

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. 68A THURSDAY, OCT 15, 2015, 10:00

Essential Services Legislation

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2007 the Sask Party introduced the essential services Act and ignored warnings that the law was unconstitutional. Five years later the Court of Queen's Bench ruled that this law was indeed unconstitutional, and by that point this government had already wasted tons of time and money defending this poorly written and unfair law. Yet they decided to use even more taxpayer money to fund an appeal.

To the minister: does the Sask Party now regret the time and money they spent defending this unconstitutional law?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: Mr. Speaker, under the NDP, we had no legislation in place protecting and ensuring that essential services were made available for the citizens of this province.

The commitment that this government has made and the commitment that this government will keep is that we will ensure the safety and security of our citizens. We live in a province that's got inclement weather, difficult road times in January and February. We have emergency rooms that we want to keep open. We do not want those things to be held up or interrupted by a labour disruption. We want to have good alternate methods to resolve labour issues.

But, Mr. Speaker, our commitment is to the citizens of this province, and we will continue to fulfill that commitment. And, Mr. Speaker, that's something we'll make no apologies for.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: You know, Mr. Speaker, this is the government that says it can't even fund little Kayden Kot's desperately needed treatment, which would cost just \$14,000. This is

the government that says it can't afford one extra nickel for the thousands of new students in our province's schools. This is the government that hasn't found a way to fix ER wait times or specialist wait times or the senior care crisis. And yet this is the same government that has blown a massive amount of money defending a really bad law all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

To the minister: will he at least admit that the massive amount of money spent to defend the Sask Party's bad law was a total waste and should have been used to address the things that really matter to Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: Mr. Speaker, we received direction from the Supreme Court to make adjustments to our legislation. We are going to do that.

We consulted, Mr. Speaker, we consulted extensively with labour. We consulted extensively with the public sector. Mr. Speaker, we want to have something that satisfies the needs of labour, something that complies with the requirements of the court. But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, and we'll make no apology for it whatsoever, we are going to protect the safety and security of this citizens of this province so that snow is removed, so that emergency rooms stay open, so that health care continues, Mr. Speaker.

Under the NDP, there was nothing. Under this government, there will always be protection, and it's something that no government ought to apologize for. It's something that no government ought to ever back down for, is the safety and security of the citizens of their province.