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Bill No. 167 – The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act, 2014

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on the companion piece, Bill No. 167, the local government consequential amendments Act, 2014. I won't attempt the French title. But this is an important bill. It is. Sometimes when we think about these consequential amendment things that we don't pay enough attention to them. And it's important as we realize that we are a bilingual country, and it's important that the rules and the legislation, particularly when it comes to local government elections and particularly when we have francophone communities in the province, that this legislation be in both languages.

So when the minister got up and introduced this at the same time, he says:

This Act makes an amendment to one bilingual Act, The Education Act, 1995, because that Act refers to The Local Government Election Act and the provisions dealing with the election of school board members. The Local Government Election Act governs all municipal elections throughout the province as well as school board elections.

No changes [apparently, according to the minister] are being made to how school board elections are run. The amendments only change the name of the Act and the section number being referred to so that the references remain accurate.

So accordingly he moved this forward, and I would think that . . . Obviously we don't want to get ahead of the game by moving this one to committee. It should follow afterwards. But I think it's important that as we look at these pieces of legislation, again as I said, that it is an important part on the floor of this House that we do all that we can to make sure we get people out to vote. You know, as I said, it seems rather paradoxical that people will vote federally — hugely important, hugely important that they feel that responsibility — but things seem farther away, but huge, still very critical. But then when it comes to municipal elections, they don't quite seem to be quite as driven to get out on

polling day to make an X on the ballot.

And I think this is something that when we think about these two pieces of legislation, they work together in tandem, but it's an important piece of our work. And as the minister talked about, he consulted with SARM and SUMA and the school boards and New North about making sure that the barriers were diminished as much as possible. But still, we think we need to have those conversations in committee. I'd be curious to know why. Why not take the opportunity to consult with the public to say, why is it you choose not to come out and vote in municipal elections but you come out for federal? I know that federal folks are concerned about their turnout, particularly when it comes to young people. And I don't know what the turnout is in a municipal election for young people, but clearly it's an important issue that we take a look at.

And we raise, on this side of the House — we know that it's a phenomena right across North America — the impact of picture ID, photo ID, or other ID requirements, particularly in communities where people are known, how relevant that is. We have a lot of questions about whether that's needed. It could be an important tool, but is it one that . . . You know, it's a pretty big hammer to be solving some other issues. And so what can we do to make sure people feel connected, that when their name is on the voters list, they do have a responsibility?

It's the time to step up and make a difference, and really that's what our democracy is all about. You know, we look at other parts of the world, whether it's Ukraine, other communities, other countries where they are fighting for democracy, and we have things so well in hand here in Saskatchewan that we do have, we do have an onerous responsibility to participate.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure other people have a lot to say about this particular bill, because it is relatively straightforward. But as I said, we don't want to put the donkey before the cart and put this small bill into committee. We'll hold this back and we'll allow other people to have comments.

So I would like to at this time move adjournment of Bill No. 167, *The Local Government Election Consequential Amendments Act*. Thank you.