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Good afternoon.

Welcome to the Building Trades labour day picnic.

And welcome to summer, which seems to have finally arrived. Its good that labour day is in September or we might have been rained out.

I'd also like to thank the Winnipeg Blue Bombers for dropping by yesterday for a visit. There is nothing like beating back an unwelcome force from outside of Saskatchewan.

Let me welcome the dignitaries in attendance today who will be speaking to us a little later on. First, welcome to SFL President Larry Hubich. Larry has been steadfast in his opposition to Bill 80 and has been a great support in our fight.

Welcome to Barb Byers, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Labour Congress and veteran of many a labour battle with the Grant Devine government in Saskatchewan.

And finally, please welcome NDP Leader and soon to be an elected Member of the Legislative Assembly, Dwain Lingenfelter.

Let me take you back to March 10<sup>th</sup>, when Premier Wall's government introduced Bill 80. They did so with no advance consultation with the Building Trades. In fact, we didn't even get advanced warning. They told us the day the bill was introduced and dropped Bill 80 on the construction sector like a bomb.

So, if not the people of Saskatchewan, just who did the government talk to in developing Bill 80? They talked to the Christian Labour Association of Canada. They talked to the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada – which is composed almost exclusively of Alberta contractors. And they talked to some big, individual Alberta-based contractors.

They didn't talk to the working men and women of Saskatchewan and I hear that they didn't even bother to talk to Saskatchewan contractors.

Now let me take you back to June 17<sup>th</sup>. On that day, the government held public – I repeat public - hearings on Bill 80. And they refused to let our members in the building to listen. They kept us waiting outside on the steps.

Fast forward to today. Here we are gathered for a family picnic, to enjoy the beautiful surroundings, the great weather and to

speak out against legislation that will hurt our movement and our province.

We are the people that build Saskatchewan. We are the people that have powered record activity in the construction sector. Last year's \$9.8 billion in new construction investments was more than double the amount in 2004.

Our industry is more successful than it has ever been.

Tradespeople are working for good wages and good benefits.

Construction companies in Saskatchewan are thriving and we're proud to be a part of that. We work hard to keep good relationships with Saskatchewan companies.

I guess the government wants to change that.

I'll tell you, there are lots of good reasons to oppose Bill 80.

First of all, Bill 80 is a solution to a problem that doesn't exist.

The construction industry in Saskatchewan is not broken - its been among the most stable in the country, with not a single strike in **17 years**.

There are plenty of things in Saskatchewan that require the government's urgent attention. This is not one of them.

Bill 80 will create two parallel systems to regulate the construction industry – one for existing unions, and a new one aimed at getting out-of-province contractors and the Christian Labour Association of Canada into Saskatchewan.

I'll tell you right now – the Building Trades are not afraid of competition. But its not a fair fight if you have one arm tied behind your back.

Bill 80 will make the workplace less democratic. Under the existing system, workers are free to choose to be unionized or non-unionized. If they chose to belong to a union they are represented by the craft-union associated with their trade – just like it is with nurses, government workers or teachers. And if the workers later decided that they didn't want to be unionized, they can apply to the Labour Relations Board to have their union decertified. Not so under Bill 80.

Under Bill 80, employers get to pick the union that will represent workers. And you know who they'll pick? They'll pick a union that works for the boss like the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

And what if workers don't like that choice? Too bad. Under Bill 80, workers cannot decertify the union picked by the boss. What's worse, they won't even be allowed to register a complaint with the Labour Relations Board that the employer-chosen union isn't providing fair representation.

To add insult to injury, Bill 80 will allow employers a backdoor to get out of their union certifications. Under Bill 80's abandonment provisions, employers can shed their unions if they can prove that a union has been inactive for a period of three years – even if those three years were as far back as the dark days of the 1980s and even if during those three years there were no members in that union because the employer had no employees. I ask you. How is that fair?

If these changes become law, Saskatchewan will be the only jurisdiction in Canada with retroactive legislation on abandonment.

Each of these points is reason enough to reject Bill 80.

But I'll tell you what I think is the most damaging part of Bill 80. It is this.

Saskatchewan's construction industry works.

Its active.

Its profitable.

Its stable.

And it provides good jobs for Saskatchewan people.

Then the government of Saskatchewan comes along with Bill 80 and reignites old battles that have been put to rest between business and labour.

It pits Saskatchewan workers against Saskatchewan worker.

It pits union against union.

It pits Saskatchewan contractors against large out-of-province rivals.

Well you know what I think? I think in Saskatchewan we should build on our successes. Not tear them down for crass ideological reasons.

I think in Saskatchewan our resources are better spent finding ways to work together to make life better for Saskatchewan people, not fighting worn out ideological battles.

I think the government should work with organized labour to make Saskatchewan a better place, not introduce legislation to try to destroy us.

Premier Wall, being pro-business doesn't have to mean being anti-union.

Work with us, not against us.

Build consensus, not division.

We need to find another way in Saskatchewan.

It starts by withdrawing Bill 80.

Premier Wall, the construction industry isn't broken. Please don't fix it.

Please welcome our next speaker.....