



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

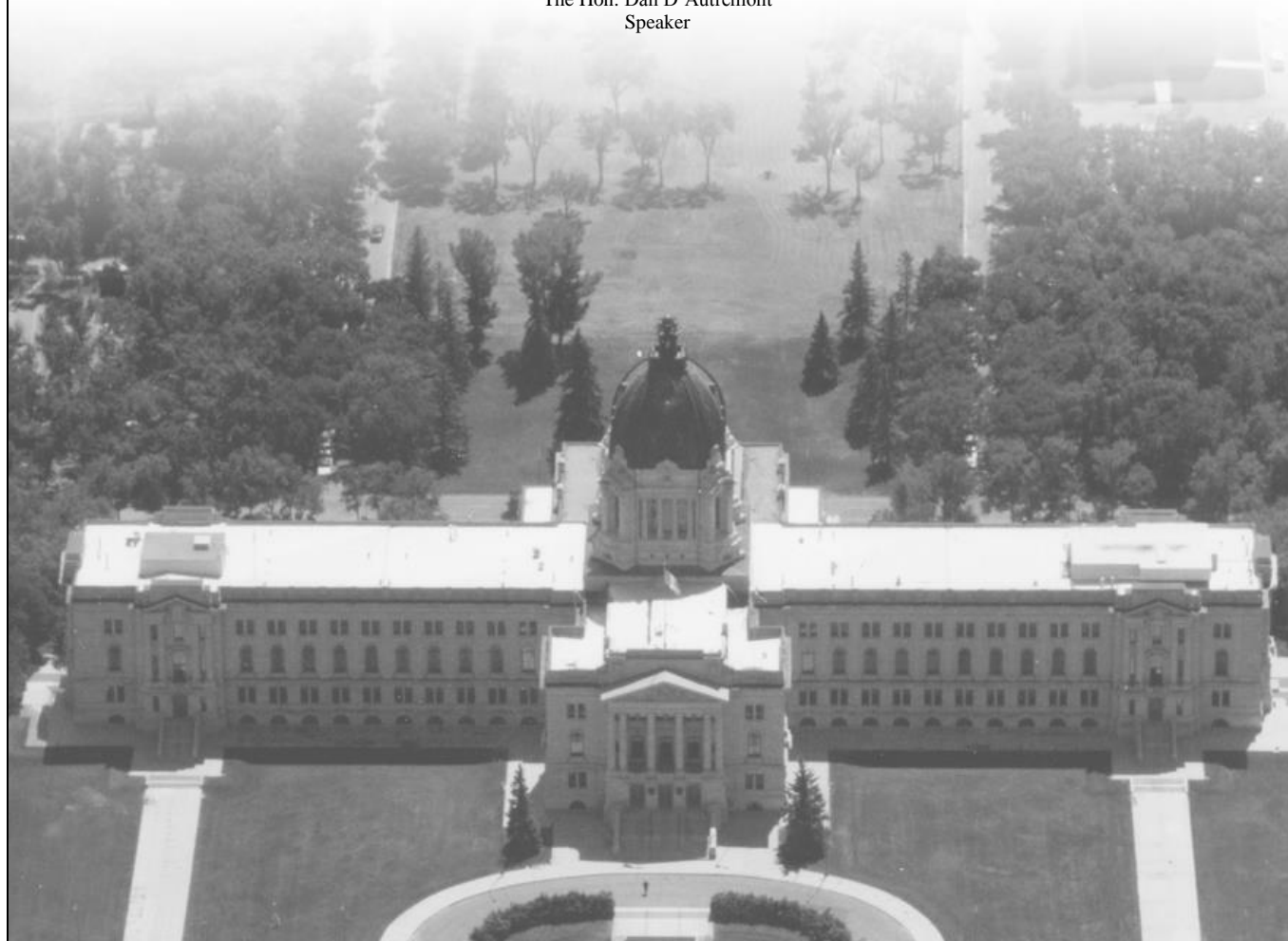
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Belanger, Buckley | NDP | Athabasca |
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| Boyd, Hon. Bill | SP | Kindersley |
| Bradshaw, Fred | SP | Carrot River Valley |
| Brkich, Greg | SP | Arm River-Watrous |
| Broten, Cam | NDP | Saskatoon Massey Place |
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| Doherty, Hon. Kevin | SP | Regina Northeast |
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| Draude, June | SP | Kelvington-Wadena |
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| Merriman, Paul | SP | Saskatoon Sutherland |
| Michelson, Warren | SP | Moose Jaw North |
| Moe, Hon. Scott | SP | Rosthern-Shellbrook |
| Morgan, Hon. Don | SP | Saskatoon Southeast |
| Nilson, John | NDP | Regina Lakeview |
| Norris, Rob | SP | Saskatoon Greystone |
| Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg | SP | Yorkton |
| Parent, Roger | SP | Saskatoon Meewasin |
| Phillips, Kevin | SP | Melfort |
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| Ross, Laura | SP | Regina Qu’Appelle Valley |
| Sproule, Cathy | NDP | Saskatoon Nutana |
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| Tell, Hon. Christine | SP | Regina Wascana Plains |
| Tochor, Corey | SP | Saskatoon Eastview |
| Toth, Don | SP | Moosomin |
| Vermette, Doyle | NDP | Cumberland |
| Wall, Hon. Brad | SP | Swift Current |
| Weekes, Randy | SP | Biggar |
| Wilson, Hon. Nadine | SP | Saskatchewan Rivers |
| Wotherspoon, Trent | NDP | Regina Rosemont |
| Wyant, Hon. Gordon | SP | Saskatoon Northwest |
| Young, Colleen | SP | Lloydminster |
| Vacant | | Prince Albert Carlton |

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — It being Commonwealth Day today, we have a number of guests in the Speaker's gallery that I would like to introduce: from the Canadian International Council, Dr. Michael Jackson and Alexander Shalashniy; representing Barbados, Bert Clarke; representing India, Renu Kapoor and Rani Bilkhu; representing Jamaica, Mavis Ashbourne-Palmer and guest, Pam Taylor; representing Sierra Leone, Muna De Ciman; representing Trinidad and Tobago, Patricia Harvey-Roberts; representing Uganda, Mike Luti; representing Zambia, Chimuka Simasiku and guest, Grace Musenge; representing the United Kingdom, Teresa Walker and guest, Elaine Morgan. I would ask all members to welcome them to our Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to welcome four women to the legislature today who are making a tremendous difference in our community through their dedicated work with the Regina Sexual Assault Centre. Seated in your gallery are Debbie House, the centre administrator — maybe just give us a little wave; thank you — counsellor Cindy Bote and board members Crystal Giesbrecht and Jasmine Collier.

As we will hear momentarily from my colleague in Regina Qu'Appelle Valley, the centre is now celebrating its 40th year providing services to victims of interpersonal violence and abuse. The centre provides a range of invaluable services, including counselling and a 24-hour sexual assault line, and also undertakes education and awareness initiatives, including the Be More Than a Bystander campaign which I would encourage all members and guests to review.

Our government is a proud partner of the centre, providing annual funding of over \$275,000, and looks forward to their continued success as they begin their next 40 years, Mr. Speaker. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming our special guests in recognition of the centre's 40th anniversary.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the Minister of Justice in congratulating the centre on 40 years of good service in the city of Regina. I know that there are many citizens of the city, but also of the province, who are very thankful for the help that they've received from you, and we look forward to many more years of service here in the community. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted

to add a couple of comments of welcome to the community leaders that are here today, Mr. Speaker, for Commonwealth Day. I want to thank all the leaders that have joined us here today, Dr. Jackson and all guests.

But I wanted to specifically thank Mr. Bert Clarke that's joined us here today. It was a pleasure to take in Black History Month gala with Mr. Clarke just a couple of weeks ago.

It's a pleasure to have Ms. Renu Kapoor with us here today, a leader and a force within our community for so many good projects, and recently the well-deserving recipient of the U of R [University of Regina] President's Award for a lifetime of community service. It's a pleasure also to welcome Ms. Rani Bilkhu, a good friend, a wonderful person, a leader within our community, and a wonderful family to join us here today.

And it's a pleasure to welcome Ms. Muna De Ciman to her Assembly here today. And many will be familiar with Muna. She's a force as well within our community. Her family are an exceptional family within our community, whether that be her daughter Phoebe or her son Chan, right now who is likely as well one of the best football and basketball players within our province, Mr. Speaker, and has exciting years ahead on that front, but also an exceptional student.

So these are a few leaders that make our community better here in Regina, make our province stronger, and I want to join in welcoming them here today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a former member of this House, Mr. Sherwin Petersen, and his wife, Pauline. I want to welcome them. They now reside in Manitou where they've been enjoying life there. I'd ask all members to welcome Mr. Petersen and his wife to his legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for Saskatchewan citizens from developers who default on fixed-price contracts.

And we know that in September of 2014 this government walked away from a new 48-unit affordable housing project in Regina, allowing a private developer to instead take control of and rent the units at full market price. This government allowed the private developer to back out of a fixed-price contract without any penalties, setting a dangerous precedent for this type of default. And further, when asked to explain the government's decision, the Minister of Social Services said, and I quote, "You're assuming there's these desperate homeless people," showing how disconnected this government is from the realities within our communities.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents here in Regina, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the unsafe conditions created by that government on Dewdney Avenue, Mr. Speaker, relating directly to that government's failure to plan appropriately and a failure to ensure safe flow of traffic, resulting in Dewdney Avenue, a residential artery, being inundated with heavy-haul truck traffic that's certainly dangerous and also degrading infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

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

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

39th Kinsmen Telemiracle

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend I had the great pleasure of answering phones for the 39th Kinsmen Telemiracle. This successful event was hosted by Bob McGrath and held at TCU Place in Saskatoon. With the phones ringing off the hooks and pledges coming in from all over Saskatchewan, Telemiracle 39 raised a grand total of \$4,312,457 for the Kinsmen Foundation. This weekend once again demonstrated the tremendous generosity from all residents across this great province.

Mr. Speaker, the Kinsmen Foundation raises funds every year to support those that require special needs equipment and access to medical assistance to improve their quality of life. All funds raised in this province stay in this province and support Saskatchewan citizens. All donations, big or small, go a long

way to support this incredible cause.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to say a very special thank you to Bob McGrath for doing a wonderful job of hosting again this year. Bob has been hosting the telethon every year except one since 1977. Unfortunately he announced this was his last year. His dedication to helping the people of the province has been outstanding and he will be greatly missed.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members join me in thanking Bob McGrath and the many talented performers, and the people of Saskatchewan for their donations. I'd also like to congratulate the Kinsmen Foundation for a very successful Telemiracle telethon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to recognize Telemiracle 39 and that it took place in Saskatoon over this past weekend. And once again Saskatchewan people opened their hearts and their wallets by raising the remarkable sum of \$4,312,457. And Telemiracle has now raised a total of over \$105 million, all of which has gone to help people living with illness and disability. It's an incredible testament to the tremendous spirit of Saskatchewan people, the incredible generosity and the care we have for our neighbours.

This year's Telemiracle also marks the end of an era. The long-time Telemiracle host, Bob McGrath, announced yesterday that this year's telethon will be his last after leading 38 of the last 39 shows. Bob has done a remarkable job of hosting this yearly tradition and he certainly leaves big shoes to fill for the next host.

Incoming Telemiracle Chair Todd Bedore announced on Saturday night the launch of a new website to collect the stories of people whose lives have been affected by funds raised at the telethon. The stories will be shared through commercials and social media posts throughout the year to promote Telemiracle 2016.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Bob McGrath for his years of service to Telemiracle and his incredible contributions to our province.

And I also ask all members to join me in congratulating Telemiracle Chairperson Bonnie Ireland, all of the Kinsmen and Kinettes, and all the Saskatchewan people who helped make this year's telethon another great success. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Women's Day

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak about March 8th, International Women's Day. International Women's Day is observed annually to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievement of women everywhere.

In Saskatchewan the theme this year is Influential Women:

Agents of Change. Mr. Speaker, this theme is most appropriate. International Women's Day is an important opportunity for us to celebrate the many accomplishments of women right here in our province.

That is why our government is helping to recognize these efforts by providing International Women's Day grants to support events in the communities across the province this month. I, along with a number of my colleagues, attended events throughout this province.

Mr. Speaker, I also had the pleasure of attending the 40th annual anniversary breakfast for Regina Sexual Assault Centre this morning. This centre is a progressive organization dedicated to working towards a non-violent society by empowering individuals who experience violence and abuse. The centre offers free counselling to abuse victims and their families. They provide a 24-hour sexual assault line. They continue to work to improve public awareness of issues surrounding sexual and physical violence.

International Women's Day is a great time to empower women in our communities who have been victims of abuse. Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone here to join me in paying tribute to the many women across Saskatchewan and to congratulate the Regina Sexual Assault Centre on providing support to victims and families for over 40 years. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, leading American feminist Gloria Steinem said, "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist, not to any one organization, but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights."

On Sunday, March 8th, we marked International Women's Day across the world to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women who have gone before us, those in our midst now, and those who will advance our future. We celebrate past achievements for women's advancement while reminding ourselves to be vigilant and to work to ensure women's equality and dignity everywhere. In countries around the world, people are marching and holding events to honour women's achievements.

[13:45]

In Saskatoon I had the privilege of participating, with the member for Saskatoon Fairview, in a panel discussion entitled *Influential Women as Agents of Change: Past, Present, and Future*, hosted by International Women of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Intercultural Association, and Family Service Saskatoon. The panellists raised the many conflicts, challenges, and responsibilities of women today.

On March 4th I also attended the screening of *The Motherload* at the Saskatoon Public Library. This film documentary encourages women to embrace leadership roles despite conflicting family, community, and workplace responsibilities. The Canadian Federation of University Women and the

Saskatoon Council of Women presented the film. Local Global News TV anchor, Lisa Dutton, moderated the interesting, inspiring, and sometimes humorous discussion that followed.

I also had an opportunity to participate in a wonderful event at the UFCW [United Food & Commercial Workers] 1400 Women's Conference on Friday where many women told brief stories about their own journeys as voices of change.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking all those individuals and organizations in Saskatchewan who continue to work to foster all women's equality and dignity here and abroad. Thank you.

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

Talented Saskatchewan Curlers

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been an unbelievably successful last few weeks for Saskatchewan curling. Not only did the city of Moose Jaw host the very successful 2014 Scotties Tournament of Hearts, but Saskatchewan's Team Laycock won bronze and Moose Jaw's own Pat Simmons led the men's Canada team to a gold finish last night.

Defeating Newfoundland's Brad Gushue in the 11th end, Steve Laycock and third Kirk Muires and second Colton Flasch and lead Dallan Muires stole 2 in the extra end, leading to a 7-5 win.

After a mix-up in positions part way through the round robin play, Pat Simmons took over for John Morris as skip and led second Carter Rycroft and Nolan Thiessen to the Brier championship against northern Ontario. With a slow start to the game and a lot of blanked ends, the game went into an extra 11th end. Moose Jaw's own Pat Simmons was the one who clinched that gold medal with a draw to get a piece of the button against a northern Ontario rock on the four-foot.

It is clear that Saskatchewan curlers clearly have talent in their veins and can still fill up the podium. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Team Laycock for their bronze medal finish as well as Pat Simmons for his win at the 2015 Brier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

2014 Business of the Year

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to recognize an excellent northern Saskatchewan business, Athabasca business development. *SaskBusiness* magazine recognized Athabasca Basin Development as their 2014 Business of the Year.

ABD [Athabasca Basin Development] is jointly owned by seven Aboriginal communities from the Athabasca Basin region. Mr. Speaker, when the company first began operating in 2002, it was mainly centred in uranium mines with a few

contracts. Having an initial value of \$1 million in '02, ABD has grown tremendously in 12 years, achieving consolidated revenues of \$176 million in 2014. ABD now has whole or partial ownership in 10 companies with plans for continued expansion and diversification.

ABD has stayed true to its founding values of giving back by donating to charities which support northerners and paying dividends to its shareholders. Some of these charities are St. Paul's Hospital Foundation, Northern Spirit Showcase, Christmas in the North, and the Athabasca Youth Care Home. *SaskBusiness* magazine touted the company's philanthropic efforts as the reason ABD was most deserving of this honour.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Athabasca business development on receiving 2014 Business of the Year and in wishing them continued success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Saskatchewan Citizens Awarded Medal of Bravery

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am honoured to stand in the House to recognize the heroic acts of Constable Steven Enns of the Estevan Police Service. While on patrol in the early morning hours of May 18th, 2012, Constable Enns saw what he believed to be a dumpster fire. Mr. Speaker, this was not a dumpster fire, but a fire quickly engulfing a two-storey home where four people were still sleeping inside. Constable Enns risked his own life and entered the home. Because of his heroic actions, he saved the lives of the four people inside, including a two-year-old boy who was still sleeping.

Constable Enns is receiving the Governor General's Medal of Bravery at a ceremony this Friday in Ottawa. Joining him are three other people from Saskatchewan, including Sergeant Jason Cary Bromstad of Regina for pulling a man from a burning vehicle, as well as security officers Tyler Andrew Campbell of Weyburn and Christopher Clark from Saskatoon for rescuing a woman from a burning hospital room in Saskatoon.

We have a lot to be proud of in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but it is truly people like Constable Steven Enns who put their lives on the line. I would ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating all the recipients of the Governor General's Medal of Bravery and thank them for being there when we need them the most. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

State of Provincial Educational Facilities

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier had very serious concerns raised directly with him about the P.J. Gillen School in Esterhazy. Has he looked into those concerns and what can he report to the House?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for raising the question. He's correct: concerns with respect to the school in Esterhazy were raised on the floor at the SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] meeting in the bear-pit session. And a response was provided by the Ministry of Education at the time, as well as an undertaking that our government would be looking into the matter with the school board, the school division in the area to see if a solution could be found, Mr. Speaker.

The issues at the school are serious. And we're going to let the minister here, as question period moves on, elaborate on his discussions with the board and our hopes for a resolution to the matter, a prompt resolution to the matter, Mr. Speaker. School capital, the building of schools, and the maintenance of schools in this province has been a top priority for the government . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well it has, Mr. Speaker. It has. There is obviously work that still needs to be done. And we are earnestly looking at solutions with respect to the school, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Education can report more fully to the House here in a few moments.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, at the SUMA convention, here's what a delegate had to say to the Premier:

If you walk through the school today, it's missing flooring. The kids can't drink out of the fountains. When it's raining outside, it's raining inside. This is the elementary school. We went from number two on the list to now number 100 to be fixed. My concern is all the schools from 1 to 99. What do they look like?

Mr. Speaker, members on the opposite side, I heard the member from Northeast heckling. These are concerns that parents are raising about the quality of their schools here in Saskatchewan. To get heckled when they come to the legislature is inappropriate, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the Premier: what is his answer to that question? What do the 99 worst schools look like, and why did P.J. Gillen elementary school drop from number 2 to number 100?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, we looked into the matter immediately after the question came from the floor, and the Minister of Education reported and the Minister of Finance reported to me, who was the previous Minister of Education, that there's no such list. There isn't a list that would even contemplate 100 schools. Now that's not to say that this is a very compelling case, Mr. Speaker, and it's not to say that action has already occurred.

I do think it's important to remind the members of this House, the folks that are here from Esterhazy, parents right across the province, that this government did inherit a \$1.2 billion infrastructure deficit in terms of school capital . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, this is the truth. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite when they were in government, far from maintaining schools, closed 176 schools in this province.

Mr. Speaker, our record is that we have increased school capital over the last seven years by 268 per cent. Mr. Speaker, our record is that there are 40 new replacement schools and 25 major renovations occurring, have occurred already in the last seven years. There are joint-use schools being built. The maintenance of schools has been a priority and has exceeded that which occurred in the province when they were in office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that a comparing of the records on this side of the House doesn't help the situation in Esterhazy. That's why the Ministry of Education has been engaged with the school board. That's why I am hopeful we'll have a prompt solution to this very serious issue.

But, Mr. Speaker, the record is clear. We inherited an infrastructure deficit in terms of schools, from the NDP [New Democratic Party], of \$1.2 billion. We've almost now recovered from that infrastructure deficit, but there's more work to be, there's more work to be done. And we'll get that job done, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, you know what action this government took once they were notified of this at SUMA? A letter was sent out to parents telling them to bundle up their kids, Mr. Speaker, because the windows have to be opened because the air quality is so bad in the middle of winter. That's what was communicated from this government, Mr. Speaker, to the parents.

Meanwhile the heating system isn't even working. They're using portable electric heaters, and sometimes the temperature in the kids' classrooms goes as low as 13 degrees. My question to the Premier: was he aware of this and what does he have to say about it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. The health and safety of our students continues to be paramount. We are aware of the situation at P.J. Gillen. We are in contact with the school community. The ministry officials have attended at the school. They've met with the administration. I've personally reached out to members of the community, and earlier today I spoke with school division officials and board members. Mr. Speaker, this is something we want to resolve as quickly as we can.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that we're seeing a large expansion with the potash mine. It's a \$1.7 billion expansion. That will bring hundreds of families into the school. It's of course a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if it was a priority for this government, there would be a fix other than telling parents that they should put more layers on their children because windows have to be propped open in the middle of winter because of the poor air quality in the school. They would have heaters, Mr. Speaker, that actually worked through the system so that there can be the proper learning conditions for children in the school.

It's absolutely unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, despite all of this talk, what we see is more delays from this government. We have parents that are traveling many hours to come to the legislature to raise their concerns because this government is not taking the issue seriously.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier, although he has passed the baton to the minister, but the parents who have travelled here today want to meet with the Premier. Will he meet with these parents? Will he listen to their concerns, and will he finally commit to fix their children's school?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that these people have come to the legislature today. I have arranged to meet with them later this afternoon. I'll be pleased to discuss this matter with them. It's a matter that is important to all of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

We were left with a large deficit from the members opposite. The school division took temporary steps to try and address this matter. They've now come to the sense that this not satisfactory. Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with the school division and we are going to find a resolution, unlike the \$1.2 billion deficit that we were left with when we formed government, Mr. Speaker. Closing 176 schools, deferring maintenance, scaring away 35,000 students is not a way to deal with the education system in our province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, these answers that we're getting from the government are absolutely pathetic. They have been in power for seven years, Mr. Speaker, with record windfall revenues due to the strength of our natural resources and the hard work of Saskatchewan people. But this government — and we see it again today and we see their treatment of these folks from Esterhazy, Mr. Speaker — has failed to deliver on the things that matter to Saskatchewan families. And this is frustration that I hear from parents all over the province as I travel.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that the quality of our school buildings are not where they should be, especially after the windfall revenues that this government has had. We know that there are at least \$1.5 billion dollars in urgent infrastructure needs in our schools, but the Premier, this government refuses, Mr. Speaker, to release any information on that. They say that it's only for the eyes of cabinet, only for the eyes of the Premier. They will not release information on the urgent infrastructure needs of our schools, the 1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker, that needs to be fixed.

My question to the Premier: will he stand today in the Assembly and explain to parents why this information is some big government secret?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'll say this to the member opposite and I'll say this to the people of Saskatchewan: this is a problem; we take it seriously. Mr. Speaker, what we intend to

do, and we have made the offer to the division earlier today, we are prepared to provide \$800,000 towards the cost of this issue. Mr. Speaker, the total cost is approximately \$1.2 million. The division has got several million dollars in reserves. They have indicated they are going to take it back to the next board meeting. We expect that they will approve it and, Mr. Speaker, the work shall be able to commence immediately thereafter.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that this side of the House takes seriously, as opposed to members opposite that drove out 35,000 students out of our province, Mr. Speaker. This is something we intend to deal with and we take very seriously.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we have at least \$1.5 billion in urgent infrastructure needs in our schools here in the province. We have school roofs that are being propped up with temporary posts. We have little kids, Mr. Speaker, who are being told to bundle up with extra layers because the windows have to be propped open in the middle of winter because of the air quality in their classrooms, Mr. Speaker.

But this Premier, this government will not release any information. They say it's a big secret. The minister, Mr. Speaker, is not being open and transparent with the people of the province about the state of our schools. And Saskatchewan parents, Saskatchewan students, deserve to know, they deserve to know the quality of the education, Mr. Speaker, that is being threatened because of buildings that are falling down, heating systems that aren't working, Mr. Speaker, and roofs that are leaking. Saskatchewan people deserve to know what is the list.

Will the Premier at least today, instead of having the chit-chat with the Deputy Premier, will the Premier at least stand up today and explain to the people of Saskatchewan how many other schools in the province have to have their windows propped open in winter because of poor air quality? How many other schools have that state of learning conditions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like the Leader of the Opposition to turn around and speak to the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre who is getting two replacement schools: Sacred Heart and Seven Stones. Mr. Speaker, those aren't on the list anymore because we've taken them off.

I'd also like him to turn around and talk to the member from Regina Lakeview who's getting a replacement school for Connaught. I'd also like him to turn backwards and talk to the member for Saskatoon Riversdale who's received already a \$16 million state-of-the-art replacement school for St. Mary's. Mr. Speaker, I'd also ask that he talk to the member for Saskatoon Centre who received \$6 million in renovations for E.D. Feehan. Mr. Speaker, he may also want to talk to the Deputy Leader, the member for Regina Rosemont, who has received new licensed child care spaces in the same building as his constituency office.

And, Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition, I'd like him

just to look at himself because he himself is receiving a brand new joint-use school in Hampton Village, something that's worth millions and millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. What I'd like him to do is say thank you to the people of Saskatchewan for providing that to his constituents because they need it.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, on a day where parents travel hundreds of kilometres to the legislature because they have not had their concerns addressed by this government, a day when parents are concerned about the learning environment for their children because of poor air quality, where there are health concerns, Mr. Speaker, of lethargic . . . where the students become because of the bad air quality, where there are headaches, Mr. Speaker, for this government to stand up and praise itself is absolutely offensive to the parents who came here and offensive to the parents throughout this province, Mr. Speaker, who want and deserve the best learning condition for their children.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier. How many other schools in the province have these types of air quality concerns? What is the true state of the condition of our schools? Will he stand up and release that information to Saskatchewan parents today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has a difficult time accepting yes for an answer. We've indicated we're intending to deal with that situation. We've announced today how many dollars we've offered on that.

Mr. Speaker, we have made a record investment in education in our province. In capital, we have \$700 million on school projects, big and small; 40 new schools including nine joint-use schools; 25 major renovations and additions; \$96.2 million in the 2014-15 budget which provides for four new projects, seven ongoing projects like those in Langenburg and Gravelbourg; 29 new relocatables; and a 23 per cent increase in preventive maintenance funding, as opposed to 27 in 2007-2008 where the NDP spent a total of \$18 million on school capital. Mr. Speaker, that year we spent over \$20 million on preventive maintenance alone. Mr. Speaker, our schools are old, but we're working hard to fix them up. We have more work today, and we are continuing to make progress.

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

Government Procurement Policy

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, last June, the Premier appointed the member for Saskatoon Meewasin as the Legislative Secretary supposedly responsible for fixing this government's terribly flawed procurement policy.

We put in a request under the access to information legislation for any documents and any internal correspondence related to the Legislative Secretary's work. The government told us that he has produced absolutely no documents, and we were provided with internal emails amounting to about 100 words

written by the Legislative Secretary, all of them very insignificant.

To the Premier: when will this government get serious about fixing its terribly flawed procurement policy?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last year we formed Priority Saskatchewan whose sole purpose is to look at the procurement policies, not only within executive government but within the Crowns.

Mr. Speaker, those meetings have been ongoing. There has been over 175 meetings with stakeholders, not only with industry, Mr. Speaker, but with other parties that are associated with procurement, Mr. Speaker. And we're expecting to get some further work done by Priority Saskatchewan so that we can report to the people of Saskatchewan what changes might be needed with respect to procurement in this province, Mr. Speaker.

As far as the work of the Legislative Secretary, we're thankful that he arranged a number of meetings with a number of people within the construction industry, Mr. Speaker. Those were valuable contacts that Priority Saskatchewan had through the able leadership of Lionel LaBelle, Mr. Speaker. And we'll be able to report back to the House in very short order with respect to the progress that we're making on Priority Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the reality of this government's approach is that it's hurting the bottom line of Saskatchewan businesses, or having their interests sold out by this government, Mr. Speaker. We've hammered hard to get this onto the radar of government, and all we see from this government is delay after delay after delay when there's common sense solutions that businesses have put on the table.

This government continues to fork out contracts to companies from Ontario, Quebec, California, Texas, and beyond, and at a time, Mr. Speaker, when many Saskatchewan companies like local steel fabricators are in layoff mode because of the, as a direct result of this government's policies. So instead of moping around about the price of oil, Mr. Speaker, this Premier should be working actively to boost and diversify our economy to allow us to be as strong as we can be and help local businesses by fixing his flawed procurement policy.

To the Premier: when can we expect this government to get serious about putting Saskatchewan businesses first?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the member opposite didn't appreciate about my last answer. We are doing extensive consultations through Priority Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I think the opposition would agree that appropriate consultation, full consultation with industry is an important thing when we're moving forward with

changing procurement policies, Mr. Speaker. We will have something to report to the legislature in short order, Mr. Speaker, with respect to procurement, and I think that the member opposite should wait for that.

But to say that we shouldn't be consulting, that we should just be moving on and changing policies willy-nilly without having those consultations, also, Mr. Speaker, having regard to the trade agreements, which are serious to the people of Saskatchewan . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, delay, delay, delay from this government on something that's critically important to Saskatchewan businesses, that's important to taxpayers, that's important to our economy, Mr. Speaker. Right now the government's approach is incredibly naive and focuses only on the lowest initial price. It fails to take into account a bunch of other factors that often lead to higher final prices for taxpayers, reduce quality, and a hollowing out of industry right here in Saskatchewan. New Democrats want to fix that, Mr. Speaker. Taxpayers and Saskatchewan businesses deserve nothing less.

Now we brought forward a private member's bill, Mr. Speaker, that would bring forward a much more sophisticated procurement policy, that would give Saskatchewan businesses a level playing field and ensure that we get best value for Saskatchewan taxpayers, and that should be our goals, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: why won't he just agree to work together, to work to pass that legislation and finally put Saskatchewan's interests first, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how much consultation the opposition did when they were drafting their bill, but I can tell you we're doing extensive consultation on this side of the House because we want to make sure we get it right, not only for participants in the industry, Mr. Speaker, but for those that are buying those products through the procurement, Mr. Speaker. And we're doing that broadly: we're talking about executive government, Mr. Speaker, and we're talking about the Crown corporations. So having extensive consultation is very important when you're talking about procurement, Mr. Speaker, because there's not a simple one fix for all solutions, Mr. Speaker.

So I think that if we can wait, we'll wait for the report from Priority Saskatchewan to come forward. We can look at some of the recommendations that are coming forward and decide how we're going to move forward. But, Mr. Speaker, we appreciated the issue. That's why we formed Priority Saskatchewan in the first place.

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

Environmental Protection and Essential Travel

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, officials within the Ministry of Environment have told me they're no longer allowed to do vital

inspections because the Sask Party government doesn't consider it to be essential travel. How can the Environment minister justify that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll go through this next year. It's been alluded to a number of times by members of this side as the challenges, the fiscal challenges that we're faced with with the provincial budget as we move forward this next year, Mr. Speaker. But I can assure you that the environmental protection and the continued support for our Environment department will be there, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward this fiscal year.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, what environmental protection workers are telling me is that they're not allowed to do crucial inspections anymore, and the reason they've been given that is that this government doesn't consider it essential. To the minister: who made that decision and how was it communicated?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As many members of the legislature know that we have an environmental impact assessment for a number of projects across the province of Saskatchewan that's been in place. We've updated it a few years ago, Mr. Speaker, to make it more streamlined and more effective, Mr. Speaker.

We had, just recently in this past year, the introduction of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code, Mr. Speaker, which is a results-based system, a risk-based system if you will, Mr. Speaker, to streamline our environmental protection, Mr. Speaker, and make it a better environmental protection, Mr. Speaker, for all of Saskatchewan's residents.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's a real shame when we talk about streamlining and it turns out it's removing inspections that protect the lives and health of people of Saskatchewan.

This government's approach to essential travel is getting more and more ridiculous. This is the same government that thinks it's perfectly fine to send a representative to an Oscar party in Hollywood, and this is also the same government that thinks it's perfectly fine to spend almost 1.3 million to send another 140 health care administrators to tour an airbag factory in Utah.

To the minister: how does this make any sense? What exactly is this government's policy on essential travel?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, there is an air of ridiculousness in this House here this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, when you talk about this government's policies with regards to

financial measures in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this government has taken unprecedented initiatives in debt reduction in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we've taken unprecedented initiatives with regards to tax reduction for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, with the money still being in those people's pockets.

Mr. Speaker, we've taken, as we talked about earlier today on education, Mr. Speaker, unprecedented investment in our infrastructure, whether it be 13 long-term care facilities across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, whether it be schools in rural Saskatchewan and some of the members in the urban centres as well, Mr. Speaker, as the new joint-use facilities that are coming on.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the member asks about what has been important with investment and financial investment with this government, Mr. Speaker, I ask her to look no further than this government's record.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, there's absolutely no answers coming over from that minister. He obviously has no idea why this travel freeze has been imposed on his staff. Who's making the decisions in his own ministry? All we're asking is why was that decision made for environmental inspections and audits, and how is it communicated to the staff?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There has been decisions made with travel outside of the province and outside of the country, Mr. Speaker, in the air of financial prudence and fiscal probity. Mr. Speaker, in light of this year's financials, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of the member and her comments regarding travel that may be within the province, Mr. Speaker, but we'll look into it and be happy to get back to her.

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

Ms. Sproule: — What's incredibly frustrating for public servants and for Saskatchewan people is that this government's approach to essential travel is overflowing with misplaced priorities. A trip to Hollywood is essential, but environmental inspection is not? Sending 140 health care workers to an airbag factory in Utah is essential, but environmental inspection is not?

Again to the minister: exactly what is this government's policy and your ministry's policy on essential travel, and will you table it today?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, this government is fiscal prudence and looking at our expenses, Mr. Speaker, as a government whether it be in travel within or outside the province, Mr. Speaker. We're looking at it to ensure that we are managing Saskatchewan taxpayers' money

prudently and on their behalf, Mr. Speaker, as we go into the next years.

But in light of that, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, there's been unprecedented investments, investments in debt reduction, Mr. Speaker, investments in infrastructure across the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as well as investments in tax reduction for Saskatchewan people all across the province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Expansion of K3 Potash Mine in Esterhazy

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had a special announcement, a very positive announcement, just earlier this day with respect to a major expansion in the potash industry, actually in the community of Esterhazy, as the Minister of Education has alluded to. I have had the chance if only in terms of short notice to send over the press release to the Leader of the Opposition, and I hope we can hear from him, the Leader of the Opposition, on this issue as well.

Mr. Speaker, we know that, I mean today we've had a debate around education. We've had a debate over the last number of days around health care. There's only really one way to sustain the kind of quality of life we want in the province, to sustain the investments in education and in health care that we want, here in Esterhazy for example, in Regina, right across the province, and that's a thriving economy, that's a growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan has a program, if you will, with respect to its royalty structure for the potash industry. The royalty structure that we have, Mr. Speaker, is actually the highest in the world. If you remove the incentives for growth, which are part of that program and part of today's announcement, if you remove the incentives that have been put in place for trying to attract new investment, we would have the highest potash taxes on the planet — higher than Russia, higher than Israel, higher than Brazil, higher than anywhere else.

So, Mr. Speaker, the program of the government has been now — for some time actually, encouraged by our party in opposition, but implemented by the previous New Democratic Party government — the policy and the program of the government is to have had an incentive in place to balance off that relatively high royalty rate so that companies would want to invest here. When a potash company looks to expand, they could do that in Russia. They could do that in Belarus. They could do that in Israel. They could do it around the world. We want them to choose Saskatchewan for those jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce today, to confirm to the Assembly today by way of ministerial statement that Mosaic, a potash company that has operated in our province now for decades and operated very well and very successfully, has announced a \$1.7 billion expansion at K3 in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting announcement because it

comes at a time when obviously there's some challenges around the energy sector, and there have even been layoffs in the oil service side of things. We saw even it touch the city of Regina with respect to Halliburton, with changes coming there. And for each of those announcements, we worry about those families that are affected. We also worry about what might come with respect to some energy sector adjustments down the road.

What we have in our province though is a diversified economy. Not only do we have diversified natural resources from which to draw economic strength when perhaps one sector's struggling, but our diversity includes other sectors. The manufacturing sector, Mr. Speaker. The innovation sector is something that's strong in our province. The trade sector, the financial services sector, all of the logistics sector, transportation — all of these things are creating opportunity, continue to create relative strength in our economy.

Today's announcement though is crucial. And we want to, through this Assembly, acknowledge that these incentives are working. We want to acknowledge Mosaic and the 2,300 people that work for that company — including, by the way, 135 or so that work at their new Canadian headquarters located right here in the city of Regina — because of taxation changes that this government made, because of a decision we made with respect to that Mosaic building.

Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge their head office presence. We acknowledge this new investment, this expansion, the new jobs that will come in from construction, roughly 600 is the estimate or 300 per year, and then potentially operational employment increases as well.

Mr. Speaker, it's important for this province to have competitive royalties. It's important for us always to balance the interest of the owners of the resource, and that's the people of the province, with our desire, our plan on this side to also have an attractive business climate and an attractive investment environment.

And I know the opposite side does not agree here. The other side would like to increase royalties. They campaigned on that. They want to jack up royalties in the potash sector, in the energy sector. This is not the right time for that. What we need is continuing with the program we have, that I'm pleased to confirm and affirm today on behalf of the government, and in so doing to acknowledge the good people at Mosaic and thank them for this \$1.7 billion investment in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to follow the Premier's response here today about something . . . I'm pleased to follow the Premier here today on what's certainly a positive announcement for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I think the Premier maybe got a little more into the politics than he needed to in his celebration of what's been an important announcement here for the people of Saskatchewan. But when we look at the potash sector and those world-class companies, that world-class resource, the exceptional workers

in this province, we have an incredibly important industry here in this province. Certainly that's evidenced by this announcement here today. And a \$1.7 billion commitment to the expansion of K3, the second phase, is something that's very important to Saskatchewan people. It's something that we welcome and it's something that we're pleased to see, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly as we've looked at the past decade, Mr. Speaker, the past decade, I know that Saskatchewan New Democrats were in government at a time where a royalty and regime change occurred that was created, Mr. Speaker, to in large part induce investment into Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, from that the results have been unprecedented. And as we know, this government has left that policy in place.

It's important for us, when we're looking at this vital industry to Saskatchewan people, that we look at it in a balanced way by important investments like this one here today, like the important jobs that are provided in this sector, Mr. Speaker, and yes, by way of the royalties that are paid, Mr. Speaker. These are the real returns that are important to Saskatchewan people. Getting that balance right is incredibly important to Saskatchewan people.

I would urge, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, that it's important for government to be mindful that it's time to review and make sure they're fully understanding all of the forces, the current economic environment, and make sure that they're setting an environment that's serving the best interests of Saskatchewan people from a perspective of investment, from a perspective of jobs, and from a perspective of royalties. But as it relates to Mosaic, a very fine company, a world-class potash producer with exceptional workers, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to welcome this investment here today, Mr. Speaker.

And I know the Premier got into a bit of political games in his remarks, Mr. Speaker. I think what's important for Saskatchewan people to recognize is that, you know, it's not good enough, Mr. Speaker, to boost and boast during times of economic prosperity; that the Premier and a government has a direct responsibility to improve the lives of Saskatchewan people and make sure they're getting the job done, Mr. Speaker.

And we know we've come through a decade-long run of increased royalties on things like oil, Mr. Speaker, with a boom of windfall revenues to this government, but what do we see, Mr. Speaker? Higher debt by this government, no long-term savings fund, public infrastructure in disarray, and really a government that has failed to diversify our economy the way that they should, Mr. Speaker, which is in part why we'll continue to push this government to improve its procurement . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Please let the member finish his statement. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And, Mr. Speaker, this is in part why we'll continue to urge this government to take full opportunity of the strength that's been presented to Saskatchewan people and to do a better job of diversifying that economy. A part of that would certainly be fixing the procurement policy, providing a fair shot to Saskatchewan companies.

We know that this potash sector and those companies in this province, Mr. Speaker, do a fine job of engaging Saskatchewan companies. They do an exceptional job on that front. That's in part why this capital investment is so important, Mr. Speaker. But we, you know, certainly do look to government at times of economic prosperity runs that we've seen and any time, Mr. Speaker, focusing on delivering for Saskatchewan people and improving their lives. But we certainly welcome this investment by Mosaic into this expansion of an important one to Saskatchewan people, hopefully for generations forward, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

BILL WITHDRAWN

Bill No. 169 — *The Surface Rights Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to rule 15(2), I wish to withdraw item no. 1, Bill No. 169, *The Surface Rights Act* from the order paper.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 15(2), item no. 1 is withdrawn.

MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I have a message from Her Majesty the Queen. Please rise.

Message from Her Majesty the Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, March 9th, 2015.

One simple lesson from history is that when people come together to talk, to exchange ideas, and to develop common goals, wonderful things can happen. So many of the world's greatest technological and industrial achievements have begun as partnerships between families, countries, and even continents, but as we are often reminded, the opposite can also be true. When common goals fall apart, so does the exchange of ideas and if people no longer trust or understand each other, the talking will soon stop too.

In the Commonwealth we are a group of 54 nations of dramatically different sizes and climates. But over the years, drawing on our shared history, we have seen and acted upon the huge advantages of mutual co-operation and understanding for the benefit of our countries and the people who live in them.

Not only are there tremendous rewards for this co-operation, but through dialogue we protect ourselves against the dangers that can so easily arise from a failure to talk or to see each other person's point of view.

Indeed, it seems to me that now, in the second decade of the 21st century, what we share through being members of the Commonwealth is more important and worthy of protection than perhaps at any other time in the Commonwealth's existence. We are guardians of a precious flame, and it is our duty not only to keep it burning brightly but to keep it replenished for the

decades ahead.

With this in mind, I think it apt that on this day we celebrate “A Young Commonwealth” and all that it has to offer. As a concept that is unique to human history, the Commonwealth can only flourish if its ideas and ideals continue to be young and fresh and relevant to all generations.

The youthfulness and vitality that motivate our collective endeavours were seen in abundance last year in Glasgow. They will be seen again in a few months time when young leaders from islands and continents gather to make new friendships and to work on exciting initiatives that can help to build a safer world for future generations. And last November in India, talented young scientists from universities and research institutes conferred with eminent professors and pioneers of discovery at the Commonwealth Science Conference, where together they shared thoughts on insights and inventions that promise a more sustainable future.

These are stirring examples of what is meant by “A Young Commonwealth.” It is a globally diverse and inclusive community that opens up new possibilities for development through trust and encouragement. Commonwealth Day provides each of us as members of this worldwide family with a chance to recommit ourselves to upholding the values of the Commonwealth Charter.

It has the power to enrich us all, but just as importantly in an uncertain world, it gives us a good reason to keep talking.

Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

[14:30]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to move a motion regarding changes to the membership of standing committees.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move a motion regarding the members of standing committees. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Committee Membership

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of Doreen Eagles be added to the membership of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

That the name of Doreen Eagles be added to the membership of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the name of June Draude be substituted for the name of Wayne Elhard on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

That the name of June Draude be substituted for the name of Wayne Elhard on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 607 to 618.

The Speaker: — The Government Deputy Whip has ordered responses to questions 607 to 618.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 163

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 163, *The Education Amendment Act, 2014*. Going and looking at the Minister of Education coming in and I guess after

passing a bill that he went ahead with, and I guess taking the school year for students in the province, and as he I guess decided to go ahead and introduce legislation that would allow the minister to set a date . . . And you know, we heard a lot of frustration out there in the province from parents, from teachers, administrators, boards of education. Many of them were concerned about the way this information and the decision was made without consulting and talking with the education professionals that are out there, families, students. People felt that when a government makes this type of a change, and at the end of the day they can argue it was for the tourism industry and we heard different stories why, you know, the government wanted to push this and have students come back September long weekend. And we look at that issue. And I want to come back to that.

But I also want to talk about a few areas that when you talk about education and we see some of the challenges that we're seeing . . . And we had family members here today, and parents, who are raising concerns about education. And it's not just about the quality of education. When we look at tutors, you know, we look at the lack and the cuts that have gone on there, within resources to classrooms, the overcrowding, there are so many issues facing our students today, our teachers, the parents, to make sure that our children in Saskatchewan have a class act, number one education system. And we should have that. Our children, my grandchildren, should all have that, as well as every member in this House and every individual in this province who have children, grandchildren. We should make sure that our children and our grandchildren are getting the quality of education that they are entitled to.

And there are individuals, Mr. Speaker, with many challenges. We understand that. There's individuals with disabilities, struggles. But we have to make sure that there's resources for those individuals who struggle in that environment, learning environment. We have to make sure they are successful. We have to make sure we provide the resources that they need. And the government could do that. And there's provisions.

When we talk about making amendments, it gives us a good opportunity when we're debating these bills, why government chooses to do what it's doing without consulting. And I know there's many out there that are feeling like the current government does not consult, does not share what it's doing. For some reason it wants to just come out and say, this is the way it will be. And people are tired of that type of a government, you know, coming from the top down. And it's supposed to be the other way. You're supposed to listen, talk, consult. And we see that many times.

And I don't want to get into that because time after time we've heard, whether it's municipal leaders, whether it's Aboriginal leaders, families, seniors, there's so many in this province that are feeling they're not being heard, and they want to be heard and they want to share. They have good ideas. And the people in our province, whether they're professionals, whether they're families raising their children, they want governments that are willing to open and listen to their great ideas and good ideas when it comes to education, when it comes to the quality of life, when it comes to housing affordability challenges. And I talked about that. But they want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that the resources are there. They want to make sure that the quality of

education are there. They want to make the life that Saskatchewan brags about.

We talk about record revenue, and I think that's so important in our province. You know, the province for eight years this government has had record revenue. It could have done so much for Saskatchewan people, but they're stuck on their priorities, Mr. Speaker, priorities that do not match Saskatchewan families who are struggling, many living in poverty. And members can heckle all they want about that. There are challenges. Many families are struggling to make ends meet in this province. They hear about the great times, but they're not feeling it. They are wondering why aren't they a part of that. And that's amazing.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the struggles that are going on for many families, they're not feeling the prosperity and all the great things that this government likes to put out there and feel-good stories. It's not happening to everyone. I mean there are success stories out there and some are doing really good, and great for them. They are doing really good. And you know, Mr. Speaker, that all that Saskatchewan people are asking for is a government, a ministry, a minister willing to hear their issues and involve them in the decision making to make sure that their views are taken forward, that their input is valued, and to act on that.

And you can say, well we consulted them by going to a meeting. And you know, it's interesting. I met with some of the leadership, First Nations leaders. They talked about that. Government officials, bureaucrats come in. They talk about something they're doing. Next thing you know, it's been that they were consulted, and they weren't. They were given some information. Those individuals leave, and they feel like, oh well, we consulted them. They didn't raise any issues.

And that's not the way you do true consultation, whether it's First Nations leader, municipalities, whether it's, you know, urban, rural leadership, whether it's parents, students, teachers, administrators, board of education, business people. We talk about that. That is not the way you do it. You do not consult in that way. And this government has a track record, and people out there are talking about it and they know that.

You know, and I talked about the education. And this Act, this amendment, is going to give the minister an opportunity. Had he done the research and done some work and consulted with the teachers, administrators, boards of education, they probably would have identified that for himself, that, you know what? This may not work in some years. You want to, you know, have the school year start after the September long weekend. It may not have worked, Mr. Speaker, that the date would have gone on too long.

Now we see the amendment and you know, the minister and the government's coming forward to amend that, saying, well if it's September 5th or a date that goes on longer than that, he has the power to . . . This gives an amendment to allow him to fix it, you know.

But instead of fixing things, they should make sure that legislation that they're introducing, Mr. Speaker, is done with consultation to the professionals that are out there — to the

parents, to the students, to administrators, to boards of education, municipalities, to the business. They could have reached out and got some good ideas. They could have reached out and got some answers that they needed when they were, you know, adopting and bringing this legislation into place. They could have done that, Mr. Speaker, but they chose not to. Again, it shows.

And we have heard that — whether you talk to teachers, whether you go to their conventions, whether you see them in the classroom, whether you see them on the street — teachers are not happy. You know, they're not being valued. They don't feel like they're getting respect from government the way things have been handled, the way the government has actually attacked them. And then we've seen what this government has done and the way they've handled and the way they've treated teachers.

So having said that, you know, Mr. Speaker, we just see a pattern here and, you know, there's such opportunities for government to do some good legislation and, you know, yes, bring in some things that help the province. And we don't have anything against tourism. You want to make sure it's thriving, it's good. But consult with those that are being impacted. You don't come heavy-handed down and tell them, this is the way it's going to be, and then later come back and you've got to fix it because you've got to amend it because you didn't consult the individuals that if you would have, probably would have given you some good advice saying, here's some of the challenges that we see with this legislation.

But again, this government's not into consulting and it's, you know . . . And every now and then they'll say they do that, you know, and they try to make it sound like that and then you find out, well going to a meeting and just telling them what you're doing isn't consulting. That's not what it is. Consulting is a different way and, you know, and a way of doing it. You want to make sure that the input's given. You want to make sure that they have that opportunity.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague, the critic for education from Regina Rosemont, will be in committee and I know we'll be asking a lot of questions and get the opportunity. And I know he goes out and he has a lot of talks, as that was his profession before as a teacher. He has a way of communicating with the teachers. He has many friendships in that and I know he will get the answers. He will meet with the boards of education. He'll find out what kind of questions they would have and what would have worked. And maybe government can take those suggestions next time when they're developing legislation and to consult with the boards of education, the teachers, parents . . . And I know he will do that. He will ask some tough questions. And I have colleagues that will have more to say on this bill before it goes to committee.

But at this time, Mr. Speaker, I have no further comments and I'm prepared to adjourn debate on this Bill 163.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 164

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join in on Bill 164, *The Health Information Protection Amendment Act, 2014*. And I guess the Act being introduced and looking at some of the comments of the minister . . . And previous members have a comment about this bill and the changes that are being proposed here. And I know that the critic will have a lot more comments in committee, and my colleagues will have questions at it.

But I guess some of it takes it from Health, Saskatchewan Health, and it goes from the ministry and it'll be going to eHealth where they'll monitor information. And I guess it's providing certain protections from privacy, your health privacy. Nobody wants to see our records out there in public where we've seen in the last I think four or five years, where we've seen issues with, you know, health records out in the public and in, you know, bins, and having to go through and finding, the Privacy Commissioner finding that stuff. And you know, trying to say that . . .

So maybe these changes are what's needed. And some of the comments you talk about here, I think the Act will actually give more powers to authority to make sure that should charges come forward by somebody taking health records and not disposing them in the proper way, following regulations and provisions that are provided to protect all of our health information for those individuals who have those files out there, this gives it easier. And I think some penalties to prosecute, should there be a reason why after an investigation, you know, that there's a reason to charge someone and, you know, fine them or do whatever needs to be taken, the provisions are there.

We know that that's part of this Act, and bringing it into effect will give an opportunity. And I think it's an eye-opener for individuals out there whether, you know, that are handling health records, that they have to make sure. And I know the Privacy Commissioner has voiced concerns and that office, an independent office, has made it very clear, more had to be done. And I think in light of that we see something, some pressure being put on, and government is acting on it. It's the right thing to do and the government should do that.

[14:45]

So we see that area where they're giving the provision to also transfer, like I said, the health records to eHealth within that's what eHealth does. It can take care of that, but it also gives I guess the clear message out there and clarification that you better make sure that those health records are protected. And we have to protect individuals' private information when it comes to health records. But not only that. There's other areas where we have to ensure, and I know the Privacy Commissioner oversees that, when people out there in the province have

complaints, whether it's with your health records or anything else that's going on, this will take care of it.

Another area where it looks at if someone is going to go snooping into someone's health record, and you could have somebody working who's dealing with those files, and some of those files are confidential information — they're private — and if someone's going to go snooping around in there and looking, and you could have that situation where somebody wants to just have a peek at somebody's health record, and they can go ahead and do that, this actually gives an opportunity for the powers to be to hold those individuals to account so that they're not digging into health records that, you know, for whatever reason, just wanted to check somebody's health records. It won't be allowed and if they're found doing it, there's provisions to handle that and deal with that in a very I guess quick and harsh way for penalties to come.

So some of these changes, I know, whether it's the health professions, I'm not sure who all the government consulted on this. But I know my colleague will be doing all the work that is required as critic for Health, to make sure that the records are protected. And we want to make sure that people's health records are protected, and there's provisions when it needs to be acted on and if it's reported, that there is some action taken and it's not, well we investigated and there's not much we can do. Now this Act and with this provisions will give the authority to individuals within the Act to proceed charges and do whatever action needs to be taken to correct something if something has been, someone's privacy has been violated and that sort of thing.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I know again in committee there will be more work from my colleagues. We'll have more to say in committee. There's more work to do. I know we'll be consulting and checking with people, and if this is the right thing to do and people feel good, that's great. But I guess that gives us an opportunity to ask some tough questions and make sure people's privacy are protected.

So at this point I have no further questions and I am prepared to adjourn on 164.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 165

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

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to enter the debate today, as always, on the Bill No. 165, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2014*.

Mr. Speaker, the minister had his second reading speech on this particular bill back in December, December 1st actually. And he points out that the Premier back in August announced that the government would be bringing "... forward legislation to allow Saskatchewan residents to have some alcohol shipped directly to them." And the minister talks about this being a move to provide opportunities for consumers to seek out and purchase unique products, but it also demonstrates this province's continuing commitment to remove barriers to interprovincial trade within Canada.

The minister goes on to talk about how Bill No. 165 is about "... setting the framework to allow Saskatchewan consumers access to a much broader selection of Canadian wines and craft spirits than previously available." But this is just the first step, Mr. Speaker. Implementation, once these changes are in place, it'll also require amendments to *The Alcohol Control Regulations, 2013*.

What this particular bill though does, Mr. Speaker, is it ... And the minister outlines this in his second reading speech. It allows:

... Saskatchewan to enter into agreements with Canada and other provinces regarding direct-to-consumer alcohol shipments; [it] allows individuals to import alcohol for personal consumption from other provinces where such agreements exist; and [it also] create regulation-making authority regarding issues such as type and amount of alcohol, type of seller, and province from which the product originated.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. In the news release the minister points out that ... or pardon me. A news release released on November 27th, 2014, when the bill had its first reading, specifically mentions British Columbia and how ... Well the minister goes on to talk about "... eliminating inter-provincial trade barriers that restrict the flow of product between our two provinces and hinder economic growth," but specifically mentions, the news release specifically mentions BC [British Columbia].

Once the legislation is passed, expected in spring 2015, consumers in Saskatchewan will be able to make direct purchases of wine and craft spirits from B.C. manufacturers and have it delivered directly to their door.

So there have been conversations between our government or this government, Mr. Speaker, and the Government of BC. So this is to open up the door, not just to BC though obviously. But I think it's important to mention although this will allow direct purchase here of BC spirits and wines, the goal I think obviously should be to have some of our stellar distillers and wineries here in Saskatchewan doing the same thing in BC and across the country, Mr. Speaker.

The goal should be to have LB Distillers in Saskatoon shipping directly to consumers in BC. Some of their products — I've never had some of LB Distillers' products — but I've heard

very good things about them, the Western Dry gin, the vodka. Their marketing campaign, Mr. Speaker, is very clever as well. I don't know if, I know they refer to themselves as LB Distillers, and I don't know if that term is parliamentary, so I'm going to refrain from saying the common name of the company in the legislature, Mr. Speaker. But they do also, they make some lovely liqueurs, I'm told as well: Seabuckthorn Liqueur, Carmine Jewel Cherry Liqueur, Crème de Cassis, and Haskap, which is blue honeysuckle, Mr. Speaker. So some lovely Saskatchewan spirits, and then infused with some really wonderful Saskatchewan fruits, Mr. Speaker, and essences.

I know Last Mountain Distillery, I've heard really good things about the Dill Pickle Vodka. Again, I've not had an opportunity to give it a try myself, but my constituency assistant is a big fan of it. So we have some very good . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the member from Elphinstone here next to me is testifying that the Dill Pickle Vodka is quite fine as well, Mr. Speaker. So the end goal, I think, again should be to get the Saskatchewan products that we here in Saskatchewan have the opportunity to enjoy into other provinces as well.

I've had an opportunity when I've been in Vancouver in the past year, Mr. Speaker, to tour a couple local distilleries there. Actually it's interesting: aquavit, I'd never heard of aquavit, Mr. Speaker, until I became an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and acquainted with my colleague from Lakeview — my Norwegian colleague from Lakeview — who has often had aquavit for all of us to sample, Mr. Speaker. But I've had an opportunity, when I've been in BC at a couple of these distillers, to realize that aquavit must be pretty darn popular because a couple of these distillers offered aquavit as one of their offerings. I see by the look on your face that that isn't your choice beverage, Mr. Speaker, but apparently it is quite a popular beverage. So perhaps there will be people from Saskatchewan ordering directly from a couple of these distilleries in British Columbia.

I know that when we talk about some of the rules around alcohol, Mr. Speaker, so today we're talking about spirits and wine, and this is opening up the opportunity for sale of . . . Actually it's opening up the opportunity for purchase of products from other provinces. In particular it sounds like BC, that groundwork has been laid, but this hopefully is the first step to get our products elsewhere.

But we can talk about some of the great microbreweries that have opened up here in Saskatchewan in recent years, Mr. Speaker, and continue to pop up — some really wonderful products. And this bill doesn't address that, but I know there are many microbreweries who are interested in seeing some of the alcohol regulations change, modernize, so they become more supportive of that industry as well, Mr. Speaker.

But I do know I have colleagues who will also want to speak to Bill No. 165, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2014*. So with that I would like to move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 166

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join on Bill No. 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*. Just to give some brief comments, and I realize there's a number of areas where there's been changing, but I would like to talk a little bit about before I get into details of the actual bill.

We want to make sure that voters out there, when you're in a federal election, provincial election, municipal election, board of education election, whether you live in rural, urban, cities, that those individuals . . . And that's always going to be, you know, a concern for those individuals that go to a poll, and for whatever reason. And you know, the voter ID [identification] thing has been a huge issue for many. And we look at different groups of people and those in poverty have challenges. Our seniors sometimes have challenges with the ID. We have Aboriginal people, First Nations, Métis sometimes have the challenges with getting the proper ID when you look at housing.

So we see some of the changes that the government's bringing forward under *The Election Act*, and governments will say, oh well, it's just, you know, we're making a name change. We're changing this. We're changing that. Some of the struggles we wonder about, who's asked for this? And we've seen where government has introduced legislation in 2012 to make changes to *The Election Act* when it came to voter ID. And the changes that are going on, really the changes weren't warranted and wanted by individuals, saying you know, there wasn't abuse, widespread abuse. There was no proof of that. We never heard any proof. Where were the complaints, like people filing within the Elections Saskatchewan? You know, where were all these complaints about voter ID?

I think at the end of the day you look at municipal elections, and probably federally we look at the voter turnout, and the low turnout that's going on right now in Canada when you look at federal elections, provincial elections. But I think municipal elections, you know, from the information I've heard and that people have shared with me, are even lower to get people out for mayor and council and for your Reeves, your RMs [rural municipality], and all that.

So there's already a challenge in getting people engaged, and we don't know the reasons why sometimes. But I do know this: if you have individuals who are willing to go to the poll and they want to cast a ballot and go and take the time to vote in this province, we should make sure that that person has a right to vote. Now there's provisions there, and I think there has been provisions to sign an affidavit, to have them sign on your behalf saying they know you — you're from the community; you're from the province. You would sign this. This is binding on you, and should you sign a false declaration or information saying

someone's who they are, charges could be laid and people could be held to account for that. So I don't think people went out and signed these things just whatever . . . it was widespread and you had problems.

And sometimes that's been the frustration. It's just the way government wants to perceive it. And it's kind of been, I guess when you hear people talk about, you know, the far right and those individuals, those parties, whether it's the far right and that movement wants to, for whatever reason, wants to hold more . . . And maybe for whatever reason, they figure that the more people or the less people that come to the polls, the better it often . . . We don't know what it is, but I think it's not the right way that it should be. It isn't fair to people who come to the polls to vote.

You know, and you talk about that. And I've heard some say, well why make a big deal out of it? Well if we're going to say that . . . And I think about this and, you know, we talk about respecting our veterans. And I know my grandfather, you know, as a World War II veteran, a very proud man, a Métis, an Aboriginal person, he was a very proud man. He fought. He fought for rights for people to have that democratic right, to have their voice and to speak and be heard, but also, you know, to vote.

And I sometimes think we have to realize . . . And for me I respect that and I do. I respect, and it is an honour to say and I'm proud to say, you know, my grandfather was a veteran and he fought. And as a Métis person, he was very proud. He encouraged people to get out and vote. He made sure we were engaged to vote, his grandchildren, his children. That was important to him, you know, whether you heard the stories and what he shared about. It's important that individuals who are going to go to the polls have a right to vote and have a voice.

[15:00]

And when you're voting . . . And I know we're trying to engage our population, you know, within the province and Canada to get involved in the election. That's crucial. Some countries there isn't an opportunity to go out and cast a vote and tell government. Sometimes it's sending a message, and sometimes some governments from time to time — I say it this way — they kind of go in the penalty box for a while because the residents in the province are saying, you know, we're not happy with the way you've been governing, so we're going to put you in a penalty box. But I also remind individuals, governments change and people's minds change, and things change that make people change when they see things happening.

But we're encouraging people to get out and vote, and we say it's important. And when those individuals come out, and the frustration is when those individuals want to come out and it's shown that for the ID . . . This bill, if you look at the Bill 166, it makes some changes, and I know they'll say, oh no, it doesn't change anything. We're just making, you know, there might be some name changes. There might be . . . There's different things.

And I know as you go through the bill itself, and I know my colleagues will go through that, and we'll talk to people, and we'll have an opportunity in committee to ask a lot of

questions. But when you're hearing just the words out there and people's frustration and concern, you know, when you see, at election, someone's turned away . . . And I look at, you know, the provision that's here for municipal elections, and whether the North, rural, urban, they're making some changes. But it's always about, at the end of the day to me, it's when individuals are turned away, and they have that right to vote and cast their ballot.

But having said that, I know my colleagues have talked long and hard. We have talked about and warned government about not stopping people from casting their ballots when they come to the polls. Make sure it's easier. Let's not make hurdles and make it harder for individuals and turn people away saying, I'm not going to bother. It's too frustrating. I'm hoping that doesn't happen.

We have to change. We have to make it easier for individuals in our province to cast a ballot. Whether it's a federal, provincial, or municipal election, we have to do that, boards of education. We have to ensure that individuals who take the time and are good citizens of this province come out. Whether they are somebody who is somebody who may be living in poverty or it's a senior or it's an Aboriginal person or it's a business person, whoever, we make it possible for that person to cast their ballot. It doesn't matter. It's important that those individuals have a right to vote and, you know, you don't want to be making hurdles for them.

So having said that, you know, I know in committee we'll have some questions. There is definitely more concerns that we're hearing. We want to make sure that individuals — and we'll keep pushing for that and we'll keep advocating — those individuals, and I encourage them to, individuals out there with concerns about the voter ID, let's get the vote out. And there's different groups pushing that, making sure, you know, the Aboriginal vote, that whether it's seniors, it doesn't matter, that all citizens get out there and vote. It's important. And Elections Saskatchewan, Elections Canada have a role, and they'll do their part. We need to do our parts and encourage our citizens to get out, cast their vote, how important it is.

But at this point, having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 166, *The Local Government Election Act, 2014*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 167

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*. Really again this Act is making a name change. From what I can look at it, it's consequential. There's not a lot in it and I think, like I said, it makes a name change. Looking at some of the documents that have been provided, it is a name change.

And at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't really have any further comments. I know we'll follow up in committee, as I said before. And at this point I'm prepared to adjourn on 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 168

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 168** — *The Government Relations Administration Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Glad to join in on debate of Bill No. 168 this afternoon, *The Government Relations Administration Act, 2014*.

This is very much a machinery of government piece of legislation in that it's reconstituting what is now the Ministry of Government Relations and duly consolidating the authority of this ministry in legislation as, in this case, *The Government Relations Administration Act*. The need arises for this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

There are four main points that the minister talks about in the second reading speech, all of which are valid points, but in the main, this is about consolidating legislation and the mandate of this ministry in government relations as concerns the government's engagement or relation with a number of groups.

I'm speaking of course of northern people through what used to be the Ministry of Northern Affairs. I'm talking about the rural and urban municipalities, which have generally been well-represented in terms of the cabinet structure or the general sort of legislative landscape of government, and I'm talking about the First Nations and Métis people of this province that have been rolled into this consolidation legislation. This legislation, I think for me, Mr. Speaker, represents formalizing the downgrading of the importance of the relationship as is particularly the case for northern people and First Nations and Métis people and the affairs of this government.

We've seen a significant evolution take place where once was the time First Nations and Métis affairs had its own minister, its own deputy minister representing these issues around the cabinet table, where northern affairs once had its own minister and deputy minister, and again the accordant resources attached to those positions to make sure that those interests were well represented at the cabinet level, at the cabinet committee level, and indeed throughout government in the various interdepartmental committees that arise from time to time. They have been rolled into one piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. Where we once would see a ministry of First Nations and Métis Relations, instead now we see an office of the interlocutor for First Nations and Métis affairs. Again a significant downgrading in terms of mandate and resources by this government in terms of making sure that relationship is properly attended to I think can only be described as a bad choice that is being made by this government.

We look to our neighbours here in Western Canada — British Columbia, where there have been significant efforts put into the whole question of reconciliation and trying to describe a better path forward for First Nations, Métis people, and all British Columbians.

We look to the province of Alberta where the Premier himself, Premier Prentice . . . And certainly I don't agree with everything that that individual does, but one thing I noted with great interest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was one of his first acts on taking power as the new Premier of the province of Alberta was to retain the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations for himself. Such is the importance that that individual places on the whole question of First Nations and Métis issues in the province of Alberta.

And in the province of Manitoba, we've seen a Premier there that has played a very interested role in the questions arising around First Nations and Métis relations, around questions arising in northern Manitoba, and indeed has no lesser light than the Deputy Premier of the government in Manitoba holding the Aboriginal relations portfolio.

Then we come to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, where again, as I pointed out earlier in my comments, we don't have a . . . We've seen this government eliminate the minister and the deputy minister for First Nations and Métis Relations. We've seen it rolled into a much less significant footing into the workings of Government Relations. Again, Government Relations does I think an admirable job in terms of working in concert with urban and rural municipalities in this province. There are some things that work well in Northern Affairs. There are some things that could work a whole heck of a lot better.

But the way that . . . The glaring piece of this piece of legislation for me, Mr. Speaker, is the way that First Nations and Métis issues continue to be downgraded in importance for this government. Because it's what you do with your budget and what you do with your people: that's where you find out about the priorities of the government. And so that you don't have a minister of First Nations and Métis relations. You don't have the attendant resources being devoted to this incredibly important and complex set of files by this government. Again I find it to be a bad choice and certainly reflects poorly on the province of Saskatchewan and serves the province of

Saskatchewan very poorly, especially when you look at the importance that the issue is being accorded by our neighbours either to the east or to the west. And surely to goodness we could look and see something to be gained from those examples.

So as regards to the consolidation and just the sort of technical aspects of this legislation, it's fair enough there and fairly commonplace in that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But what it says about the lack of urgency with which this government approaches the relationship with First Nations and Métis people in this province in particular, I think, speaks volumes and I think represents a series of bad choices being made by this government, and in a time when First Nations and Métis issues and the success of those issues and making sure that they're being properly addressed and that they're properly on the radar of a government, Mr. Speaker, couldn't be more important.

So again this legislation in some respects fairly commonplace, in other respects fairly significantly disappointing as regards to the formalizing of the downgrading of the relationships, that this government puts on the importance of relationships with First Nations and Métis people in this province.

I know that other of my colleagues have participated in this debate so far, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know that others I'm sure will add further voice to what we see as the deficiencies and the strengths of this legislation. But with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 168, *The Government Relations Administration Act*, 2014.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 168, *The Government Relations Administration Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 170

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

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to enter into the discussion about Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is not an amending bill; it's a brand new bill. And as the minister has pointed out, if this bill is passed, it "... will replace *The Fire Prevention Act, 1992* and update the powers and responsibilities of local fire services and the provincial fire service."

The minister has pointed out that this particular bill, in replacing the current Act:

... will update powers, definitions, and other terminology to better reflect the current realities and requirements of the full scope of modern fire departments, and better support

fire safety and response across the province.

There have been few amendments to that original Act that was passed approximately 20 years ago, Mr. Speaker, and much has changed in the world of firefighting, I understand.

[15:15]

The bill will also:

... provide local authorities, their firefighters and fire inspectors [the minister says] with more transparent rules regarding entry in situations involving fire, along with additional measures to prevent the risks of fire and other emergencies.

And the third thing this bill does, Mr. Speaker, it:

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

So this was the minister's second reading speech, him summing up what exactly the bill will do, but in a little bit further detail, Mr. Speaker. Again the minister points out that the current fire prevention Act, the one under which we are functioning right now, is dated, and he points out that:

... local and provincial fire responsibilities have changed considerably over time, [but] there has been little in the way of amendments ... [to this particular bill] since it came into force over 20 years ago. [So the minister points out that] ... fire departments now respond to [things like] industrial accidents, train derailments, flooding, hazardous material spills ...

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. McCall: — With leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a real pleasure to introduce two former members of this Legislative Assembly and indeed a former Deputy Speaker and a former Speaker of this Assembly. I'm speaking of course of Myron Kowalsky and Graham Addley. Myron Kowalsky served the people of P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton with distinction from 1986 to 2007; Graham, a bit of a shorter stretch but we'll see how that works out in the future, but representing the good people of Saskatoon Sutherland from 1999 to 2007. Anyway two individuals that made a great contribution to the

life of this province and able servants of the people of this province. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming Graham Addley and Myron Kowalsky to their Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — Before I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, I'd also like to welcome the former Speaker and former Deputy Speaker to their Assembly.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 170 — *The Fire Safety Act* (continued)

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to take a moment too just to say welcome to Mr. Kowalsky and Mr. Addley, and welcome them to their legislature. I never had an opportunity to serve with them, but I've heard very positive things about them from my current colleagues, and I know that their record stands as well, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, continuing on with Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act*, I was just talking about how this bill will replace . . . It's not an amending bill. It will replace an existing bill, *The Fire Prevention Act, 1992*. The minister had pointed out that many things have changed in firefighting over the years. While local and provincial fire responsibilities have evolved, there have been few amendments to the existing Act.

Some of the things that fire professionals have taken on now, we see them responding to “. . . industrial accidents, train derailments, flooding, hazardous material spills, and other emergencies. They also provide fire code and other bylaw enforcement, search and rescue services, fire prevention awareness, and general public safety education.”

I do want to add one more thing that I know firefighters in Saskatoon actually are doing that isn't on this list — that I think the Minister of Health, I've had this discussion with him in committee but should be of concern — firefighters are being called out, fairly frequently actually depending on where your fire hall is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, more often than not in certain areas, to do lifts actually because many personal care homes are not equipped to do two-person lifts.

And the reality is it's gotten harder and harder to get into long-term care so the needs in personal care homes . . . Because if you can't get into long-term care and you don't have the supports that you need to stay in home, your only other option is a personal care home. So firefighters, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are doing lifts in personal care homes when someone falls, well anywhere, off the toilet, Mr. Speaker, in the tub. And so our fire professionals, not one has complained to me about this, but they have pointed out the fact that they are frequently doing these lifts.

In fact about a year and a half ago or almost two years now, the Saskatoon Health Region has started, the fire department, the Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services actually, asked the

health region to start documenting those kinds of numbers of interactions fire professionals were having in personal care homes, Mr. Speaker, because it wasn't a one-off. The reality is it was a frequent thing to get called out to do a two-person lift, again because it's gotten harder and harder to get into long-term care, and the needs in long-term care are significant.

We had a fellow last summer, Mr. Speaker, who was almost 94 years old, who had multiple types of cancer, had taken multiple trips to the hospital in an ambulance, Mr. Speaker, in the previous six months, and he was still not eligible for long-term care. So if you think an almost 94-year-old man, who was that profoundly ill can't get into long-term care, who can, Mr. Speaker? This particular individual, he was deemed, assessed ineligible because he could dress himself in the morning, but it was noted that once he dressed himself, he was done for the morning, Mr. Speaker.

You can see why our fire professionals in Saskatoon are having to come out and assist with the lifts because personal care homes are not equipped to do two-person lifts in many cases, Mr. Speaker, so I would have added that to the minister's list of duties that have grown for fire professionals. Having spoken to firefighters in other centres as well, I understand it has happened there as well, but I'm very familiar with the cases in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

This bill updates “. . . the province's fire safety legislation [as the minister says] to be current with everyday fire and emergency response services, with advances in technology and with best practices such as incident command structures.”

Another key part of the improvements that the minister says this Act will make is providing:

. . . municipalities and local fire services with more transparent rules regarding entry in situations involving fire, along with additional measures to prevent the risk of fire and emergencies. [And the minister points out] Specifically this new Act will authorize actions to prevent and address the imminent risk of fire or an emergency. The current Act focuses almost entirely on putting out fires and very little on preventing fires. As a result it does not provide adequate authority to firefighters to take pre-emptive measures that protect persons, property, or the environment from potential harm or danger. The new Act will explicitly authorize such measures.

I think that that'll be an opportunity in committee to find out a little bit in further detail, Mr. Speaker, how it will be, what some of those pre-emptive measures will be, and how that will look, Mr. Speaker.

It also, this new proposed Act will “. . . provide the ability to inspect places open to the public without notice or warrant to better deal with situations such as overcrowding and hazardous materials.” But the minister also points out in his second reading speech that it provides clear direction that a warrant or consent is required in going into a private residence, so this is the opportunity to balance protection of public safety with the rights of property owners. So there'll be, I'm sure, questions in committee by our critic on that issue as well, Mr. Speaker.

This Act allows municipalities to register fire safety orders on land titles. And the minister says:

This is something the municipal sector has requested to assist in compelling property owners to comply with these orders and to improve transparency for potential property buyers that a fire safety order is outstanding.

The minister also references another ask from municipalities that allows “. . . municipalities to pass bylaws that exceed the minimum requirements of the National Fire Code.” And this was again requested by the municipal sector.

Mr. Speaker, it’s interesting. So it’s important to talk to and listen to all stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. And clearly the municipalities have huge . . . have much to . . . They are a huge stakeholder in this issue, in fire safety obviously, Mr. Speaker. But I know we’ve had the opportunity, in every year actually, Mr. Speaker, almost every year that I’ve been an MLA, to connect with the professional firefighters of Saskatchewan. And I know they feel like they . . . They’re wondering how they have this government listen to some of their issues or concerns that they’re raising that have a very real impact on your safety and my safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we have government who is clearly listening to some of the stakeholders at the table, but not listening to all of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So a few other things that this Act does. The minister points out that it doesn’t:

. . . change the autonomy of local authorities regarding fire services that they provide, [but] it will introduce requirements for municipalities to report locally and provincially on the fire services available in their community.

So, Mr. Speaker, this bill does a number of things. And I know that our able critic, when this bill moves to committee, will have many detailed questions about this bill and the opportunity perhaps to talk a little bit about the abysmal fire safety protection that’s afforded to families and individuals who live on-reserve, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was a report just a year or two ago that illustrates that if you live on-reserve, you’re ten times more likely to die in a fire, Mr. Speaker, than you or I, which is unacceptable. I don’t care what jurisdiction it falls under, people . . . As provincial leaders, Mr. Speaker, we need to all get our act together to make sure that fire safety and every community in Saskatchewan has the appropriate and necessary fire services in place to ensure the safety of their community, Mr. Speaker.

But with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 170, *The Fire Safety Act*. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried

Bill No. 172

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 172 — *The Naturopathic Medicine Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to enter into debate this afternoon as it relates to Bill No. 172, *The Naturopathic Medicine Act*. And the changes that are brought forward seem to be reasonable changes that may reflect more of a modernization than anything else, Mr. Speaker. That being said, it’s going to be critically important for us to be fully engaged in consultation on this front to make sure that these changes are practical and that there’s not a host of unintended consequences with these changes.

I know that this bill sets up a framework for a college of naturopathic doctors of Saskatchewan. And certainly as such, there seems to be an important role of ensuring a regulatory body for naturopathic doctors, naturopathic medicine, and also of course paramount, protecting the public at large.

Certainly in Saskatchewan there’s been an Act in place in naturopathic medicine since well back to the 1950s, Mr. Speaker, and certainly it plays an important role within health care in this province and for many individuals who access naturopathic doctors, Mr. Speaker. It’s certainly in all of our interests to make sure that those doctors have a regulatory body that works, Mr. Speaker, and, as I say, most importantly is there to serve the public at large.

Mr. Speaker, there’s no explanatory notes at this point in time accompanying this legislation. The comments of the minister are rather brief at this point in time. I do know that it’s going to be important for us to follow up directly with that minister in committee to understand the consultative process that he has or hasn’t engaged in, Mr. Speaker, and also to make sure that we’re working directly with Saskatchewan people and those stakeholders on this front.

I certainly invite, Mr. Speaker, anyone that has input and has perspective on this legislation to contact the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it’s our interest to work with Saskatchewan people, to listen to Saskatchewan people, to listen to stakeholders, and make sure that legislation will serve Saskatchewan people’s best interest and serve us for generations forward, Mr. Speaker.

So at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, with the limited information we have on this bill, I will adjourn debate for Bill No. 172, *The Naturopathic Medicine Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 172. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[15:30]

Bill No. 174

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

The 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. 174, *An Act respecting the Regulation of Teachers and making consequential amendments to other Acts*.

Mr. Speaker, this is legislation that's been brought forward by the Minister of Education to set up a different format for regulation of teachers and the teaching profession in Saskatchewan. It's something that has been developed by the ministry. I think the teachers have had a system of basically regulation and discipline and other aspects for teachers for many, many years, and there are many procedures there.

This legislation steps in and replaces that, and we don't totally know what the effect of this will be. But what it does do is follow professional legislation that we have in other areas and creates a separate organization to do this. Mr. Speaker, this is not unusual in our province, but it is different or it is a change for teachers. And so I think what we have to be cognizant of as we're looking at this legislation is that there will be some growing pains. There will be some things that will happen with this legislation that may not be exactly what the Premier or the minister intended.

Other professions have a professional regulatory body. So if you're a doctor, there's a College of Physicians and Surgeons that deals with the licensing issues, the discipline issues, those kinds of things. And then there's the Saskatchewan Medical Association, which is more of the professional organization that deals with the financial issues, deals with some of the bargaining with the Ministry of Health, other issues like that. Same thing you have in the legal profession with the Law Society of Saskatchewan handling the regulatory and professional issues, and the Canadian Bar Association dealing with a whole number of other issues that relate to the perhaps more political sides of what the profession's about. And we end up then having it with nursing, with a whole number of areas. The legislation that the member just was talking about, the naturopathy Act, also adopts a form of regulatory body to regulate that industry.

So we're not dealing with something that's an unknown, but we are dealing with something that changes some of the long-standing practices that we have in our education system. And so the question comes is, how much was the older system broken? How much did it cost? How much will this system cost? And I think that's a bit of a wild card. We don't totally know how much all of the procedures that are here will cost in the total scheme of things.

Now what we do know is that in the health professions, the provincial government virtually pays all of the professional fees

for the various health professions, and that's on top of what kinds of salaries that people get, but especially for the salaried workers.

We're not certain whether that's what's going to happen in education or not, but it probably will end up being a point of bargaining. And maybe there are some arrangements, given that the Finance minister is a former teacher, that he understands that this legislation being brought forward here has financial consequences for the provincial budget. So we're not totally certain how that's going to work. Right now the cost, I think, of regulation has been borne through the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. And so that's how the costs are dealt with.

Now the independent board that's involved will involve not just teachers, but also the leadership: the principals, which has now had their own sort of organization; the League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents; and then there's the others that are involved in this area as well. And so what will happen is that there'll be some changes in that world as well because the matters will all be dealt with by one professional body.

And so when you look at the legislation, you can see that it's pretty heavily organized to set up a new organization, and I guess that's as it should be. But much of the meat or much of the substance of what the legislation will do or how it's going to be done will be handled through bylaws and through various procedures that are set up by the body as it moves forward.

And so I think that we should be aware that that's going to take some time, and it may not go as simply or as smoothly as has been planned because that's kind of usually what does happen.

The ultimate sort of result of dealing with all of these things will be the fact that there's final review of this, of the bylaws and amendments that are going to come to the legislature. And I think that's probably fine, and I guess practically, whether it's written or unwritten, it's part of all of the professional legislation that we do have in the province.

So I think that practically we need to recognize that it's going to be a change. It's going to cost more money. There'll be a discussion about who is going to pay for that extra cost — I assume it's going to be the public taxpayer — and it will take some time for all of the procedures to be put in place. Whether it's a bad or a good situation, I think that we'll end up having that decision made after we've operated with this system for a few years.

But, Mr. Speaker, it appears to be legislation that we can look at. I know some of my colleagues have some more comments to make about this one, but at this point I would move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 175

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

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 175, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Registered Teachers Act*.

Mr. Speaker, once again this is bilingual legislation because there are a number of pieces of legislation that need to be amended in both French and English. And there are relatively straightforward issues, I guess would be the best way to put it, but it is important that the legislation be in both French and English. And practically we do this in Saskatchewan because of the orders of the court and the arrangements by the government to put as many important pieces of legislation as possible into both of the official languages of Canada. I think the ultimate goal is that all legislation would be bilingual, but we're not there yet. But when we do make amendments to legislation that affects bilingual legislation, then we have to pass a separate Act to do that.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there are any dramatic consequences in this section of the effects of the bilingual legislation, but I know some of my colleagues may have some comments about it. But at this point I'll move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 176

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

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It's my pleasure to enter into a brief debate here today of Bill No. 176, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act*. I guess this was brought forward because the Act that was brought forward by government maybe hadn't considered all of the consultations that it could have, or I guess it's the here-to-fix legislation that was brought forward by this government.

Certainly when we're looking at changes to this Act, our paramount focus has to be improving safety on Saskatchewan roads and highways, addressing the safety challenges that far too many face, Mr. Speaker. Every year we see loss of life on our highways that is sad and tragic and far too often preventable, Mr. Speaker. And so it's incredibly important that we build legislation that puts the safety of Saskatchewan people first, Mr. Speaker, and that's the lens we'll look at these changes through.

I know there's a couple of practical changes that have been brought forward as I interpret the minister's comments. I believe that there will now be a potential for a suspension of a licence for someone driving a commercial vehicle. That certainly seems to make sense. That'll be the driver themselves, so potentially an employee within the conduct of their carrying out their work, Mr. Speaker, and that's important because certainly they shouldn't be free from disciplinary action, and certainly they do have responsibility for their conduct behind the wheel, Mr. Speaker.

So this introduces a three-day suspension for someone driving a commercial vehicle, and certainly that's something that seems more than practical. I guess some of the analysis that we'll want to engage in as to whether or not this measure is as effective as it can be, and if three days is the right number, Mr. Speaker, or if it shouldn't be a more significant penalty.

We'll also, of course, need to put in context that those that are working and behind the wheel, we need to make sure that the employer is providing the right environment to allow the employee to conduct their work in a safe manner, Mr. Speaker, and a legal manner, one that protects lives.

Another change here that I think is an important change, one that seemed to be a real gap of the legislation that moved forward before, is to allow an appeal mechanism for a company, Mr. Speaker, an employer whose vehicle may be seized through the course of, I guess, the employee being in breach of the laws, Mr. Speaker.

And that seems to me to be to be eminently reasonable, that there should be a fair appeal process for, and an expedient process for a business or for an employer, Mr. Speaker, because certainly if a driver that's employed, Mr. Speaker, is negligent in their duties, if they're in breach of our laws then they have a direct responsibility, and there's now a disciplinary process laid out on that front, Mr. Speaker. And if that breach is separate and apart from any of the environmental aspects set by the employer, it's important that the employee be, the one that's driving the vehicle, be accountable. But there are broader, certainly, circumstances that may need to be considered about making sure that the employers are setting the right environments that will allow safe travel and safe roads, Mr. Speaker.

But I certainly support an appeal mechanism being put in place to ensure that an employer isn't penalized for the action of an employee when breaching some of our laws and putting Saskatchewan lives at risk, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll engage in broader consultations on this front and make sure that government gets it right this time, Mr. Speaker. I know

that this bill is fixing the flaws in this government's previous legislation, and I guess that's a good thing. It is, you know, notable though, Mr. Speaker, that far too often we see this government fail to do the consultation they should to build good legislation in the first place, Mr. Speaker. But on this front we'll certainly be willing to be constructive and make sure that, as we come through this process, we have legislation that better serves all Saskatchewan people, that front and centre, Mr. Speaker, protects lives here in Saskatchewan on our roads and highways. So at this point in time, I adjourn debate of Bill No. 176, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2014*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 176. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[15:45]

Bill No. 177

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

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House and enter in the debate about *The Insurance Act*, No. 177. It's an important piece of legislation. It's a thorough piece of legislation. It's comprehensive, and it's one that has a huge impact on security of mind.

And of course in our Saskatchewan society we really value strong, strong insurance. And whether that be flood, fire, accident, or life, and the list actually goes on, it's amazing what you can insure these days, but those are the basic ones. And you know, I don't want to give the impression or . . . I think when you get into this kind of legislation, it is very technical and it's very thorough. And of course it obviously has to be, because the unintentional consequences of getting it not quite right could have the dire consequences for people when they're in an unfortunate circumstance where they may find themselves whether it be, as I said, in one of those fire, floods, an accident, or, God forbid, a loss of life prematurely. And so we want to make sure the legislation is good.

I do think it's quite . . . I want to thank the ministry for the technical briefing. I couldn't partake in it, but I understand it was very thorough and it answered a lot of questions that we had. You know, when we get this kind of legislation, as I said, it is very technical, and we need the people who have put a lot of energy and expertise into this, and we appreciate that. It will be interesting when we get into committee whether we will have that same access to experts within Justice, but perhaps maybe even if we could have people outside Justice give us their points of view of this.

This is a thing that, you know, when we've had the committee structure, we've only had it a couple of times where we've actually had experts come in and tell us what they've thought of legislation. One that comes to mind, the other one, is the asbestos registry, where we had the Cancer Society — of whom we're going to go visit in just a short little while — we had them come and give us their thoughts on the legislation. We had the heart and lung people come and tell us what they thought. We had the electrical workers, who have a real experience with asbestos, come and tell us what they thought about how good it is to be proactive on registries such as the asbestos registry.

So I think it would be something for the committee to be considering when we look at this bill in committee, that not only will we have the folks from Justice come but perhaps some of the folks from industry come and give their two cents too. This would be really worthwhile. I mean, it would be . . . We could ask questions ourselves but we maybe need to dig into that.

And you know just, I think it's tomorrow that we're going to be visiting with the IBAS folks, the Insurance Brokers' Association. This'll be, I'm sure, a topic of what they might want to talk about with us, who knows. But it is an important one, that this is why we have people come and visit with us, to have their points of view. They've probably been following this along the way, I would imagine. I would hope that would be, if they happen . . . that would be quite appropriate for them to be included in some of the conversations. They're very, very important stakeholders.

But I think it's important for us to avail ourselves of some of that expertise and actually get it on record. Get it on record of what the intention is. Because I know we love to give the government gears about, the gears about this because we'll probably see the amended, the insurance amendment Act here next year. You know, I'll make that prediction right now, that I bet a dollar we'll see that Act before the House next year.

An Hon. Member: — Which one?

Mr. Forbes: — The insurance amendment Act. I bet that'll be before the House next year because there will be a couple of things. I know in this bill, it's 293 pages . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . We're on. Okay, we'll take it from there.

And it is just what happens. When you have such a comprehensive piece of legislation, how can you not . . . The odds are that something will be either overlooked or the potential for misinterpretation will happen. And the case will be made to the ministry officials that, you know, you really need to tighten this up, or is this what you really meant to say? And so that'll happen.

But we may save ourselves a bit by having some expert witnesses come in and talk a bit about this. And of course at the end of the day, at the end of the day, we all want to make sure that we have good strong insurance legislation and regulations in Saskatchewan.

And of course it only makes sense that as much as possible, but considering the unique qualities of Saskatchewan, but as much as possible they can be consistent across the country. And so

that when you get, when you . . . We know people move a fair bit. They may move for school; they may move for university. They may move for training, a very good job but then they come back, or we might entice them to come to Saskatchewan as newcomers. But they're used to insurance in other provinces. And so we want to try to make it as consistent as much as possible but not giving up on the good things that we have here in Saskatchewan. If we've got a superior product or a superior regulation or statute here, we want to make sure that that is maintained. And we don't want to lose that and take a step backwards actually because of what's happening in other parts of the country.

So we know some are calling this a good piece of legislation because it protects a consumer. I think of the real estate agent or the real estate market . . . When house prices are high and the market is tight, it's a really good thing for sellers. When markets are a little looser, it's a really good thing for buyers. So it's all good for the consumer whether you're buying or selling, so I like to know more about why it is good for consumers.

One particular area that I'd be interested in hearing more about — and this is something that happened a few years ago and I'll be maybe raising this in committee — was what happened was a fire in an apartment block in Saskatoon. It was owned by, it is owned by Quint and operated by Quint, a community-based organization, well-known organization in the city and has done an awful lot of good work for low-income folk. And what happened in their apartment block, there was a fire. Fortunately no one was hurt, but there was a lot of damage to personal goods in the apartment block.

And really what happened was that it made us all become very aware, very aware of how tenants don't often get insurance. They feel that they don't have enough. It's just not part of their financial thinking. And this is something that I explored with some of the insurance brokers and companies about, what are the barriers to have more access to good tenant insurance? Because here you have a situation where people, for what would be a relatively small amount, it might be you would want to have insurance for maybe 10,000 or 20, maybe \$50,000, but you're not insuring a brand new home. And so what would be the value of that?

And so it's interesting when you have a circumstance that drives a little bit of learning. We understand that it's just not taken up. Some people do, particularly in condos or in circumstances where you might have a significant amount of personal property, whether that be jewellery or art or clothing, but for low-income people, it's not a priority.

Now interestingly what'll happen tomorrow night, Mr. Speaker . . . And I'm not sure if you've ever had the good fortune of winning, but I've won the IBAS purple blankets where you get 50 blankets. You get to donate it to whoever, whatever cause. And that year I did donate it to — it just so happened that was the year of the fire — I donated it to the tenants, and they were quite appreciative of the fact that they all got purple blankets. Now I wonder how many of those purple blankets are still in that building. But IBAS makes a real good point about how insurance is like a blanket, and it's like a security thing, and it's what keeps us, gives us peace of mind. It really made me think about insurance, and this will be one set of questions that I hope

that the minister can help us be more proactive.

Because as we see, our society changes. The minister referred to the fact that the first insurance Act was 1913. Now I don't think this is a rewrite of a 1913 piece of legislation. It's probably been rewritten since then. The fact is that insurance goes a long way back in our legislature, but I think it's important for us to be looking forward for innovation. Where are the challenges for us in terms of insurance, that piece of mind that we want? Because things that we hold near and dear or have a lot of value, we don't want to have something disappear suddenly, whether it be by accident or something else. We want to make sure that we're all covered and that we have that piece of mind.

And so with this piece of legislation, I think it's important that we take a look at it. We thoroughly understand the pros and cons of each of the different sections. I don't intend to go on today with each section, but if there are comments I think that I can make that will be helpful, that would be a very good thing.

But as I said, here in Saskatchewan we see circumstances that are kind of unique, I know particularly with flood. It was very interesting that already we're starting to see and hear issues about flooded basements. Someone in my own neighbourhood over the weekend did major renovations on the basement. And this may be something that we should all think about when we do renovations in our basement — make sure you fix the eaves first. The problem was the contractor said, we'll fix the eaves in the spring. You should do it the other way around. First things first. Fix the eaves so that you don't have any damage, and this is going to . . . You'll solve a lot of problems later on.

And so here we have a situation of making sure you get things right, but flooding can happen any time, any time. You know, we're all looking forward, especially this weekend that's coming up, and we're having double-digit, warm weather. We're all thinking this is going to be great, but we're going to have some repercussions of it. And it will be interesting to see what happens in our basements and that type of thing. So weather can play an amazing part in how we live our lives here in Saskatchewan. We can get pretty pumped up about the warm weather, and then all of a sudden we have issues around flooding, so this can be a real problem.

Mr. Speaker, I hope in terms of the legislation here today that we have before us that we think about this carefully and make sure that there are no unintended consequences, that in fact we can be innovative. In fact when people have called this good for the consumer, what does that really mean? What does that really mean?

And I know that there are pieces in this, and I don't mean to get into some of the technical language, whether it's unsolicited insurance, whether it's a trafficking or anti-trafficking aspects of buying and selling of insurance. These are things that sound very foreign to the regular consumer or the regular buyer of insurance. But the fact of the matter is that we all need to make sure that those who have the responsibility, and in this case the Ministry of Justice, are looking carefully at the pros and cons and making sure the legislation is completely well written and that when we have questions from people who want us to make sure that we are doing the right thing, we're not seeing the bill come back year after year with amendments, maybe only just

once, but the fact is that we will have done our job here and that Bill 177 is a thorough piece of legislation, a very good piece of legislation, and one that we can all be proud of. But of course the proof will be in the pudding, but we need to make sure that we have a full understanding of it.

[16:00]

So there are parts of it that, you know, the language, whether it's reverse mortgage, the trafficking provisions, all of that, you know, leaves us sometimes scratching our heads. What does that really mean? But we hope. And we do appreciate the side-by-side, the meeting with the ministry officials the other day to help us understand. Unfortunately we couldn't all be there, but I do appreciate that, and it leads to a lot more confidence, a lot more confidence in this piece of legislation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know that there'll be many more people who will want to stand and talk about this piece of legislation. I know that, as I said, the fact is that in Saskatchewan we do have a lot of natural challenges, whether that be fire, flood, all of that kind of thing. Of course the big ones are personal life insurance, accidental insurance, all of that. We want to make sure we get it right, that in fact consumers are truly protected, that they're getting a fair deal, a deal that's struck in English, plain English, or in French if that's what it's required to be. We want to make sure that the people, the consumers fully understand and really get the benefit of good consumer insurance.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I think that it would be time and quite appropriate for me to move adjournment of Bill No. 177, *The Insurance Act*. I do so move. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:03.]

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Jennifer Campeau

Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Mark Docherty

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Minister Responsible for the Provincial
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Government Insurance
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Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
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Hon. Jim Reiter

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