

FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

Published under the authority of The Honourable Don Toth Speaker

N.S. VOL. 50 NO. 36A THURSDAY, MAY 1, 2008, 10 a.m.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Essential Services Legislation

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport knows that 45 of her department staff are considered essential under the legislation. Two groups that the Sask Party has not talked a lot about in regards to Bill 5 are social workers and CBO [community-based organization] employees. I know that the Minister of Social Services has been fairly busy in recent weeks, first learning about, then rewriting, her first budget. But I'm hoping she's had time to figure out who within her ministry will be covered by Bill 5.

To the minister: how many workers will the Sask Party deem essential within the Ministry of Social Services, and what about the CBO sector?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, the significance of the essential service Bill is that it's actually meant to empower and ensure that the parties actually agree to come to a consensus on who will be deemed essential, Mr. Speaker. That's the first significant point. That is, it's a different paradigm than unilaterally declaring any individual essential from a government vantage point. This is about the individuals coming together. As far as the scope of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, it's addressed within the legislation. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, what we have said is based on consultations.

Again we met with nearly 100 individuals as well as individuals from various communities. And what we saw, Mr. Speaker, is people coming forward as they did at the NSBA [North Saskatoon Business Association] lunch. There were members from opposite. They came forward and said, could we please be included. Mr. Speaker, obviously that's under consideration. That would be part of the regulations. The groups that are covered, Mr. Speaker, are actually embedded in the legislation. Thank you, sir.