



STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS AND JUSTICE**

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Mr. Doyle Vermette, Deputy Chair
Cumberland

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Wood River

Mr. Russ Marchuk
Regina Douglas Park

Mr. Kevin Phillips
Melfort

Mr. Warren Steinley
Regina Walsh Acres

Mr. Corey Tochor
Saskatoon Eastview

[The committee met at 15:59.]

The Chair: — Well good afternoon. Welcome to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. My name is Warren Michelson. I am the Chair of the committee. Along with me, our other Chair or Chair members, or other committee members: Doyle Vermette is the Deputy Chair; Yogi Huyghebaert, Russ Marchuk, Kevin Phillips, Warren Steinley, Corey Tochor. And substituting this afternoon for Doyle Vermette is Warren McCall.

We also have other members. Jeremy Harrison and Cathy Sproule have joined us. If everyone is in agreement, we'll proceed with the agenda as planned.

Welcome to Minister Wyant and your officials. If you'd like to introduce them, we will now, and any opening remarks. We'll now consider Bill No. 139, *The Election Amendment Act, 2014*. We will start with clause 1, short title. Mr. Minister, you may proceed with opening remarks.

Bill No. 139 — *The Election Amendment Act, 2014*

Clause 1

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With me today from the ministry, Susan Amrud, Q.C. [Queen's Counsel], associate deputy minister from the Ministry of Justice. And to my left, Darcy McGovern, Q.C., director of legislative services.

Well thank you, Mr. Chair, for affording us this opportunity. This bill will implement a series of amendments proposed by the Chief Electoral Officer that have been agreed to by all members of this Assembly. These amendments will establish a permanent voters registry in Saskatchewan and remove the requirement for door-to-door enumeration, with one final count to be taken prior to the next election.

It will provide for homebound voting. It will allow qualified voters to vote at advance polls, all qualified voters. It will remove the requirement for a voter who is not on the voters list to swear a statutory declaration in addition to completing a registration form and showing photo identification. It will permit a voter to deposit their own ballot.

It will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to waive the requirement to set up a polling place in remote locations with 25 or fewer voters, and instead use mail-in ballots provided by the returning officer in that area. It will ban the use, but not the possession, of cameras and phones in a polling place.

It will remove the requirement for the election officers to necessarily be resident in the constituency in which they are to serve. It will remove the RO's [returning officer] duty to transport candidate scrutineers.

It will provide that the term of a returning officer would expire six months after the return of the writ for a general election, subject to reappointment by the Chief Electoral Officer, and provide that election clerks be appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer rather than by the returning officers, and be made

subject to term limits like those of the returning officer.

The Election Amendment Act, 2014 will also provide for amendments to improve voter access for voters with disabilities, including defining a friend to include a spouse, child, or other relative of the voter in order to broaden the pool of who may assist the voter with a disability; allow a polling place to be held in a location with a liquor licence — often such a location provides the best voter access in a particular community; broaden the availability of voter assistance provisions to apply to any voter who has a disability that significantly restricts the ability of the voter to vote. It will allow an individual to act as a friend to assist two voters and providing that a deputy returning officer may use a sign language interpreter to translate any oath or declaration and to ask any question that the deputy returning officer is required to put to the voter, and to translate the voter's answers.

The bill will also adopt the Uniform Law Conference of Canada's recommendation that military voters be provided special ordinary residence recognition similar to that provided for students, so that active members of the military will retain their residence when they are out of the province or are immediately recognized as ordinary resident when serving in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize the sacrifice that our military makes to protect our democracy, and we're proud to be the first jurisdiction in Canada to make these amendments to better facilitate their ability to participate in that democracy by voting in provincial elections here in Saskatchewan.

Those are my opening comments, Mr. Chair. We're certainly pleased to answer any questions that the committee has.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister, and welcome to the officials. Just to remind the officials that in case you are helping with the answers, would you please identify yourself for the purpose of Hansard. We'll open the floor for questions. Mr. McCall.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, yourself, committee members, minister, officials. Thank you for joining us here today to consider Bill No. 139. I should say by way of explanation off the top, certainly some folks may find some of the questions a bit redundant. It might involve terrain that has been gone over a few times, but I'd also observe that this is part of getting on the record, part of the . . . providing that greater scrutiny for the legislation as it moves forward to becoming law, and as such is an important part of the process. So if any of that gets a little redundant, our apologies for that. But this is, I assure you, important.

It's important that the public gain a better understanding of how different components of this legislation come to be presented here, and I'd submit also that the public has an interest in how different of these components were developed, how they come to be presented here today. And you know, at risk of repeating various of the remarks I had to say upstairs in terms of the second reading speeches, I just want to state for the record, off the top, the gratitude of the official opposition in terms of the efforts that were made on the part of the Government House

Leader, on the part of the minister and officials, to ensure that we were consulted at the different stages of this legislation's development.

So with that being said, Mr. Chairman, my first question for the minister or officials would pertain to the origins of the legislation. And I guess by my reckoning there are three main sort of streams flowing into this legislation: (1) arising from previous recommendations made by the Human Rights Commission to Elections Saskatchewan, (2) the recommendations coming out of the Uniform Law Conference as related to military voters, and (3) the recommendations that have been on the public record for some time now, coming from the Chief Electoral Officer. They're not represented here in total, but certainly there are a significant number of the recommendations made by the Chief Electoral Officer that find their way into this legislation.

Could the minister or officials describe how the different components of the legislation relate to those bodies, and if there is anything alongside those three sort of sources for the components of this legislation.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I'll let Mr. McGovern answer the question.

Mr. McGovern: — Darcy McGovern. Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the member has indicated, there was a few sources I think for the changes that were recommended today. The most direct source perhaps with respect to what's been provided was the Uniform Law Conference with respect . . . They had provided a report that they recommended to the attorney generals of Canada, which recommended, as the minister has outlined, that there be special residency requirements recognized for active military members similar to that that's already provided in our legislation with respect to students.

Just in the interests of full disclosure, Saskatchewan was very much involved in the development of that report. And I think it reflects the clear message from my minister and the Premier in terms of the role that or the high esteem that military members are held with in the province of Saskatchewan and the recognition that, like students, this is a group that is highly mobile, very intelligent, very engaged, and is exactly the kind of voter that we want to facilitate voting. And so in that regard, I think the Uniform Law Conference recommendations were well received here, and of course by all members as well, as a good step in providing greater access for individuals who otherwise may be in situations where they've just moved, just arrived. And this way we provide for special residency. That's the Uniform Law Conference piece.

With respect to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, the Minister of Justice had an opportunity to meet with Mr. Justice Arnot, and indicated that he was, on an ongoing basis, interested in their views with respect to improved access under the Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission had previously provided a statement of different points that they felt would improve the voting process to a previous chief electoral officer. And we had access to that report as well as to their further comments. And I think the changes that the minister outlined in terms of improved access for voters with a disability reflect some of the changes that

they've recommended.

Like with the Chief Electoral Officer, I don't think it's the entire waterfront, and that's an ongoing process. But in terms of a bill that's going to pass relatively soon, before the next general election, these are changes that can be adopted within the legislation and applied by the Chief Electoral Officer without a big disruption in terms of how their process works. And that's things like broadening the definition of friend to include spouse and relatives — and a friend is, of course, a person who's able to assist a voter with a disability — to provide for a friend to assist two voters rather than just one person, to improve the access to sign language interpretation. Those sorts of issues help a great deal.

One of the big overlaps between the Human Rights Commission position and that of the Chief Electoral Officer was with respect to homebound voting. The other is with respect to removing the requirement with respect to advance polling or advance polls for an individual to meet a specific criteria and instead to say everyone is able to vote in an advance poll. And so those I think are the two points where the submissions of the Chief Electoral Officer and the initial position of the Human Rights Commission overlapped.

With respect to the Chief Electoral Officer, I'll be briefer. As the members are aware, he had tabled a series of recommendations. The primary recommendation, I would suggest, is the development of a permanent voters list that would be updated on an electronic basis without the requirement at every election for a full enumeration to occur. And that's implemented through this bill as well as a series of other changes that, as the minister had noted, were brought forward by the Chief Electoral Officer and tabled in the House as his recommendations for changes prior to the next general election.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the official for the response. I guess moving back to front in terms of what you've referenced for the committee, in terms of the provisions around the permanent voter registry, it's my understanding that there's been at least bipartisan agreement in terms of the two parties represented around this table on the worth and the attractiveness of moving to a permanent voter registry since at least, I believe, 2004. Does the minister or the officials have anything to add to that?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well certainly we share a common interest in having a permanent voters list. With the advances in technology, it will certainly allow a permanent voters list to be populated quickly and certainly updated on a . . . and kept updated. So I think we share that view with all members that the establishment of a permanent voters list is a good step forward.

Mr. McCall: — Is the minister or officials, are they aware that, I think this will leave I think two or three other jurisdictions provincially, territorially in Canada that will . . . In terms of moving to a permanent voter registry, Saskatchewan to date has been in the minority of jurisdictions that don't have a permanent voter registry. The other jurisdictions have moved to it. Does the minister have any sort of precise observations in that regard in terms of how this moves us to what is arguably best practice?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well we agree that this is certainly best

practice when it comes to elections. And you're right, we're not . . . we're certainly later to join this parade than other jurisdictions. But this process will improve the process in Saskatchewan, certainly improve voter access.

So it's certainly, you know, we agree I think with the opposition that this is a good step forward and agree with the Chief Electoral Officer as well because certainly that was one of his key recommendations in the report that he had tabled.

[16:15]

Mr. McCall: — I guess continuing on with the permanent voter registry, there was some certainly some ongoing consultation that I'm aware of that took place between the ministry and the Chief Electoral Officer on the legislation, and particularly as regards the kind of delineation between the gathering of voter data, the permanent voter registry, and then the voter list. Does the minister or officials have any sort of comment on that subject for the committee or for the record?

Mr. McGovern: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can speak to that issue. In terms of the way that the amending Act is set up, it's essentially a cascade or a narrowing of how information is collected and then how it's collated and how it ends up in a voters list. And it starts with voters' data. That is the broad definition at the front of the Act, that the member would be aware of, that provides for an ability where it's reasonably necessary for the Chief Electoral Officer to collect voter data for the purposes of populating the permanent voters list and subsequently creating the voters list. So within that rubric of what's reasonably necessary, there's a range of personal information that they're able to collect, including your name, your address, and information of that line.

That voter data then forms the basis in a narrowing gauge for the register of voters, and that's the permanent register of voters that would constitute all of the voters in Saskatchewan plus those individuals who will soon be of age to vote on an ongoing basis. That register of voters is a narrower list of information that's held by the Chief Electoral Officer, as I said, on a permanent basis. It contains an ability to cross-reference information with the voter data to make sure that it's up to date, that you're dealing with the right John Wiebe, at the right location, with the right age group, for example.

When we go from voter data to the register of voters, subsequently we go to the voters list. And the voters list is much more narrow in terms of what information. And the voters list is what historically, the member will be aware, is the actual list in a particular constituency in a particular polling division of who is eligible to vote at that election.

And what's new in a permanent voters list process is that rather than in every case requiring an enumeration, a permanent voters list would allow the Chief Electoral Officer to update the information in the permanent registry on an ongoing basis, or where the Chief Electoral Officer feels it's appropriate, conduct targeted enumeration to update the information available for the permanent registry.

But I think that's the model that was discussed with the Chief Electoral Officer in terms of understanding that we start with

the broader voter data, we move to the permanent registry, and then we get narrower with respect to the voters list.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. In terms of, in the opinion of the minister or officials, what sort of privacy considerations does that information . . . What sort of considerations does things like the voter list or the registry, what privacy considerations are triggered by those mechanisms and how are they represented in the legislation under consideration here today?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Perhaps I'll read this into the record in answer to your question. The bill and *The Election Act* contain a number of provisions to address the balance in the Act between necessary transparency in the establishment of the voters list while at the same time protecting against improper use of the voter information that's been gathered.

The Act provides that the CEO [Chief Electoral Officer] may only collect voter data that's reasonably required for the purpose of producing a voters list. Under the Act, the CEO will be focusing on collecting information that assists with that function. And you can refer to section 18.2(3) on that. Once collected that voter data may only be used by the CEO to populate the permanent register of voters which is then in turn used to create the voters list. At each step in the process, a narrower amount of personal information is used, as Mr. McGovern has already stated.

For their part, members of the public remain able to participate in the revision process and to review that list to provide transparency and ensure that political abuses are not occurring. The CEO is specifically charged under the Act with protecting the voter data that has been collected and ensuring that the voters lists that are generated are only used in accordance with the provisions of the legislation. At the same time, political parties and candidates that receive a voters list under the Act are expressly restricted in the Act to using that information for specific democratic purposes such as communicating with constituents, and failure to comply with those restrictions is an offence under the Act.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the minister for that response. I guess the one other sort of question I'd have under the heading of permanent voter registry type questions, what does the minister or officials . . . What is envisioned in terms of establishing the permanent voter registry, but then ensuring that the purpose for which it was established is being lived up to, that it's the best functioning sort of repository of electoral information, that it's doing the job that we're setting out for it? What sort of review does the minister have in mind, or officials, to make sure that this is living up to its promise?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Perhaps I'll let Mr. McGovern just answer that question. But before I do, I just want to follow up a little bit with the question that you asked before. Under the Act, if a member of the public is at all uncomfortable with respect to their name appearing on the registry of voters, it's absolutely their right to have their name removed from that registry of voters. So there's certainly some protection with respect to the public for those that don't want to be in. There's obviously avenues under the Act for people to vote notwithstanding the fact that they're not on the permanent voters list. But with

respect to your specific question, perhaps I'll let Mr. McGovern just answer that.

Mr. McGovern: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the member: the primary review mechanism with respect to, not just the permanent voters list but also the, as the member's aware, in terms of the operation of a general election, is the reporting mechanism under the Act of the Chief Electoral Officer to members of the Assembly through the tabling process. And so particularly I think the first general election plus the first few elections after the establishment of the permanent voters list, I think this would be a key element of his report.

And we would anticipate through that process that the Chief Electoral Officer would be able to advise if there's any technical issues, for example, that he's encountered in the conduct and compilation of the process. But that's the primary mechanism that's continued through this process, is that the Chief Electoral Officer as the independent officer of the Assembly can be expected to be very specific in terms of his comments with respect to the conduct of a general election.

Mr. McCall: — I thank Mr. McGovern and the minister for the response. I guess before we move sort of back through the other provisions in the Act, is there anything else you'd like to add at this time in terms of the way that the permanent voter registry is represented here in this legislation and what it means for the electoral process here in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — No, I don't think there is anything really that we want to add. I think that we've covered off the basics of it through answering your questions, sir.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. I guess moving to the provisions that the minister had referenced some overlap — or perhaps it was Mr. McGovern — overlap between recommendations that had been made previously from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and recommendations that have been made by the Chief Electoral Officer through different iterations over the past months. Can the minister or officials describe to the committee again the envisioned impact of something like homebound voting or the different steps that are being taken to improve access for disabled voters in particular to the electoral process?

Mr. McGovern: — Thank you. I think the two areas of overlap, one you'll see in the Act is much more straightforward and the other has a little more detail. If we refer to section 20 of the bill regarding section 130, it talks about a voter that ordinarily resides in the constituency may now vote in an advanced poll. I think what's new here and what all interested parties are looking for is to say that rather than requiring individuals at an advanced poll to demonstrate how they fit into the criteria to vote at an advanced poll previously saying, I'm unable to get to the poll on polling days, for example, this removes that and says anyone can vote at an advanced poll. Now that's a one-line change at section 20 of the bill that I think will have a profound impact in terms of how individuals can provide for voting on an easier basis. They don't have to query whether or not they're, you know, they have enough problems that they qualify and etc.

The second, which is a little more detailed, are the homebound

voting procedures that are introduced with these amendments. And they provide for a process whereby an individual may apply to the returning officer indicating that they'll be unable to vote at an advanced poll due to a disability. And what's new is that under this process where they make an application, they meet the criteria and the election officials are able . . . are to say that it's reasonably possible for them to attend on that voter.

What happens is that the election officials will come out to that individual's residence and essentially administer what is the absentee voting process, in person, to that individual, collect that vote, and then bring it back for counting as if it were an absentee ballot. And so that is a new, entirely new access provision with respect to individuals who previously wouldn't have been able to vote at the . . . necessarily at an advance poll, couldn't get there, and for whom the absentee ballot process may not have been working very well.

And so I think that's a new initiative that was looked at by the Chief Electoral office and the Human Rights Commission as an initiative that improved voter access in a reasonable fashion, and that certainly my minister, in the review of the legislation, thought that this is something that we could move forward with sooner rather than waiting for a later review.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that, Mr. McGovern. In terms of also some of the work around the advance polls and when people can be sworn in, I guess if you could just touch on that again and if you could expand on the sort of thinking involved.

Mr. McGovern: — Well with respect . . . and part of what's being done with respect to the recommendations regarding the individuals with the disability is to provide for two things I think — an easier process and then in some cases easier physical access. And that's done either through . . . We mentioned defining a friend to include spouse, child, or other relative. So previously the term, friend, didn't necessarily include a family member. It was fairly restrictive in that regard. And so if you needed someone to assist you and the person who . . . and it was your brother, mother, father that brought you to the polls, you had this stickler of a definition in terms of being able to provide the assistance for the individual to conduct the vote.

And so that's an example of a procedural change that's being made in the legislation to assist voters with a disability. You know, similarly the friend can act for two individuals, so if you're bringing in a few people that you can act for two voters.

An access issue is more the issue that I've described in terms of saying, well let's open up the advance polling so that any individual can come to an advance poll. They'll have more time. It'll be less of a crowded place. Those are important factors in terms of access.

The example of saying, having a polling location in a permanent place, in some rural communities a permanent place may provide the best access if you're in a wheelchair or if you have other access issues. And so by providing more flexibility in that regard, I think on two levels, as I say, procedurally and then in terms of the actual physical access, we're hoping to improve voter access.

[16:30]

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. There are other sort of, I guess not so much under improving access for disabled voters or voters generally, but there are some of the measures in the legislation, or in the amendment, that would seem to be of a fairly . . . tidying up the Act, or more of a housekeeping nature.

I think of removing the CEO's duty to transport candidate scrutineers or provisions like that, or further clarifying what sort of . . . who's swearing in the poll clerks, what are the terms of duty for different of the election officials, where polling stations can be located. Does the minister or officials have any comment on the amendments contained in this legislation of that nature?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — These are, you know, largely housekeeping matters that came as a result of the report that came from the Chief Electoral Officer. I'll give one example, and I know Mr. McGovern would give another one. But for instance we've struck section 36(9) which prohibits a polling place in a location with a liquor licence. And sometimes in small communities where there's Legions and things, sometimes those provide the best opportunity to have a polling place. So those kinds of access issues, those housekeeping issues were things that had come from the Chief Electoral Officer. And I think Mr. McGovern had another comment to make on that as well.

Mr. McGovern: — Another example of that would be with respect to 68, for example, where with the voter ID [identification] requirements, the photo ID requirements, there were a few places within the bill where there was a hangover, I'll call it, in terms of still requiring a declaration to occur. And the reality was that once you've met that high, the government photo ID standard, also swearing out a declaration was simply redundant.

And so there was a few places where that was recommended to be cleaned up. There was a recommendation regarding the use of, for example, phones right now and communication devices. There was a ban on the possession of those items in a polling place. And the reality with phones these days was that that was becoming, that was in danger of becoming a bit of a scofflaw in terms of . . . And what the change does is focus on, more appropriately, and say the use of communications devices in a polling place is prohibited, not the simple possession of those items. So you're not using the phone.

And then secondly a provision was provided with respect to cameras, that cameras are not to be used in a polling place except with the approval of the Chief Electoral office. And this was, and members will know, is it was a chronic issue in terms of saying, well it's in everyone's interest on election day to give publicity to the fact that the election's proceeding, you know. And one of the best shots is to show the polling place or the polling area, but it ran into this problem. And so this addresses that more directly and says the Chief Electoral Officer may permit that.

You mentioned the transporting candidate scrutineers; that that's one that was removed.

So there is those that are certainly a second or third tier, compared to creating a permanent voters registry or the changes

with respect to homebound voting, that I think it's fair to characterize as being more procedural, more housekeeping, just to make the Act work a little better.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. And as you might expect, my colleague from Nutana has a very interesting question, moving back to homebound voters. And I'd invite her to try it out with the minister and officials at this time.

The Chair: — Ms. Sproule.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I was just looking at the provisions of the proposed 89.3(1), and it occurred to me that there could be individuals who become homebound after the close of voting on the last day of advanced polling. And is there sort of an emergency procedure available to those individuals to get their vote?

Mr. McGovern: — There's an emergency provision in general under the Act, where the Chief Electoral Officer has emergency powers. It's not specific at all to your circumstance of a slip and fall, with respect to that process. So it doesn't provide for an emergency override in that regard.

What would be done if you're in what is essentially, what is most likely the one-day period between the close of the advance poll at 9 o'clock on say Saturday night and the Monday election, if you do something on Sunday, then it's fair to say that this process wouldn't pick that up. But keeping in mind this process requires an application to occur eight days beforehand, because what it does actually contemplate, you know, which is unique, is to have one or more election officials along with the official representatives of the party to attend in person on an . . . to schedule a time and place, the time when it's appropriate to come out to the individuals. So while it does attempt to be as flexible as possible, I don't think it's sufficiently agile enough to say, in that 12-hour period, we'd be able to pick that up.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you for that. I guess moving back to the recommendation of the Uniform Law Conference as regards military voters, could the minister or officials describe for the committee when that particular report of the Uniform Law Conference was issued and expand a bit on the involvement of Saskatchewan in the drafting of that report?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well I'll let Mr. McGovern answer that question specifically. He was certainly directly involved in the work of the Uniform Law Conference. And we're all very thankful for that work and thank him for that work, but I'll perhaps just let Mr. McGovern answer that, given his involvement.

Mr. McGovern: — Thank you, Minister. The specific report for the amendment Act for voting by members of the Canadian Forces was finalized and accepted by the Uniform Law Conference and recommended to the Attorney Generals in August of 2013, so at last year's annual general meeting in Victoria, British Columbia.

Saskatchewan was . . . As I recall, the initial recommendation to give some consideration to military voting came from the delegate from Nova Scotia to the convention. And I was part of his working group from the start and subsequently became

Chair of the working group as he moved on to a different position.

Part of the work, I think to be fair, was initiated . . . The American Uniform Law Conference had done some work on military voting, and it raised the issue with us to say, in our consultation with the Judge Advocate General's office, a recognition that particularly in the time prior to fixed-date elections, military voters out-of-country were terribly poorly served by the voting process in a number of the provinces. For example, if the absentee voting process didn't kick in until after the writ dropped, and you were sitting in Afghanistan, the time frames within a 28-day writ period became terribly short. And so there was some general discussion of how those improvements could be made, and I think the . . . What had happened in large part, Saskatchewan has a student provision that's well established, and the recommendation was made that the military process could be greatly improved along the similar lines.

So that recognizing three circumstances: one, where a military voter who's active in the services leaves their constituency in Saskatchewan, for example Swift Current, to serve at CFB [Canadian Forces Base] Moose Jaw and providing that individual with an ability to elect to either vote in Moose Jaw or to elect to vote in Swift Current, much like a student; second scenario is where a individual leaves, is transferred from CFB Moose Jaw to CFB Gagetown and to retain the ability to vote in Saskatchewan notwithstanding their temporary residence out of the province; and the third scenario of course is the CFB Gagetown individual coming to Moose Jaw and our providing for special recognition of their residency in Moose Jaw and inviting them to join our democratic process in the next general election.

Mr. McCall: — I thank the official for that response. What's anticipated or estimated in terms of the number of military voters?

Mr. McGovern: — You know, I don't know that we have numbers on that on that front. I think with the discussions with the Judge Advocate General in general terms — with his office, I should say — was in part a recognition, like students, that no one in Canada is having a problem with too many students or too many soldiers voting. That's not the concern. The concern is very much to say how can we make this easier and more adaptive so that this mobile and, as I've mentioned, intelligent, engaged constituency can be best offered an opportunity to vote. And so I think that's what it reflects. But in terms of actual numbers, we'll have to learn how that process works.

Mr. McCall: — Sure thing. I guess one last . . . on this, under this heading. In terms of the . . . This was coming forward from the Uniform Law Conference. Any anticipation on other jurisdictions following suit now that this ground is about to be broken?

Mr. McGovern: — I of course don't have any specific numbers. What I hope to be able to do, in returning to the Uniform Law Conference annual meeting this year, is to report back that, you know, this change was made, that it was well received, and to suggest to other jurisdictions that it's a very appropriate way for them to proceed. The election Acts between

provinces lack uniformity because of a lot of historical reasons, but this is an area where it was felt that they can take steps to improve access for military voters across Canada.

Mr. McCall: — I thank Mr. McGovern for that response. And unless my colleague has got other questions or there are other questions across the way, that would conclude the questions that we wanted to get on the record from the Official Opposition. But again thanks to the minister, officials, the Government House Leader, members of the committee for this opportunity to consider Bill 139 here today.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. McCall. Are there any other comments or concerns regarding Bill No. 139, *The Election Amendment Act, 2014*? Seeing none, we will proceed with the voting. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

[Clauses 2 to 29 inclusive agreed to.]

[16:45]

The Chair: — Thank you. Her Majesty, by and with the advice and the consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts the following: *The Election Amendment Act, 2014*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I would ask a member to move that we report Bill No. 139, *The Election Amendment Act, 2014* without amendment.

Mr. Phillips: — I so move.

The Chair: — Mr. Phillips so moved. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That is carried. Thank you, committee members. And thank you, Mr. Minister. If you've got any closing remarks, please proceed.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Well just a few thanks. First of all I want to extend my public, to make a public thanks to the Chief Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission for all his assistance, certainly the Chief Electoral Officer.

I specifically want to thank again Mr. McGovern for his work with the Uniform Law Conference in bringing those amendments forward. I'd like to again acknowledge, as the members already acknowledged, the collaboration, and express gratitude to House leadership, as well as all the members of the House for their collaboration on this matter.

I'd like to thank my office staff. I'd specifically like to thank the Justice officials, who are here with me today, not only for

their work on this piece of legislation but on all their work that they do for me and for the ministry and the government. I'd like to thank Hansard for participating today and, Mr. Chair, to you and your committee for accommodating us today. So thank you.

The Chair: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you for your officials. Thank you to the committee members. I would ask a member to move a motion of adjournment.

Mr. Marchuk: — So moved.

The Chair: — Mr. Marchuk so moves. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — All agreed. Carried. This meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[The committee adjourned at 16:47.]