

Bill 80 robs workers of choice

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I write in response to the July 16 letter by Michael Fougere with regard to Bill 80. Fougere does not correctly describe either the intent or the content of the proposed legislation, which will radically change and disrupt the Saskatchewan construction industry.

Tradespeople oppose Bill 80 because it will allow contractors, instead of workers, to pick the union with which they want to deal. The employer chooses the so-called union, and chooses the terms of the collective agreement. That is not choice for workers. Worse yet, Bill 80's abandonment provisions will let unionized contractors shed their unions without any input from workers. Again, no choice for workers.

Contrary to statements from Labour Minister Rob Norris, the construction industry is open to competition. There is nothing to prevent a company from coming to Saskatchewan and bringing its workers with them. The Albert Street Bridge project in Regina is an example.

The current labour relations system has led to stability -- 17 years with no strikes, all in the best interests of the Saskatchewan economy. The economy is strong. The construction industry is strong. The current system is working.

Tradespeople ask: why is the government putting the strength of our industry in jeopardy? Why is the government fixing a system that isn't broken? And why is the government trying to do this without first talking to the men and women who work every day in the industry?

The construction industry isn't broken. Don't fix it.

Terry Parker

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Regina