

FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD) Published under the authority of The Honourable Dan D'Autremont Speaker

N.S. VOL. 57 NO. 21A MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2014, 13:30

Bill No. 163 – The Education Amendment Act

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to enter into this debate on Bill No. 163, *An Act to amend The Education Act, 1995*. And 1995 was a great year. Obviously some good work went into this, and I think that we could review 1995. But I will be reviewing certain dates, Mr. Speaker, because I have a lot to say about this bill particularly, and about some teachable moments we might have today, some teachable moments here.

So some things that we need to get the record straight on, the record straight on. And I know that this is an important piece of legislation to a lot of people in Saskatchewan, a lot of people if not everyone. Everyone has an interest in good, solid public education, you know. And I think that it's really important that we take a moment and just reflect back a bit on how important public education is in Saskatchewan. We have a long, long history here in Saskatchewan about public education right . . . in a formal sense because I certainly don't want to discount the traditional way of learning prior to the public school system being set up because that was a huge way of passing knowledge down from generation to generation. That's hugely important and it should not be discounted or forgotten. And so I just want to make sure we acknowledge that.

But in the formal sense I want to take a moment to talk about the education, the public education here in Saskatchewan because it's a huge, huge thing that people respect. And I don't think they take it for granted here in Saskatchewan because we have such a strong record of education. And whether that be from back in the original homestead days, the early days of the province as we now know it, where education became more formalized for the settlers and the newcomers.

And as we saw this Act evolve over the course of time, many changes have been brought forward to improve it. And one that we felt was really not a great idea, not a great idea, was when they introduced the legislation around changing when students would be back in the classroom after Labour Day. And it was such an interesting thing that when the

minister at the time, and it's the minister we have now, made that announcement. And it was part of an election campaign.

But it's so much of how this government has operated. It's made announcements, knee-jerk announcements, and haven't really consulted with primary stakeholders such as teachers and families, and what the impact would be, what the impact would be. And here we are now seeing the unintended consequences.

And I think, I wish that we had more time and more resources to do the research on this, but if we were to go back and look at the old speeches from just a few years ago — when we talk about old speeches, we're not talking about many, many years ago, but just a few years ago — we would have all been on this side talking about the unintended consequences. And one of them would be, we would be predicting that we would be back here today. And here we are fixing a wrong that this government had made because they acted in haste. They did not consult with the folks that they should have consulted with.

And to that extent, Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a minute and talk about the minister's Actually when he was talking in the Throne Speech and he, even he, even the minister then acknowledges that it was the first time that they had actually gone out and consulted. I think this is what it means. And I quote from page 5564 of the *Hansard*, October 28th, 2014, when the minister said, "We've undertaken a historic consultative process called student-first where teachers', parents', and students' voices were heard."

Well you know, Mr. Speaker, I think in many ways we would say, yes that's right because you haven't consulted — first for this government. They haven't gone out and consulted. And it's great that the minister's actually acknowledging that it's historic, that they're actually going out and consulting. This is something this government is not known for doing, whether it's *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, you can go through all the whole list of things, the employment Act, many things where they have not gone out and consulted. So it is good to see that the minister actually acknowledge a historic first, that they've actually gone out and done some consultation.

And I don't know if it came up then, or when it came up, but somebody pointed out to the minister, you know, there is a problem with that piece of legislation that you introduced a few years ago where you changed when kids would be coming back to school. And if you do it the way you had it right after Labour Day, at some point — and they are fixing the number of school days — at some point you're going to have a problem. You're going to have a problem, Mr. Minister. And he finally acknowledged that that day had arrived. And here we are, and now we have to change the legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, the list doesn't stop there. When we look at this Act, and there's four main parts, and I will talk about many of those parts. But many of the other parts that he should be talking about, the changes this government has made without consultation And I refer back to that quote about the minister acknowledging that they don't do very much consultation, that in fact historically they've done a bad job of consulting, that there are other issues.

And that is, for example, the number of hours of instructional time that has caused chaos, chaos out in many school divisions because they're trying to coordinate what does that mean. They've established their processes to make sure they have a strong educational program. And I think that if this government is saying that they weren't having a strong educational program, then we need to hear that. We need to hear that. But they created a lot of problems out there because they didn't think through, they didn't think through what the consequences would be. And so we are glad to hear that they are doing now consultations, full consultations.

You know, we can talk about standardized testing. We can go on about standardized testing, about how this government refused to listen to the teachers, to school boards, or even academics about the problems of their infatuation about standardized testing and how they were going to pour money, come whatever, into that. And so, Mr. Speaker, I have some real problems with how this government operates when it comes to education and their method. But I'm glad to hear that they are doing some consultation.

But I do want to talk a minute because, you know, this minister, he prides himself on accuracy and how he feels that, you know . . . and today decide over there, talk about fact checking and how they are really wanting to be accurate. Well here's a teachable moment. Here's a teachable moment here because I want to refer to again the Throne Speech response from the Minister of Education. And he often likes to talk about me in his speeches. And he often talks about me, and maybe some people would say, he kind of gives me, a bit of giving me the gears, I think. And you know, and this is a lesson. This is a teachable moment about how, you know, people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. And that's the lesson today. If you live in a glass house, it's not a good idea to throw stones.

This is what the member from Saskatoon Southeast was talking about. He said, and I quote, "The member opposite has said he's wanted a minimum wage and he's talked about *The Minimum Wage Act*, something hasn't existed in our province since 1969." So he's talking about me. He's talking about minimum wage. But the quote goes on.

The member opposite went on at great length about wanting to have a minimum wage Act. I don't know where he was in the summer of '69, whether he was watching the moon landing or watching Woodstock on TV, but that was the year the NDP did away with *The Minimum Wage Act*.

Now I ask you, in 1969, now some of you may remember who was in government in 1969. Do any of you remember who was in government in 1969? Now I know the member from Walsh Acres prides himself on being a factual type of guy. Would he remember who was in power in 1969? . . . [inaudible interjection] ... Well so the world didn't start before the member from Walsh Acres was born. That's an interesting approach. Anyways, Mr. Speaker, just for the benefit of those folks at home who may not remember or for the folks over there, it was not the NDP. It was the Liberals.

So my point here is for people who live in glass houses, for people who live in glass houses, they should not be throwing stones. And this minister, when he talks about being

accurate, I'm talking about *The Education Act* because I hope he's accurate in that, because we keep talking about how we have to come back and fix the education mistakes. Here he has something pretty seriously wrong. He doesn't know his history, doesn't know his history. I don't know where the Minister of Education was in 1969. Maybe he was at Woodstock, I don't know. He could have been at Woodstock. I know where I was in the summer of '69. I was listening to the moon landing up in Waskesiu. That's what I was doing. I don't think I left the province that year.

But I'll come back to that because sometimes people say you have to repeat lessons seven times, seven times to get the point over there. So I may say this is lesson one or more times for the folks opposite because at the end of the day I really want to emphasize the point for everyone — you should not throw rocks if you live in a glass house.

And if you don't know who was in power in 1969 in Saskatchewan, I mean he was actually kind of famous because, you know, when this happened, there was some important labour legislation that the Liberals actually brought in about labour standards. And I think they actually deserve a lot of credit for that because they consolidated a lot of things and made it *The Labour Standards Act*. So you know, the Liberal at the time, and actually it was Minister Coderre who was the minister at the time. And I would know that because Coderre is not far from my hometown of Mortlach, and we know a lot of people from Coderre. But at any rate, I digress on that point.

But I do want to say that we want to talk a little bit about the bill before us, Mr. Speaker. What I wanted to say about this was apparently there's four pieces of . . . And I'll take a minute here to review the minister's comments here. And he talks about four amendments, essentially four amendments that will be in place by September 1st, 2015, by Labour Day 2015.

The first change being proposed is to amend *The Education Act, 1995* to rename section 4.1 to the Education Scholarship Fund. The newly . . . Education Scholarship Fund will include the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall Scholarship and also the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Scholarship in alignment with the Premier's announcement on May 23rd, 2012 [which was a good announcement].

But I do want to say that the Prince of Wales announcement when it was first introduced — and I believe it was introduced in the spring of 2001 — in fact it was one of the first things that our former premier, Premier Calvert, had done just after being elected leader and being elected premier. That was one of the first things he set up and it was a great scholarship. And it was done in recognition of the Prince of Wales's visit here to Saskatchewan in the spring of 2001.

So I think it's fair enough, and if it means we can do more scholarships, then that will be a good thing. And that's a good thing because, as we know, especially for high school students as they enter post-secondary education, it is getting tougher and tougher. And we hear the stories in Saskatchewan. We know this government's in dispute about whether or not it's easier to get into schools here than it was. We know that it's still a challenge and

it's very important.

And that's one of our main goals in education, is make sure that we prepare students well enough that they can enter into post-secondary education if they are so inclined. But we do not want to see financial costs as a barrier, and too often we see that, and we see that unfortunately in communities right across this province. And we want to do all that we can to make sure students who have the potential and have the will and have the drive do access post-secondary education, whether it's in the trades or whether it's in the arts or whether it's in other professional studies, we want to make sure that the potential of our young people is fully met.

And again, this is the whole purpose of *The Education Act*, in a sense, to make sure that everyone, every person, every young person in our province has the ability to become, to reach their full potential. So that's a very important part, and I don't think it's a small part. I think this is important, so we'll be watching to see, and particularly now that we're into the budget cycle and the Premier has alluded to it, in fact alluded to it today in question period, that we're in the budget cycle. And maybe this is a signal that we'll see more bursaries coming forward, more scholarships. So this is a very good thing, and it's one that's important.

And the second change that's being proposed is to amend two expressions that are used in the French version of *The Education Act*. And one is to talk around a change to home-based education program, and also the change, "pupil with intensive needs." And now I do not have the faculty of the French language, and so I will not attempt to pronounce the words. But I understand, and I think that it's important that when we have the translation, we often talk about what's unfortunately lost in translation. And this is important when we talk about students with intensive needs.

I can go back. One of the very first things this government . . . And I still have some questions about this. When they changed, they took the words special needs out of *The Education Act*, and what that meant. And of course we supported the idea, the concept that students with special or unique needs, that we should be moving from a medical model to more of an individual model, an individual needs model. But when you took out the words — words are important — when you took out the word special, that in fact special education had a certain recognition right across Canada, in fact, right around the world. And this change was really problematic. And we still see some of the fallout from that.

But I think it's important that we listen to the translators and understand the nuances. They're hugely, hugely important.

Last week we had a good discussion about the statutes amendment Act and how we saw words like capacity being used. And I had raised some concerns around the idea that capacity may not completely meet the needs of what the government was trying to say in terms of the new definitions.

Clearly language evolves, and it becomes more specific, more current, but we have to

make sure that we mean what we say and say what we mean. And I hope that in terms of the consultation that this government took on this, that it does meet the needs.

And this is what we'll be doing as an opposition, meeting with the Francophone community to find out, does this language capture the intent? It's really important that, again, that the intent is not lost. The intent is not lost in translation, and that in fact it in fact strengthens the bill and limits the unintended consequences because we don't want to be back here talking about the amendment again, as we are with the Labour Day, after the Labour Day fiasco that we knew, that we knew was coming. And here is the government today amending something that was almost a certain certainty that we would be discussing this point yet again. And so this is interesting.

So the second change looks relatively straightforward, but we would like to make sure that it does capture the intent. And you know, I can remember when we asked about when special education, that word was changed, that in fact it did cause quite a stir because the groups, who the minister at the time said that they were consulted, and in fact they weren't consulted. And I think that's the important thing.

Well the third one, this is the one that really captured the news, and the government did issue a news release. And everybody, you know, quietly just shrugged because everybody knew that we were going to be coming back to this, that this was too big of a problem, and the government had to face it and face it head on. And of course that was to amend *The Education Act* to allow school divisions to start the school year prior to Labour Day when it occurs on or after September 5th.

And he talks about:

Current legislation provides that school divisions are required to commence instructional time no sooner than the day following Labour Day and to end no later than June 30th.

And this is where really the problem was caused because you're setting out parameters that just were difficult in Saskatchewan to meet because people have certain expectations around what a school year was, and generally speaking, we've always thought that school starts around or after Labour Day. Everybody had that idea, and then there were concerns, and people started seeing the school year creep maybe too much into August when there were too many days that were not instructional days happening in the school year, the main school year between September and in June. And so they were really concerned.

So people have an expectation about what will happen at Christmas. People have an expectation around Thanksgiving. And people have an expectation around Remembrance Day, and that's one that we know. And you know, I have to take our hats off, and I don't know who put the holiday, the stat holiday for Remembrance Day into being, but I think when we looked across Canada . . . And I know that's a debate that actually the federal government is having right now and moving relatively quickly. I don't know what the deal is with it, but making Labour Day a national stat holiday, because unfortunately it

isn't, and we see variations across the provinces on that one holiday.

But we all have an understanding what spring vacation or Easter vacation would be. Now interestingly, and I'm not sure what the correct terminology is, whether Easter or spring, I think of it as Easter break because it's tied to Good Friday and Easter Sunday, but it may be more appropriately referred to as a spring break, and how people have an expectation that it will be a week. And so this is one that really shows how important consultation really should be in our province, Mr. Speaker, because there's just so many moving parts when you talk about holidays.

But as well, you know, ironically when I was a teacher, and actually the minister of Education at that time was the chairman of the public school board, and we have an interesting history in terms of, I was the chair of the local bargaining committee and so...

An Hon. Member: We heard some stories about you back then.

Mr. Forbes: Yes, there you go. We were all great. It was all great. But I tell you we had some interesting discussions around prep time and how important preparation time for teachers is, very important because it has a direct correlation to improved instruction, and improved instruction of course leads to better learning. And that's a great thing for students because at the end of the day, that's what all our goal is, is how can we help our students achieve better. And of course there's many ways of getting to that, but how you use your time wisely is really important.

So this is something that I know the minister's been thinking about for many years. And I've been thinking about many years because we've been talking about it for many years. But I think that it's one that here we are when you see quite clearly evidence of something that's not well thought out.

And of course this is a government and this is a caucus really, you know, and I don't know whether they have this process called stop-the-line, when you see . . . Did anybody in that caucus raise their hand and say, you know, to the people who are making those promises in that campaign, this isn't going to work? At some point this is going to be a problem. And when many of them got elected, you know, and the bill came forward in caucus, did anybody say, whoa, stop the line? Stop this line?

Oh there's one who said he raised his hand. Okay, it would be him who said he raised his hand. He raised his hand to say, stop. This is not going to work. We're going to be back here. We're going to be back here in a few years. Somebody over there should have said, whoa, stop the line. Stop the legislative line, because this is not going to work. This is not going to work.

Because here we are. Here we are. We should be debating things like buy local. We should be debating that bill on P3s [public-private partnership]. But instead here we are, fixing up a mistake that this government made because nobody would stand up. Nobody would stand up and say, whoa, stop the line.

I think that many of those over there suffer from what they call group think, you know,

because they don't want to stand up and say, you know what, Mr. Minister? This is not going to work. This is not going to work. We're going to be back in a few years. So I really do urge them. And I know many of them got up and, you know, we had quite a stirring debate about the statutes of limitations and spelling, and they really get into that over there. And you know, I think this is the kind of stuff, when they come forward, they need to say, hey, stop the line. Doesn't make any sense. Doesn't make any sense.

Because if you know how the calendar works, dates and days change around. If you know how that works . . . a little different, you know. And you have a leap year and that throws another curveball into it. And so I think the folks over there needed to sit down and figure out, needed to figure out what was going to happen if they put in that legislation. And they did. They did. And because, you know, as we had these second reading speeches, we have these second reading speeches and I would hope that they listened to them. I hope they would listen to them and say okay, this doesn't make much sense. Now today the fix is correct. We think that . . . But we need to talk to the people, the stakeholders.

But there are other things that you could be fixing and talking about today. They should be talking about the minimum hours of instruction because that isn't really very helpful. You should go back to and say, so what are we trying to resolve here? What are we really trying to resolve? You know, we all want our children to do better at school. That is a given. How do we make that happen? How do we make that happen? Well we think there should be better funding in schools. They should be addressing issues like that. They should be fixing the issues that teachers are identifying. Now the issues of overcrowded classrooms, the issues about educational assistants, that should be fixed. Now they're all saying this is done — done, done, done; it's all done.

The last thing on their list, the last thing on their list was to fix the calendar. Was that what they're saying? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. If that's the last thing that needed to be fixed, then we've got a problem. We've got a problem because a lot of people out there have a lot of concerns about how we can make our Saskatchewan schools better.

We have a great opportunity. We have a great opportunity. More kids, more kids in schools than ever before — this is a wonderful thing. We've got excellent teachers. You've got excellent teachers. But frankly they feel their hands are tied because they're not getting the resources they should be getting. And this government . . . We'll be watching the budget. We'll be watching the budget.

An Hon. Member: Like in 2009 when they slashed over 300 educational assistants.

Mr. Forbes: Three hundred educational assistants? Where did they go? And yet they say things are better.

And they have this infatuation about standardized testing when we know that doesn't prove education. And we know we have to do much more for First Nations and Métis education. And we saw there was a great consultation piece that happened a few years ago and it was put up on the shelf, put up on the shelf. And we know there's much more

work to be done, much more work to be done.

So we do see, we do see a challenge for this government because they do have these ideological blinders put on and we're . . . And this really brings me to the fourth point, brings me to the fourth point when we talk about P3 schools or the rent-a-schools. Talk about blinders, talk about blinders. They should be looking about. You know, one day we'll hear they look across the country and they see what other provinces are doing and how they're backing away from certain things, they're changing things because that's what other provinces are doing. And then the next day they say, hey, we're going to do this first, or is it worst? They're going to do it first or worst? I don't know. I think they're going to do P3s, the rent-a-school thing. We're going to be watching this one very closely.

You know, the whole thing about transparency and accountability, even when the BC [British Columbia] auditor says, not a great idea, not a great idea because of the way you're forcing, the way they're forcing the local school boards to borrow money, the way they're forcing local school boards to borrow money at 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 per cent higher and this could result in increased costs, in fact several hundred million dollars. I've heard some estimates of \$300 million . . . [inaudible] . . . on these P3 schools. Now I don't know what \$300 million could buy. Could that buy a school or two? I think it could. I think it could.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is the same . . . Here you have on one hand the point three, where they're essentially saying, okay, we admit that we made a mistake. But wait till you see point four. We're going to talk about our biggest mistake, and that is tying the hands of our local school boards and saying we've got to do P3s.

Now really what it does, section 9 removes the requirement for the board to get a quote on a loan before passing a resolution to borrow money. And we think this may be a way of hiding the higher interest rates on P3s, which cost in BC more than 3.5 per cent. And that's huge. That's huge when you think of the costs that . . . when you're thinking about the scale of these projects. That's a significant amount of a money, and a significant amount of money.

Now if we're going to see the same kind of accountability that the minister from SaskPower says he's talking about, the CCS [carbon capture and storage] project, that he's going to do the analysis after a \$1.6 billion project is done . . . We're going to only see the analysis after it's done, not before it's done. It must have been done before. I mean clearly this government, any government, any government would have done its work before, would have done its homework before.

And so we have some real questions about this, Mr. Speaker. And I think that we have to really reflect on how this government . . . and its commitment to education.

And you know, when I think about this and I think about, you know, what I had said earlier, and I think I want to talk a little bit more about especially around the history. And we have the Minister of Education who doesn't know when the last time a Liberal

government was in power in Saskatchewan, doesn't know but yet seems to take quite a lot of pride in throwing rocks at glass houses when he himself lives in one. I think this is something he should think about, he should really think about. When he makes a big deal about pride of accuracy and knowing the facts and letting the facts tell the story, and here he is, here he is throwing rocks. And really he should be watching what he's talking about because clearly somebody . . . Now I know the quality of Sask Party researchers aren't so great. But they've gone up a little . . . Well I don't know where they are. They're kind of . . . That one bad one is, yes, out the door. But they were sort of at the D level, floating around the F, D level, somewhere in there, up and down. But you know the researchers . . .

Mr. Forbes: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's great to have people in the gallery as well. And I think it's important that when we have debates like this, when we're talking about something so fundamental and *The Education Act* really is one of . . . You know, when we talk about core pieces of legislation, this is I think one of the most fundamental pieces of legislation in our whole legislative suite. I mean and I know that people would argue whether it's labour or health, of course, environment would be right up there as well, and all of the good work that government is required to do, education is clearly one of them. *The Education Act* is a real fundamental, foundational document that I know the stakeholders, whether they be the school boards or whether they be the teachers, you know, parents, and now you know, in our new day and age too with young people and how it's so important to consult with them.

And we talked about that just a few days ago in terms of the international day of children and the United Nations declaration that recognizes how important it is to talk about the consultation and recognition of the rights of young people. And really this is what we are here all about in terms of making sure our young people are educated well and they have the ability to move on and the opportunities that, you know, as every generation moves forward to new opportunities, and we want to make sure that there are no limitations, that in fact we have the best education here in Saskatchewan.

And so it's not something we take lightly, and so when we go out and we consult with the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], we will ask them, so what should have been in this Act? What should have been in this Act? And will we see yet another amendment Act?

Because quite often this is what happens with this government. They put one Act . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, they haven't fixed the hour issue and we'll probably see a second education Act. We'll probably see yet another bill and it will be called an Act to amend *The Education Act, 1995* (No. 2). We might even see an Act to amend *The Education Act, 1995* (No. 3). Because the government never seems to finish it, never seems or never really finishes the job. What are the key pieces that we need to have done? And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's really, really important that we take the time.

And I know this government doesn't have a really strong legislative agenda, does not have a strong legislative agenda this session. And really we are concerned about that because some of the things that we're seeing before the House, you know, we look at

their agricultural agenda, the legislative agenda was essentially one bill that was one line long. And here we have . . . And the points itself do have merit in terms of having a discussion. We do think it's important to make sure we allow a process to have more bursaries or scholarships. I think that's hugely important, and that's great.

I mean, but the real challenge will be if we just change the name to Education Scholarship Fund, and if we just changed the name and yet put no more money into it, that would be a real shame, wouldn't it? What would be the point? And so is this a signal that we're going to see more money in the budget for the Education Scholarship Fund? Or are we just going to see a name change and that's it?

You know, we were very proud to create the Prince of Wales scholarship back in 2001, and that was a good thing. And now we need to see more, more supports. We want to make sure, as I've said, we want to make sure that the barriers for post-secondary education are gone. And if the barriers are gone, then that's a great thing so kids can take full potential.

The second point the government made is around the French translation, on those two points about home-schooling and students with special needs or unique needs and how a better translation is very important.

But I think the last two points are very interesting when we talk about the Labour Day change. And of course, as I've said, there was a collective sigh right across the province where the government finally owned up to the fact that they had made a mistake, that they should've consulted. And even in the minister's own words that they had, you know, a historic, a consultation process, something they hadn't seen before. And we agree, they have not really engaged in good consultations.

We've seen a reluctance to have public meetings. We've seen a reluctance to actually engage face-to-face meetings. Especially that minister is one who really doesn't seem to get out and meet with people. He'd rather have people do things through the website. And we do have really major concerns about section 9 that removes the requirement for the board to get a quote on a loan before passing a resolution to borrow money. We have a lot of concerns about what that means in terms of transparency.

We've put forward a bill about transparency for P3s, and yet the government refused to pass it last time. And we've got it . . . They don't want to be accountable or transparent. They're going to do it their style, their style. And I don't know if that's the style of the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, the smart meter style. You'll never find out anything unless you really pull and pull and pull, pull. And we don't want to see, we don't want to see that happen. We don't want to see that happen. And I just thought it was so passing strange that that minister could get up today and lecture us on strange financial behaviour, strange financial behaviour, somebody who's managing the smart meter fiasco. There's no lessons from that guy, no lessons from that guy about how to explain things, no lesson at all from that guy.

You know, so you have that minister and you have this minister over there, the Minister

of Education who really wants to rewrite history, rewrite history, writing out the Liberals. And there's some Liberals over on that side; I don't know how they feel about it, how they feel about it. They're fleeing because they see the Sask Party rewriting history, writing out the Liberals out of Saskatchewan history. Because it was in 1969 they did away with *The Minimum Wage Act* to create a much better piece of legislation called *The Labour Standards Act*.

So that Minister of Education really needs to take a few lessons himself. Or maybe his researchers need to take a few lessons because I think that this is a real problem. And this government who likes to talk about glass houses, they themselves live in a glass house. And they should watch when they start chucking rocks because you know what happens? What goes around comes around, and it's coming back to them.

And that minister loves to have a few laughs. But you know, it's odd when it comes back and gets him right in the House. Mr. Speaker, I think that's a problem. I think that's a problem. So we have some concerns about this. We want to know. We will be talking to the stakeholders and we'll be talking about a whole host of issues in education. How's it going? How's it going with the educational assistants? Are the kids with needs getting their support with the special needs? Are they? This government says, yes they are. They say, yes they are, and there's not any more work to be done.

Well we'll have to hear from the people in the front lines, in the classrooms, about that case. And we have some real questions about that. We have some questions about First Nations and Métis education. How is that going? Should there be stuff in this bill about that? What's not in here? What's not in here? We have a lot of questions about that.

And again, when I talk about the P3s, this is really a question that we have. Because clearly, you know, when we see the mayor of Regina raising questions, when we see the auditor from BC raising questions. We see what they've done in Alberta when they've walked away and say, this isn't working. This isn't working. This is a real problem. Again, it's really about ideological blinders. These folks are looking straight ahead. They're looking straight ahead until there's no more road.

And this is what happened with the Labour Day fiasco. Clearly they were caught. They were caught in a jam, and the minister had to admit that it was, they had to admit, they had to admit it was wrong. It was wrong. And while it was an interesting idea, too many people couldn't believe what they heard. And we remembered during that campaign when people go, what? Where did that come from? Where did that come from?

Well you know, it's like so many things that they've brought forward, like the 950 hours, you know. Where did that come from that it had such power that this government would go right to it? What about the standardized testing? Who was calling for standardized testing? Who was calling for, who was calling for the cuts to educational assistants? Who was calling for crowded classrooms?

So, Mr. Speaker, we have questions about this. And we think that we don't want to be back discussing or debating another amendment to *The Education Act*. And it would be

very interesting, and it might be just something that we'll have to do a little work on, to find out how many times have we amended past legislation when this government did not clearly think through the consequences? And we raise this. We really do. And I know the folks over there go, oh that's just a . . . you always say that. Well we do because there always seems to be a point where we come back, where we come back and find out that there's been a problem.

They haven't really thought it all the way through, or if they've said that they've consulted with folks, they really haven't consulted with the folks. When we call them up and they say, so we hear this is what you're saying. Is that right? And they go, well no, it's not really what we're saying. And we hear, you know, in fact actually it was . . . It would have been interesting here that this, you know . . . Actually as I look through the minister's speech, there is no acknowledgement of having consultations with any of the stakeholders on any of this. And I think this would have been very, very important, you know.

I think it would have been very important, for example, and this is one I think is really important, is when we talk about the scholarships. Were you talking to groups who really, who really have faced barriers to post-secondary education? Who are those folks? Who are those folks that are facing real barriers?

Well one group I know, and I think the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union president, Max FineDay, raised a really interesting point about kids who have grown up in foster care, and what about the barriers they have? And is there something that we can make sure that they have access to post-secondary education because we see, as I've said, a direct correlation, the kids who do well in school then go on to post-secondary, and just achieve very well in later life. They have to have that option, Mr. Speaker, they clearly have to have that option.

And so I know that there will be many of my colleagues who will have a lot to say about this, and particularly around the P3 borrowing change here that we see, and how it's been disguised as giving local school boards options when really, really they don't have options, and as well the amendments around the Labour Day. As I said, this was a really, a very good opportunity for the government to come clean and admit to some of the other areas, but they're only doing this one. So we'll probably be, we'll probably really . . . So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like adjournment of the debate on Bill No. 163. Thank you.

