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Cyberbullying Legislation

Mr. Forbes: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the federal government introduced changes to the Criminal Code to address some aspects of online bullying, in particular those related to inappropriate sharing of intimate images. The Premier said yesterday that the government couldn't really comment on it until he'd actually seen the text of the bill. To the minister: has the government assessed the federal legislation yet, and does it recognize there's a need for this province to fill in some of the gaps?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: Mr. Speaker, let me first say we're very pleased with the federal government's response. Last October in Regina at the federal, provincial, and territorial ministers' meeting, we raised the issue of the distribution of intimate images on the Internet without consent, and we're very pleased that the federal government has reacted.

Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed the legislation. It's not the position of the government at this particular point in time that we need to make any changes to provincial legislation. However, Mr. Speaker, I will say that we will monitor the effects of the legislation, how it's being implemented, and how it's being enforced by the police, and we'll assess that as time goes on, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Mr. Speaker, the federal legislation only covers intimate images, but we know there are many other aspects to online bullying. And the websites that young people are on these days, like Ask.fm, are ones that parents may not have even heard of yet, but they're places where there's awful bullying going on that's happening far too often.

Nova Scotia has implemented concrete, specific actions to combat cyberbullying, and we have repeatedly called on this government to do the same. One of the things Nova Scotia

put into place to fight cyberbullying was the cyberbullying investigation unit called CyberSCAN. To the minister: will this government adopt the CyberSCAN model for Saskatchewan kids?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: Well, Mr. Speaker, we have reviewed the legislation that was introduced in Nova Scotia. We don't have any information with respect to how that legislation is working. We are, however, monitoring that legislation to see what effects it will have.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we're very, very supportive of the amendments that have been brought forward by the federal government with respect to amendments to the Criminal Code. We on this side of the House, as do all members of this House, abhor cyberbullying in any of its forms, Mr. Speaker, so we'll do whatever we can in terms of making sure that an end is put to it.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to monitor what's happening in Nova Scotia, but as I said, we have no concrete information at this particular point in time how it's working.