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DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

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Bill No. 124 – *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal (Consequential Amendment) Act, 2013*

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to enter into the debate about Bill No. 124, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. And it seems relatively straightforward. This is a much smaller Act, and it really talks about the use of the word community clinic or clinique communautaire as part of its premises. And it seems really straightforward in that nature.

And so you know, as I review what the minister or his representative that day was actually . . . how it was presented in the House, he talks about the importance of making sure that our legislation is current as it can be.

Now clearly what we want to do again is making sure that there was consultation and that, particularly when it comes to health clinics . . . And of course we're on the record of being very supportive of co-operative health clinics. We think they're a very, very effective way of delivering health services in our communities. And we know that there are several in the province who have done a very good job of serving their communities and their membership with appropriate health services. And they've played a really strong role in terms of advocacy and leadership as we move forward to make sure that medicare is a strong principle in Canada and in particular Saskatchewan where we have taken a real leadership in that area of public health care. And we can tip our hats to our co-operative health clinics throughout our province.

So you know, and we do get worried about the consultation, make sure that's happening, but we also get worried that the government seems to be spending an inordinate time in terms of a wording change, that this is not going to impact an awful lot in terms of health care delivery. There are bigger challenges, and every day we stand and we ask about that. And we would like to see much more than a simple verb tense change in an Act. So clearly they need to do more. They need to do more for recruiting physicians and health

care professionals here in this province, make sure our emergency rooms are working completely and fully.

And I have to say that, you know, there is a higher expectation from the people of Saskatchewan for this government as we see record revenues coming in, and yet we see, oddly, health care delivery actually slipping. And why is that? And why is that as we see more funds being spent that actually we're not seeing the results that we would think should happen? And while we all have our own personal stories in terms of health care and every one of them is very, very critical as we strive to ensure and advocate for better health care in this province. We want to be leaders. We have been leaders in terms of health care delivery in Canada, but unfortunately that does not seem to be the case as it once was.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that while there is much that we can go and we can talk an awful lot about health care in terms of the challenges that lay before us. And today I asked a straightforward question in terms of an anti-poverty reduction strategy, the impact it has on health care.

Yesterday we had discussions around mental health in terms of what's happening with that, the mental health and addictions strategy that seems to be . . . We have questions about where it is, and it should be here. We are in the third session of this term. Will that strategy actually see the light of day before the next election, and will it get the resources? Will it get the resources? Or unfortunately we have concerns that maybe this government is not moving as fast as it could. What are the real priorities of this government when it comes to health care?

It's great. We heard the minister say today that she doesn't want just another report. We don't want to see another report. But we want to see the report and we want to see action on the report. We want to see action on the mental health and addictions report.

So I urge the government to do that, to do that as quickly as we can on whatever the issue is, and particularly where we saw and we agreed in December to move the bill to committee, the personal care home bill to committee back in early December. And here we are, months later, and it has seemed to have slipped off the edge of the desk of this government. And somehow they want to spin it back to somehow it's our fault over here. Forty-nine to nine and yet we have to manage what they should be managing as a government? Is not anyone over there? Are they asleep at the wheel or what's happening?

An Hon. Member: — Embarrassing the Premier.

Mr. Forbes: — Yes. And we do feel sorry for the Premier as we acknowledge he probably was embarrassed because the implication was he thought the bill was still before the House in debates and he hasn't been properly briefed and hasn't really been kept up to speed about what bills are in committee and what bills are before the House. Today I even looked at the schedule that we get from the Government House Leader and I was looking for that bill and it wasn't on there. And so I was thinking, most of the bills would be on there and it wasn't on there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to re-emphasize how important we take health care in this province. And we see this bill before us and we see that there are bigger challenges out there. And while we can definitely live . . . And of course, it only makes sense to have properly constructed bills and legislation before us, so it only makes sense that if this is the only issue with the bill that's being amended, then for sure we should be doing that.

But again it will be the question of when you open up an Act . . . And I wonder if this is the case of when the government and the Minister of Health talked to the folks who were . . . who are affected — and I should make sure I get my tense right, not were affected but are affected — by *The Mutual Medical and Hospital Benefit Association Act*. Have they all been consulted about ways to improve the Act? Or did they do a grammar check and just say, well we see it appears the “is” or “was” are out of sync, and that's the biggest concern we have with the community clinics and the co-ops, the health co-ops?

So did they do the full-blown consultation, saying to these folks, we are opening up the Act? If you are affected by *The Mutual Medical and Hospital Benefit Association Act*, if you are affected by that Act, please let us know. And they probably should have a list of the different groups who are affected by it. They should know that group. They should send out a letter. We are considering opening up the legislation. It will be before the House. Right now the only error we can see in it is a very small one. Are there ways that we can improve the legislation today so we can make your work better? Because once you open up a piece of legislation, we all know — and they should know on that side — that it's an opportunity to improve the work done. Here you have an opportunity to improve the work done by, you know, the health clinics and any of the groups that would be affected by this. Have they done that?

If they have, that's great. And what was the response? And have they listened to it? I would imagine and I would say and I would imagine I can understand, I know the Saskatoon Health Clinic would be very interested and would have probably a few more words than just saying, well correct the tense please on this legislation. They would have lots to say because, as I said, they are real leaders, real innovators when it comes to providing health care to our communities, in our communities right across Saskatchewan. And there are several — whether it's Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, and others — that I'm aware of.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I think that it's important that we have further discussion with this, and I know my colleagues will have more to say on this. But with that, I would like to move adjournment of Bill No. 124, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2013 (No. 2)*. I do so move. Thank you.