

Editorial: Refusing to take questions is lazy, entitled governance

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EXCERPTS

"The Government of Saskatchewan continues to negotiate with the federal government on a child care deal that creates high quality, affordable and inclusive child care options for parents and families. We have already submitted a proposal to Deputy Prime Minister Freeland and Minister Hussen that meets all of the federal governments objectives while providing flexibility and choice for Saskatchewan families. We look forward to receiving approval on Saskatchewan's plan and build on the significant work that has already been achieved in this province."

That, with all due respect, is a precious load of nothing. A knot of fireweed fluff, floating on the prairie breeze. Sheer puffery.

Last week, reporters wanted to interview someone in government about the province's child care plans, after Premier Scott Moe said a proposal for child care funding had been submitted by the province to the federal government. It's an issue that matters deeply to families struggling to find affordable child care in the province, and one that most parents would like to hear fleshed out.

Instead of interviews, the media got a self-serving scrap that included at least three instances — one in each of its three sentences — of the government patting itself on the back for a job well done.

Some of the questions those reporters might have asked:

- Will the plan meet the federal government's stated goal in the 2021 budget of \$10 a day childcare?
- Is there a timeline involved that parents can plan toward?
- Is there any urgency to complete and sign a deal before the shortly-anticipated federal election? Could that election short-circuit the process, and the promised \$10-a-day fee, entirely?
- The federal government has said it expects provinces to contribute financially to the proposed program. Is there any consensus on what Saskatchewan's contribution might be?

Instead, we got 83 empty, self-congratulatory words.

When a government can't be bothered to speak to the public — to voters — in a meaningful way, there's something wrong. Governments are supposed to report to their constituents, and the media is often the conduit for that back-and-forth discourse.

When a government gets in the habit of issuing diktats, it shows that it has no interest in opening or maintaining a conversation with those it was elected to serve. That's lazy, entitled government.

Look at it another way: your boss says she wants to see the important proposal you're working on. You send back an email saying only, "I've written a most excellent proposal." What happens next?

Region: Saskatchewan [3]

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