



SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

Affiliated with The Building Trades Department, A.F.L. – C.I.O.

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Building Trades Release Report on Bill 80

In the absence of a report on Bill 80 from the Human Services Committee, the Saskatchewan Building Trades have released their own analysis and recommendations on Bill 80.

“Even though the government didn’t consult with us beforehand, we participated in good faith in the public hearings on Bill 80,” said Terry Parker, Business Manager for the Saskatchewan Building Trades. “Then last week we learned that contrary to the Minister’s own assertions, that he in fact consulted with business groups well in advance of Bill 80 and introduced legislation that is exactly what they asked for. It has become obvious that the Human Services Committee won’t be releasing a report on their public consultations in time for it to be of any use to inform the debate surrounding Bill 80. The government’s consultations have been a sham so we did our own report complete with analysis and recommendations.”

The government of Saskatchewan introduced Bill 80 in March 2009 to amend the Construction Industry Labour Relations Act. Bill 80 amendments will fundamentally change the way the construction industry in Saskatchewan operates.

The Building Trades report raises troublesome questions about Bill 80 and points out a number of flaws in the legislation, including:

- Voluntary recognition provisions that prevent workers from choosing their union for themselves and prevents workers from getting rid of a union they don’t like;
- Removal of an employees right to file a “Duty of Fair Representation” complaint against unions that have been voluntarily recognized;
- The possibility that Bill 80 will depress wages in Saskatchewan and shortcomings in the government’s wage analysis;
- Problems with retroactive abandonment provisions that will allow companies a backdoor out of their union certifications;
- The fact that Bill 80 is not actually required in order for the Labour Relations Board (LRB) to rule on cases of abandonment as evidenced by the Board’s recent ruling on Saunders Electric.

Minister Norris met with the Building Trades on October 5, 2009 and offered assurances that that he would wait for the Human Services Committee Report before he made any final decisions on Bill 80. In September, 2009 he wrote a letter stating that “*The feedback received from stakeholders as well as the report of the*

Standing Committee on Human Services will assist in identifying any unintended consequences of the proposed legislative amendments. I can assure you that the contents of the report of the Standing Committee on Human Services will be studied by Ministry Officials to identify the implications of the recommendations."

"We met with the Minister late yesterday and asked him why he consulted with business groups before he introduced Bill 80 and not with us. The Minister became quite agitated with us and his official, Mike Carr told us very clearly that the government was going to pass Bill 80 with no amendments. This despite the fact that he had given us his word that he would only proceed after the Human Services Committee had produced its report. We can only conclude the consultations on Bill 80 were a sham."

The Building Trades report on Bill 80 can be found at saynotobill80.ca.

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