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DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

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Bill No. 115 – *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2013*

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into this debate on Bill No. 115, *An Act to amend The Public Guardian and Trustee Act, to repeal The Mentally Disordered Persons Act and to make a related amendment to another Act*. That Act is in the bill.

I think this is a very important piece of legislation. Interestingly the minister did not refer to who they consulted in the development of this Act in his remarks. Other times they would be very proud of who they consulted with, but in this case it sounds like they didn't consult with anybody really, to be quite frank. So that will be one of our questions, and clearly we'll be out asking people, particularly seniors' organizations, what they feel about this.

Of course there is the language modernization, and it's always a good thing to make sure the language is appropriate. But we do have some questions about making sure that this kind of work around Public Guardian and Trustee is the right fix. It's important that we don't go too far too quick. But at the same time, I have to tell you that even within my own riding in the last month or so this has become a bit of an issue, the Public Guardian, and something I wasn't aware of before, but I think as our society ages that this will be something that will become more and more an issue. Our society is aging, but as well some seniors, unfortunately, as young people move away — they may be in other provinces, other cities in the province — seniors don't have anyone really close at hand. And this becomes a situation that causes a lot of problems.

And so while it's difficult to really comment specifically on specific parts because I think you need to have that medical background — I'm looking at certificates re in-patient, certificates re other patients, other persons, you know, when we're dealing with psychiatrists, that type of thing, physicians — I think it would be very interesting, well it is going to be interesting for us to get some feedback from the medical profession, the seniors, that type of thing, about how this . . . Is this a good piece of legislation? How

does it compare to other provinces?

As I said, this is one . . . It is interesting there were no comments whether this is something from the law society or the national organization that we often hear from. And so that leaves us wondering, where did this come from and what kind of background does this come from? Now if it is coming from the Public Guardian here in the province, that would be as well good to know in terms of that background because clearly that part of government has a lot of experience, and we value that. And if they're feeling this is the kind of stuff that we need to have, then fair enough. But we need to have that, and we'll have many more questions about that. It is important that we have that accountability.

But clearly as I said, it's always good to have a debate around this. And I'm looking forward to this for sure because, as I said, it's becoming more and more of an issue. And I think as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], when we have to go out and explain what does the Public Guardian do or what does the trustee do, we need to be able to do that, and I think that's an area that we can all polish up a bit on.

So I think this is an important area around seniors and others who have come to a point where they need someone to help them with their finances or just with their living situation in terms of making decisions and that type of thing, so it's really important.

But I have to tell you that we have some concerns in terms of this government's track record, in terms of care of seniors and accepting that responsibility. I know that when we see this daily in question period, the reluctance to accept responsibility, to do a better job, and acknowledge that it's under this government that things are getting . . . There are many serious concerns that seniors are expressing about their care.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that we'll have lots of questions and lots of comments in the days ahead about this particular bill. And I know this comes out of the Throne Speech. I think there is merit in having the debate, and we look forward to finding out more about this and making sure the people in this province understand the changes that lay ahead.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move adjournment for Bill No. 115, *An Act to amend The Public Guardian and Trustee Act, to repeal The Mentally Disordered Persons Act and to make a related amendment to another Act*. I do so adjourn, move.