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Bill No. 149 – The Health Administration Amendment Act

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into this debate, *An Act to amend The Health Administration Act*. I understand essentially what this talks about is health registration and what we do with our health cards. So I wouldn't mind taking a minute to review what the minister had to say about this.

Almost over a month ago, he rose and talked about this, and it was very interesting. He talked about 1.1 million people who hold health cards. I think that's important that we understand this is a pretty significant thing, that everyone, everyone has one here in Saskatchewan, and this is a big deal. And we have your renewal stickers, and that's an important thing, and we've got to make sure you put them on.

Now this card, you know, is the thing that makes our health care system work because it's the thing that we've got to present whenever you go to the doctor or the health . . . Any place where you'll get benefits through the government, you need to present the health card. It's a pretty important, important document. And so how we manage that, how we administer the cards are very, very important.

And so essentially what this is talking about is taking it from the Ministry of Health over to eHealth Saskatchewan, and that seemed to be what we want to do. Of course I think that seems relatively straightforward, and they've been looking after that. And so this is the legislation that enables this to happen. This is a relatively straightforward thing, but of course we will have questions. Obviously we intend to have questions about these things, and it's our job as the opposition to ask questions. Is this the most effective way? What is the most . . . What's the current thinking with health cards? What are they doing across the country? You know, and we've just talked about the health tissue gift Act. This was something we need to deal with in terms of how do we be as efficient and effective so that we don't lose any opportunities when it comes to, whether it be corneas or lungs or kidneys or that type of thing. We want to make sure that we're as effective as possible.

Likewise with our health card, and of course there are challenges with health cards, particularly with those who may not have all the pieces of identification that are needed to get a health card.

But it seems that it's the most responsive. It's one that I don't see a lot of issues, I don't hear a lot of concerns about, that they have a system of doing it. But I know we'd be very interested in hearing more about it. I know for example the idea around language. It's interesting, you know. We were talking about human rights today and the fact that if you go to the human rights website you can get services in many languages. So I'd be curious to know in eHealth how they deal with that in terms of making sure people get their health cards in the right way, that all the questions have been answered appropriately.

So nothing . . . Again here we were just talking about translation earlier, that in fact that we have the translation that's appropriate because, you know, as we see, the diversity in Saskatchewan is blossoming and that's a wonderful, wonderful thing. But along with that comes the challenges of administration, and we need to make sure, particularly when it comes to . . . for services in health, I think this is an important thing.

And so I think that we'll have some interesting conversations in committee about this, particularly when it comes to services to make sure people are getting appropriate services; they're getting the cards when they should be getting them, that the answers are given directly, that nothing is lost in translation.

This seems like a relatively straightforward bill, but we all know how important it is to have your health card. So if we get this wrong and we're back yet again in a couple of years, in a couple of years, this is not a good thing at all.

So it sounds pretty well straightforward. You know, eHealth is to help us, modernize us. And I think that in many ways we'll have questions, because I think I want to know across Canada, what are the different standards? Are we at the top? Are we middle of the pack? How is this all running?

So I know that many of us will want to get into this, in the conversation. And I know there is lots of work to do tonight and so we want to make sure that we get to the other bills. So I won't take long on this bill, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to say, it's an interesting one, an important one, particularly in Saskatchewan. So I would move at this point adjournment of Bill No. 149, *An Act to amend The Health Administration Act*. Thank you.