

Wall gets proverbial 15 minutes of fame

BY JAMES WOOD, AND ANGELA HALL, SASKATCHEWAN NEWS NETWORK; LEADER-POST; CANWEST NEWS SERVICE JUNE 20, 2009

As they say, a week can be a long time in politics.

Last Saturday, the Globe and Mail ran a lengthy and glowing piece on Brad Wall that touted him as potential future prime minister.

Alas, the press can be fickle.

A photo caption on the front page of Thursday's Globe identified Wall as arriving at the Western Premiers conference in Yukon.

Unfortunately, the man in the picture was actually Manitoba's Gary Doer.

There's no telling whether the 43-year-old Saskatchewan Party premier or the 61-year-old New Democrat would be more offended by the mix-up.

But Wall did quip Friday that "the office has taken a greater toll on me than even I realized."

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Occasionally dozy committee hearings at the Legislative building were anything but dull this week.

When more than 200 unionized workers in the construction trades showed up to attend public hearings on Bill 80 the committee room was much too small to accommodate them.

NDP MLA Cam Broten made three failed attempts to move proceedings to a bigger venue but expressed his frustration when Sask. Party MLAs voted down his motions.

"We welcome school groups here. We give them juice boxes. But we force tradespeople, adults, who come to the legislature to stay out in the sun," snapped Broten.

Sask. Party MLA Serge LeClerc responded that people making presentations shouldn't be subject to an "intimidation factor."

"I, for one, don't particularly want to be intimidated," LeClerc said.

Sparks flew after LeClerc made comments about his government being fair, evoking a ripple of laughter.

"Are you trying to say that I'm not fair? That's exactly why the reason we don't want a group organizing into that emotional stuff, because you've already taken the premise that I'm unfair," LeClerc said angrily toward the NDP side of the committee table.

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The construction workers who waited outside while Bill 80 hearings took place eventually found a way to wait inside by signing up for a building tour themselves.

An unsuspecting young tour guide attempted to give her usual spiel highlighting the building's beautiful architecture but eventually left the hundreds of workers to their own devices in the rotunda alongside the busts of former premier Tommy Douglas and former prime minister John Diefenbaker.

The workers later filed back outdoors.

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