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Combating Bullying

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the government said it would wait until Anti-Bullying Week in November to release its report and its action plan. The minister told the media, and I quote, “We’ve got Anti-Bullying Week coming up and we thought it’d be an appropriate time to try and announce it.”

Now I’m sure I’m not the only one who finds it outrageous that this government would choose to put its own PR [public relations] tactics ahead of meaningful anti-bullying tactics. My question to the minister: will he admit it’s a mistake to keep delaying action and will he please just table the government’s strategy?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend we had heard media reports of another suicide of a young person that was bullied in the city of Regina. On behalf of all members, Mr. Speaker, I’d like to offer our deepest condolences and sympathy to the family.

The Legislative Secretary, the member for Saskatoon Fairview, has been travelling across the province and has been conducting hearings, meeting with students, parents, teachers, and community stakeholders. The date for submissions is actually open until the end of this month. Because we know that this is a time-sensitive matter, they are working at gradually assembling the information as it comes forward.

I can advise that they have heard from over 1,000 students, parents, teachers, and community stakeholders. In addition to that, we have received some 66 written submissions. But, Mr. Speaker, we are still receiving written submissions until the end of the month and one of the groups that we have not heard a submission from, written or otherwise, is from the members opposite.

The Leader of the Opposition had this to say on Twitter and . . . I’ll give that answer later

on, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the final consultation meeting for the Legislative Secretary was held on June 13th. But here's what the minister said last week to the media, and I quote: "They've done their work."

So it's been 138 days since the final consultation meeting, and the minister has admitted that the work is done. But he said the government is waiting for Anti-Bullying Week in order to unveil the report and their strategy. And that's simply unacceptable. The need for action is urgent. My question again for the minister: will he admit that it's a mistake to keep delaying the action, especially since the consultation period has long been done?

The Speaker: I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: Mr. Speaker, the Legislative Secretary is doing the work as she receives the information. She has indicated that it is open to receive submissions until the end of this month. We are working with her and will have the response from the government released at the same time. We will not wait for any particular deadline. We will get it done as soon as is practical. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the members opposite that they are still accepting submissions until the end of the month.

The Leader of the Opposition had this to say on Twitter over the weekend: "Absolutely heartbreaking. I am committed to working with the government to ensure Saskatchewan does a better job of combatting bullying." That was the member for Saskatoon Massey Place, the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we're still missing the NDP submission. We'd be glad to receive it. He has till the end of the month. We look forward to receiving it.