a person who explains to the child what the court proceeding is all about. And often the child is not even directly involved in some of the aspects of what's happening, but they do need to have a sense that their interests are being protected.

I note that in the minister's comments in the second reading speech, he does indicate that there's a hope that, with the appointment of a lawyer in this situation as a representative of the child in the protection hearing, that many of the cases will actually be resolved without a full hearing, and I think that's a laudable goal. But I think we have to be careful that it isn't a shortcut or it isn't a way of diminishing the full vetting of a particular case because, if that happens, then we'll all be

concerned that the matter is not being dealt with.

Now one of the things we do note here though is that there's a continual recognition and a statement that, no matter what happens here, the child is not a party to the proceeding. And I think that that's a distinction that needs to be maintained, but it needs to also be explained to all the people who are involved.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have some legislation here that I think is a step in the right direction, and it has a substantial number of safeguards to provide for counsel for children at risk when they're in a child protection hearing. I think that's a good idea. But there are a whole number of questions around how this is to be implemented. I know that I will have some questions about this when we get into the committee stage, and I think that we'll get some of the better explanation of how this is actually intended to work. If we identify areas that need to be shored up in the legislation, I'm sure the minister will listen to those suggestions. But at this stage, I have no further comments.

The Speaker: — The member has moved second reading of Bill No. 132, *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)*. Is the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, the minister moved second reading. Sorry about that. The minister moved second reading of Bill No. 132, *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I designate that Bill No. 132, *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2014 (No. 2)* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — Bill No. 132 stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 133

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 133** — *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2014/Loi de 2014 modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 133, *An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act, 1998*. Mr. Speaker, this is a bilingual bill and it's a

complementary bill to Bill No. 132 that we were just talking about, relating to the appointment of lawyers in protection hearings for children. And because *The Queen's Bench Act* has some other provisions in there, it's important that this legislation go ahead as well.

I think one of the key aspects of this legislation is the fact that the Court of Queen's Bench is that court where the judges have an inherent power to make decisions even if there's no legislation in place to give them the power to do it. And, Mr. Speaker, this relates to the history of our courts, where the Court of Queen's Bench is the court that had the powers of equity, which is the powers that came out of the church courts, you know, centuries ago. And often when you are dealing with a difficult issue in a court case as a lawyer, one of the things you would always ask yourself is, well if there's no law anywhere that tells us how to resolve a particular problem, is there the ability to use the inherent jurisdiction of the Court of Queen's Bench to solve a particular issue?

And, Mr. Speaker, what has happened over the years in this particular instance as it relates to providing counsel for children in these protection hearings is that this inherent jurisdiction of the Court of Queen's Bench has been used to appoint counsel to represent these children even though they're not parties to the litigation or the court hearing themselves. And so, Mr. Speaker, when we're dealing with this particular bill, we're dealing with that broader aspect. Now there's nothing that's being done here that diminishes that special power or special right of the Court of Queen's Bench to step in and make some equitable kind of ruling, but what this does do is it further gives direction to the judges of the Court of Queen's Bench who might be involved in some of these particular cases.

[15:00]

Now in Saskatchewan, we have a type of family court system that's evolved over the years which allows for both the Court of Queen's Bench and Provincial Court jurisdiction to be dealt with in the same court. And so once again this legislation reflects that particular development that we have in Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, once again the legislation is there to make sure that there's an orderly process for the appointment of counsel for a child in a protection hearing. That child will not be a party to the proceeding. The power is given to the judge to direct the child to go to the Public Guardian and Trustee, who would then in turn, will use their discretion to appoint a lawyer for the child, all the time knowing that if they exercise the direction as a public guardian and trustee in a way that the judge doesn't agree with, there's some power to even supersede that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think the provisions of this bill do fit nicely with Bill 132 and that together they deal with the particular issue that's at hand. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't have any further comments on this legislation. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 133, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2014*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be assigned?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 134

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 134 — *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter discussion here as it relates to Bill No. 134, *An Act to amend The Financial Administration Act, 1993*. And you know, in many ways this legislation, you could call this bill the no more two sets of books Act, Mr. Speaker, or getting with the program, or getting with the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker, or compliance with the public sector accounting standards, Mr. Speaker. And certainly all of those pieces are long overdue. It's something that, this Act itself and some of the changes that are brought forward are something that we've been calling for for a long time as an official opposition.

It's important to Saskatchewan people to have their public finances reported and prepared in a way that can be trusted, in a way that represents the full, true picture to Saskatchewan people, one that allows accurate interprovincial comparisons. And it was past time that government got with the program and joined the rest of Canada and complied with public sector accounting standards.

Of course this, you know, has been a newsworthy piece over the past few years under this government. We know in this last year there was the unprecedented circumstance where this government, for the first time ever in Saskatchewan history and for the first time ever in Canadian history, actually failed an audit of their GRF [General Revenue Fund] books. And we know that they had masqueraded what the auditor said was close to a \$600 million deficit in the GRF as a surplus. And we know that the government basically conveniently chose which set of books they would report to the public on, the GRF or the summary, based on whatever one sort of portrayed a better picture.

But it was of course a concern to all Saskatchewan people in December of last year when this government actually failed an audit of its books, as I say, in an unprecedented way. And we've been calling for a long time that nothing short of books Saskatchewan people can trust would be acceptable for us as the official opposition and for all Saskatchewan people.

It's worthy to note that as a household, one doesn't chose the accounting rules that they adhere to. Certainly it's tax season right now, and that's important for all households. It's also important to note that the businesses across Saskatchewan — I remember chatting with all sorts of Saskatchewan businesses and to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and all their businesses across the province — they don't get to choose the accounting rules or standards put before them. Those are independent. What they do is they adhere to those rules. They comply with those rules. That's what they do.

And it shouldn't be any different, shouldn't be any different for government. And I know it was sort of, you know, it was a concern to many that the governments could play fast and loose with accounting standards and the presentation of our finances. Certainly there's all sorts of consequences, legal and otherwise, in the private sector that could be applied to a company or a person who didn't comply with accounting standards. We're pleased to see some steps taken in this budget, steps that we've called for. And I believe in some ways this Act is a reflection of that, a direct consequence of that.

Now I don't think it's been entirely figured out by this government yet how they're going to account for things like the growth and Fiscal Stabilization Fund. We'll be following up with the minister to just get the understanding on that front. We'll be following up to get a full understanding of the changes he's making, and making sure that the changes that we make today do provide Saskatchewan people with the honest books that they should be able to trust, Mr. Speaker. Nothing less would be acceptable to us as the official opposition. So we'll be tracking the implementation very closely.

We're certainly skeptical in some ways of a government that's played fast and loose with accounting policies. We're also concerned that, you know, this is the government that brushed off the independent Provincial Auditor's concerns. And we're getting lots of noise from the Minister of the Economy, but maybe he should take to his feet and explain the changes that they're bringing forward here.

The one piece that I find noteworthy is that this pulls the GRF out of the purview of the auditor from government's perspective. What's important for Saskatchewan people to know is that the auditor can audit the GRF that this government's putting forward or its core operational plan as well as all aspects of government. And it's going to be important for government to make sure they're fixing the problems that caused them to fail the audit. And of course we know this was this new accounting scheme created by that government as it related to school boards, as it related to health authorities, Mr. Speaker, and those pieces still need to be addressed.

And I know sometimes that government likes to pretend somehow that this is some matter of opinion amongst

accountants. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a strange way to characterize it when it seems that it's only the Premier and the Economy minister and the Finance minister who sort of present this opinion when the independent accounting community of this province have solidly weighed in — the big firms, the small firms — and have supported the auditor on the concerns around the accounting scheme and the improper accounting of this government.

So we'll continue to track the finances of this government very closely. We're going to make sure that the implementation of the new system provides Saskatchewan people with a transparent, proper display of their public finances. Of course they deserve nothing less. We'll challenge government at every step when and if they choose to present something that's not reflective of the reality when it comes to our finances. Saskatchewan people deserve the full and true picture of their finances, and they also deserve better management, Mr. Speaker, of their finances.

Now we'll have time to follow up with the minister in committee with further questions. I don't believe I have any further questions or comments at this point in time. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy . . . excuse me, the Minister of the Economy if he wants to carry on the conversation . . . I gather he wants to just stay sitting and talk.

The minister has moved Bill No. 134, *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2014*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When will the Minister for the Economy come to order? To which committee shall this bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 134, *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2014* be referred to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Bill No. 135

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 135** — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into discussion of Bill No. 135, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2014*. I think most of the questions I would have for this bill here for the minister are of a technical nature and certainly would be best dealt with at the committee structure. But I would have a few comments to it.

I know that a couple of the changes that we see here today are a consequence in part of changes that were made federally without any consultation with Saskatchewan people, stakeholders, or even that government. And you know, that's a concern, Mr. Speaker, when you have a federal government and a provincial government that are not understanding the changes that they're making when there's a consequence for Saskatchewan people, organizations, and certainly the government as well. This is an area that needs to be improved between the federal and provincial government, I would believe.

But two of the pieces that I want to address, one of them is the credit union changes around taxation. And I just want to say that I was, and I've conveyed this to government, I was pleased that they finally arrived at the right position on this one.

The federal government of course last year put a surprise tax hike on the credit unions of Saskatchewan, over 55 credit unions, credit unions that do over 50 per cent of the small- and medium-sized business lending in this province, a key part of our economy, key part of our communities, that have a presence in communities that the traditional banks have long left, Mr. Speaker, and serve our province in a very important way.

And I should also say that our credit unions are in a very different capital environment, Mr. Speaker. They're not publicly traded as our banks are. They cannot gather capital in the same way that the banks are, and they should be treated differently. And that was the point of the taxation regime that was built out for credit unions. And it was a concern to many when the federal government hiked taxation, something we oppose, something we spoke out federally on as well, Mr. Speaker. And it was a concern that this government couldn't give that same commitment, Mr. Speaker. And for the better part of the year, they left credit unions with an awful lot of uncertainty. That being said, we're pleased they came to the right position on this.

Over the course of the last year as Finance critic for the official opposition, I'd advocated directly with the Finance minister and with the Premier to not follow suit of the federal government, certainly explained the important economic role that credit unions fulfill to the people of this province, and pressed the government to make a commitment to the credit unions of the province, one that they deserved, one that wouldn't have them hiking the taxation of our credit unions.

Although I was frustrated throughout the year that this government was unwilling to provide that commitment, I was pleased on budget day to see the government finally arrive at the right decision and not hike the taxes of credit unions, as had been contemplated by government, to the tune of well over \$7 million a year, almost 10 per cent, Mr. Speaker, a hike that

would have had its consequences in communities across Saskatchewan, a hike that would have had its consequences in the economy of this province, and a hike that certainly would have impacted many.

So we're pleased to see that change, which is in part a piece that certainly we support in this bill to make sure we respect the roles of credit unions. I also know there's changes as it relates to taxation of dividend income. These I guess come about as a result of federal changes as well. I have some technical questions more or less on that front. I look forward to following up with the minister to discuss the consequences intended or unintended on this front as well as what sort of consultation he's engaged in as it relates to the subsequent provincial changes he's brought forward on that front. And I know as well, there's changes in here to accommodate the multi-unit residential tax structure that's there to apparently incent the development of multi-unit residential structures, buildings. And certainly it's important for us to see more of those buildings built.

[15:15]

And we just want to make sure that the government's following through in a thoughtful way with the changes to this Act to support that goal, and to make sure that the changes they're putting forward are the best way to do that. But certainly, the goal of increasing the number of multi-family residential buildings is something that's really important.

And then I will follow up with some of the questions around just the wind-down of the royalty tax rebate program, which I understand is no longer necessary because of the changes that the federal government has made.

And a couple of other changes that maybe the minister might sort of refer to as housekeeping, but certainly we want to make sure, as the official opposition, that they don't just get swept aside from consideration. We'll look at each of those changes at the committee structure and make sure that the minister is able to clearly communicate the changes that he's bringing forward, the reason for those changes, as well as the broad set of consultation that we hope has occurred on each of these fronts.

But as I say, the important piece out of this one, there's some practical changes, it would seem, maybe some of a housekeeping nature. We will get into the detail of those. But from this I was pleased, as I say, to see government finally commit to credit unions at a time where they were given too much uncertainty after a federal tax hike that impacted them in a negative way.

And we're pleased that government came to the position that we had been advocating, as the official opposition New Democrats, all along that it would be wrong for this government to hike taxes on our credit unions.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, actually I'd like to thank on this front, the chairs, the boards of credit unions across the province, administration, members who engaged with government, engaged with the opposition, spoke out publicly in communities because I think it was those voices that were really critical in influencing government to finally commit and to

finally make the right decision, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, we'll be following up with these in committee. And I don't have any further questions or comments at this point in time.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 135, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Bill No. 136

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMillan that **Bill No. 136 — *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2014*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 136, *An Act to amend The Oil and Gas Conservation Act and to make related amendments to The Mineral Resources Act, 1985, The Pipelines Act, 1998 and certain regulations.*

Mr. Speaker, once again this is a budget bill that has been brought forward by the minister. And it's obviously brought forward as a budget bill because it does relate to the revenues that come from the oil and gas industry and it also relates to certain expenditures that are being made by the ministry as it relates to oil wells, gas wells in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you summarize the Act, in many ways it's about taking a whole number of fees that an oil company might pay and wrapping it all up into one fee that they would pay as it relates to a new . . . or drilling an oil or gas well. So a new well has a certain fee. Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look, the legislation is actually quite long because of the fact that we're having to deal with 10 separate fees that are being paid for by oil companies. And so just on the straight administrative side,

there are clearly some advantages for the ministry, the government agency that's handling all of this work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

And so on that basis alone, I think there's quite a bit of merit in what's here. But when you look through the types of fees that are there and the fact that you wrap it all into one, there may be some places where we'll need to think it through a little more as we move forward.

And perhaps I'll just talk about the types of fees that were involved here. Basically right now, if you want to drill a well, you have to pay a fee. If you want to transfer the well licence to somebody else, you have to pay a fee. If you want to do a structure test hole, you have to get a licence and pay a fee for that. If you want to change the name of the well to something else, you have to pay a fee. If you want a facility licence, in other words you're putting some kind of facility there at the well, you have to pay a fee for that. And if you're going to then transfer that to another company, you have to pay another fee. If you've got an abandoned well and you want to make it deeper or if you want to re-spud it, in other words drill another hole in the same area, you have to pay a fee for that. And you also have to pay a fee for a pipeline, in other words the pipeline that goes from the well to the collector pipeline system that's out in the field.

And so, Mr. Speaker, there are . . . And then there's also a fee if you want to change the pipeline licence, and there's a further fee if you want to extend the pipeline, in other words make it longer.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a whole number of fees that are there. Now one of the things from the perspective of industry is that, on any particular well, they may not pay all 10 of those fees because some of them are maybe not necessary. And so we need to look to make sure that we're not in a situation where some of the fees are going up in a dramatic way that are counterproductive to what's happening now.

Now I don't think that that's going to be the case because we have the word of the minister that a number of the people in the oil industry and gas industry have said this kind of a structure makes sense. We also have the experience of our neighbouring province to the west that has a structure I think that's closer to where we're going. So we know that some of these things make some sense that way.

But often there are unintended consequences when changes like this are made. We know for example that a few years ago there was a change in the size of the performance bond that was required for gas wells that were drilled on land, and the result of that was that some of the smaller oil companies couldn't get the size of performance bond that they required to continue to work on the gas wells. And so they just said, well that's too expensive for us; we're not going to drill those kinds of wells. And so then we have complaints from primarily the farmers who were getting lease payments that . . . Well the lease payments have dried up because of an administrative change within the Saskatchewan government ministry related to the oil and gas regulation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we need to keep our eye on the

suggestions and the changes that are being made here to make sure we don't have similar kinds of unintended consequences because I don't think there's any intention to effectively cause some difficulty, especially for some of our smaller, home-grown oil and gas companies.

And so practically we have a situation where there's going to be one annual fee for that particular well as opposed to a whole number of different ones, fees that kick in at different times in the life of the well.

Now one of the factors as well is that there's an indication that the fees, as they're going to be set, are going to be equivalent to about 90 per cent of the cost of the regulation of the oil and gas industry, which amount will be set each year by the Premier and cabinet. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think in other provinces they set it at 100 per cent but, Saskatchewan, we're going to start at 90 per cent. I guess that's better than 50 per cent, but maybe it's something that should be looked at as well.

But practically what it means is that there's an ongoing adjustment that will be made each year to these fees, and we're hoping that that will be done in a very predictable way. Because what we know from the types of oil and gas royalty and revenue policies that were set by the New Democrat government 10 years, 12 years ago, that they had very direct results in the kinds of activity and then therefore the revenues for the people of Saskatchewan. But when you think about well what was done, well it was the predictability, in other words it was the clarity and the knowledge that those kinds of royalties were set and were going to basically be there as the industry moved forward.

We know that's the case because when Premier Stelmach, who was visiting us last week, made some indications in Alberta that they were going to take another look at their royalty structure, there were some pretty dramatic changes in the political support for his government in Alberta. And ultimately he ended up moving out of the job as premier as a result of some of the uneasiness that was caused around this.

We also know that in Saskatchewan, when the government changed in 2007 and going into 2008, that any comments by the Premier to take a look at the structure that was set up by the NDP [New Democratic Party] were quickly met with comments from the oil and gas industry. And as we've seen, those royalty structures have remained and continue to provide a situation where the Saskatchewan oil and gas industry can expand and grow. So our hope is that the provisions that are part of this legislation that relate to these fees will be something that works well to complement the previous government's royalty structure and not something that's going to cause uneasiness about how these things go forward.

Now the other area that is talked about in the legislation — and this where we'll have to ask some questions in committee but I think also watch carefully as the programs are developed — relates to the services that are provided to the industry from the government. There's an indication here that they will be enhanced, that they will be in a better place on many different levels — everything from approving horizontal drilling to enhancing the air quality monitoring and enforcement, dealing with contaminated sites, and dealing with the, you know, operating, monitoring, and enforcements.

As we know, the more activity that you have in the oil and gas field, the greater chance there is for something to go wrong, and so the fact that there is an indication that some of these things will be monitored more closely, I think that's important. But it's our job as legislators, it's our job as members of our communities across the province to identify things that don't go quite correctly and make sure that they're fixed as soon as possible.

[15:30]

And so practically we have legislation that is eliminating lots of pieces of paper or lots of applications and lots of bills going back and forth. That's I think probably a very good thing. But it also has this other aspect of using what resources do come in to enhance the service, enhance the monitoring, enhance the community scrutiny of an important industry in Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that there are a number of good things about the bill, but there are also some things that we'll need to get some further explanation about when we're in our committee setting. But at this point, I have no further comments.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Energy and Resources that Bill No. 136, *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2014* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 136, *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2014* be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — The bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that the House adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:32.]

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Kevin Doherty

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. June Draude

Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Health

Hon. Donna Harpauer

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Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Nancy Heppner

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Minister Responsible for Trade
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
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