

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two different petitions today I would like to present:

To the Honourable Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in Legislature Assembled:

The Petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth:

The Government of Saskatchewan eliminated the Saskatchewan Pension Plan without prior consultation with people enrolled in the program and without any due consideration or study of alternatives to elimination.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government to re-evaluate this action and refer the status and review of this program to a committee that includes plan members to examine alternatives such as private sector involvement and adjustments to the government's matching contribution.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

These people are from Rose Valley, Wishart, Elfros, Fosston, Bjorkdale, Kelvington, Wadena, and Quill Lake, Mr. Speaker.

The other petition I have to present, Mr. Speaker, reads:

To the Honourable Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth:

that back pain and other highly prevalent neuro-musculo-skeletal disorders are extremely costly to the Canadian economy;

that scientific evidence clearly illustrates that chiropractic treatment is the most cost effective and efficient therapy for such disorders;

that in the face of an ever increasing pressure to adopt expensive new forms of high technology treatment, chiropractic care has proven to be a low technology, low cost, conservative, and safe form of treatment, consistent with the true wellness model of health care;

that the government publicly asserts it remains committed to the basic principles of medicare, namely universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability, and public administration;

that the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to chiropractic patients;

and that the government's proposed restrictions on this therapy will clearly cost more in both dollars and in patient disability.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment, and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from the people of Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Martensville, Clavet, Grandora, Milestone, Allan, Leask, Dalmeny, Hanley, Unity, St. Denis, Sonningdale, Elstow, Biggar, Warman, Vonda, Meacham, Harris, Osler, Borden, Kronau, Swift Current, Pense, McLean, and Weyburn. All told there's 11 pages, Mr. Speaker.

I present these petitions to the Assembly.

Mr. Goohsen: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have today 15 pages of petitions. I think these are all on the chiropractic issues which we have discussed several days and have presented many thousands of names already, so I won't bother by reading the entire petition to you.

I will mention though that they come from many parts of our province. I see Yorkton is prevalent on the first pages. We've got Preeceville, Yorkton, Moose Jaw, Buchanan.

There's a lot of eastern side of the province names; they go right over to Regina. We have White City as well. We've got Tisdale, back up to the Hudson Bay area of the province, a lot of names from that area, Melfort again. And we've got . . . I can't even read that one, but anyway it's obvious that they're from . . . (inaudible) . . . and those smaller towns along that part of the province. Porcupine Plain, I see, is in here.

We've got lots more from up in that Tisdale area there of Nipawin and so on. And as we go on through I see more names from . . . (inaudible) . . . and Ridgedale and all along through the entire province, it appears, Mr. Speaker.

We've got from Weekes and Crooked River -- I'm not even sure where that is, but I guess there's a lot of good folks up there that are concerned. We have more from Hudson Bay. And Kelvington is on here and we've got Archerwill and another bunch from Porcupine Plain and Melfort -- just all kinds of people that are concerned about this problem right through our province.

We've got Kelvington and Zenon Park and I see again

Porcupine Plain and Spalding, just . . . from Burr and Humboldt. Now there's an area we haven't seen many from before. Now they're starting to come in from Drake, from Jansen, from Bruno, from Lanigan, Watrous, Watson -- all up through that area of Wynyard.

I see at the bottom there's Guernsey, the small town of Guernsey; people are concerned up there. There's Clair and Humboldt and Colonsay and . . . a lot from Humboldt, Mr. Speaker. I'll now present all of these petitions on their behalf.

Mr. Toth: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a one of my colleagues has read most of the petition, I'll just read the prayer into the record:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petitions I am presenting this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, are signed by people from Saskatoon, North Battleford, Edam, Spiritwood, Weyburn, Pangman, Hardy, Dalmeny, Langham, Duck Lake, Vanscoy, Regina, Pilot Butte, White City, and Balgonie.

Mr. Britton: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several petitions, I think in the number of 18, to present on behalf of the . . . 18 pages of petitions on the treatment of chiropractic treatment. And as the other members have read the prayer, Mr. Chairman . . . Mr. Speaker, I won't do that.

But I notice that the names come from a wide, wide area. I notice a lot of names written from my own area around Unity and Landis and North Battleford and that sort of thing, Mr. Speaker. I think it indicates that the concern is very widespread. And as the petitions keep coming in, we certainly are led to believe that it's very, very serious.

I want to present the petitions at this time, Mr. Speaker. I saw you getting a little nervous up there.

Mr. Martens: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have 20 pages of petitions to present. They are dealing with chiropractic care across the province. These petitioners are from Shellbrook, P.A. (Prince Albert), Christopher Lake, Birch Hills, Paddockwood, La Ronge, Dafoe, St. Louis, Domremy, Weirdale, Viscount, Saskatoon, Martensville, Warman, Davidson and Dalmeny. I have these to present to the Assembly here today.

Mr. Boyd: -- Mr. Speaker, I have petitions as well with respect to chiropractic care in the province. Mr. Speaker, there are 21 pages of petitions here that I wanted to present. They come from P.A., Saskatoon, Estevan, Shellbrook, Maidstone and Harris primarily. Mr. Speaker,

I'd like to present these now.

Mr. Devine: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to present several pages of petitions with respect to the chiropractic care in the province of Saskatchewan and just briefly point out that these names are from people who are across the central part of the province.

And they're from Watson, Saskatchewan. From Melfort, St. Brieux, Gronlid, Lake Lenore, several from Prince Albert, Wadena, Kinistino. I see several from Naicam and Quill Lakes. Bruno, Saskatchewan. A large number from Humboldt, Hudson Bay, Naicam and Melfort, Rose Valley, Star City, Tisdale. And then several from Saskatoon. Raymore, Saskatchewan has some. Crooked River, Englefeld, Prairie River, Lac Vert. And we see several pages here from Prince Albert.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have another nine pages from the city of Regina on top of that. I table those today with respect to chiropractic care.

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several petitions, nearly two dozen here of people from the province of Saskatchewan. I'll just read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I have people from all over the province. North-west -- Glaslyn, Speers, Maymont, Meadow Lake, Battlefords, Turtleford, Wilkie, Paynton, Leoville, Speers; lots of North Battleford. Couple of pages of Saskatoon, Macklin, Unity, Luseland. We have lots from Swift Current. There just about isn't anywhere in the province of Saskatchewan today, Mr. Speaker, that aren't covered in these petitions.

Mr. Muirhead: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have . . . I've got about 15 petitions all relating to chiropractor treatment in their petition. And I won't, seeing that my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, have been reading out some of the . . . some read out all of it, and I'll just read out the last part, Mr. Speaker, which I think is one of the most important:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will every pray.

Mr. Speaker, when we used to first table these, it used to be two. But I got them from all over the province this time, Mr. Speaker.

This page here looks like it's pretty well all Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, except that there's some from Osler, Saskatchewan. But that page is pretty well all Saskatoon.

Now this page, Mr. Speaker, is nearly all Weyburn with some from the surrounding areas -- Fillmore, Creelman, Halbrite, Yellow Grass, Radville. But it's mostly Weyburn on that page, Mr. Speaker. The next page looks like it's all Weyburn except for Francis.

And then there's one here, Mr. Speaker, from Winnipeg, Manitoba; Radville, Saskatchewan; Beaubier, Saskatchewan; Hardy, Saskatchewan, but it's still mostly Weyburn, Mr. Speaker.

There's so many of them here that I'm having trouble . . . The next one, Mr. Speaker, is also pretty well Weyburn. The whole page, Mr. Speaker, that whole page, Mr. Speaker, except for one from Regina.

The next one, Mr. Speaker, it looks like they're all from the Estevan area, from the member of Estevan's area -- Bienfait, Estevan, Macoun, Lampman, and three or four of them are Estevan, and then Carnduff, more from Estevan, and North Portal, Saskatchewan. So those are all the Estevan area.

And then this is also Estevan. It's Oxbow, Estevan, Manor, Carnduff, Midale, Redvers, Weyburn. Those are mostly the Weyburn area too.

And these also are from the Estevan area; these are mostly from the town of Estevan, the city of Estevan, pretty well all Estevan except . . . for the exception of Alameda and Midale, Bromhead. The rest are all Estevan area.

Now these, Mr. Speaker, these look like these are all Saskatoon. They're all Saskatoon addresses, I do believe, because there's about half a dozen, Mr. Speaker, of the city of Saskatoon, and the rest look like Saskatoon addresses without the town beside them or the city beside them.

And this too, Mr. Speaker, looks like all Saskatoon. Yes it is, except for Warman, Asquith -- but that's Saskatoon area -- Saskatoon, Saskatoon, Martensville. So that's also Saskatoon. On this page here also, Mr. Speaker, is Saskatoon. Looks like all Saskatoon on that page, Mr. Speaker, exception of Borden.

This page here is all Moose Jaw. Yes, Mr. Speaker, that page, except for one at Caron, that page is entirely Moose Jaw. And this page here is also Moose Jaw. It looks like all Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. This page, except for one from Craven, this is all Moose Jaw. The next one is also it looks like all Moose Jaw -- Moose Jaw. They're all Moose Jaw on that page, Mr. Speaker. And the next page is Moose Jaw, Moose Jaw. It looks like that's all Moose Jaw except for there's two from Central Butte. Yes, this is all Moose Jaw except for two from Central Butte.

And the last page is Morse, Saskatchewan. And there's some from Regina. No, Churchill . . . I thought they were all . . . some from Churchill Downs. But, Mr. Speaker, I think everybody from Churchill Downs has now signed.

Mr. Neudorf: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have some additions to lay on the Table this afternoon. I have three sets of petitions, Mr. Speaker, and the first one deals, as my colleagues have been doing, with the chiropractic situation in the province. The prayer has been read a number of times, but I just want to read part of the preamble which says basically:

that back pain and other highly prevalent neuro-musculo-skeletal disorders are extremely costly to the Canadian economy;

that scientific evidence clearly illustrates that chiropractic treatment is the most cost-effective and efficient therapy for such disorders;

that in the face of an ever increasing pressure to adopt expensive new forms of high technology treatment, chiropractic care has proven to be a low technology, low cost, conservative, and safe form of treatment, consistent with the true wellness model of health care;

that the government publicly asserts it remains committed to the basic principles of medicare, namely universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability, and public administration;

that the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to chiropractic patients;

and that the government's proposed restrictions on this therapy will clearly cost more both in dollars and in patient disability.

Mr. Speaker, the petitions -- and I have about 40 pages with me, which translates to approximately 600 petitioners -- come from . . . this particular page mostly from Saskatoon, and the second page that I have here also from Saskatoon.

Another page deals with people coming from Metcalfe Road in Regina; Pilot Butte; Empress Street, Regina. Most of these are from Regina here. This whole page, the next page, is from Regina. And the next page, some from Indian Head, White City, but again mostly out of Regina.

The next page is almost exclusively out of Regina, the next page having approximately 18 signatures on it from Saskatoon. There's one from my constituency here as well, from Langham, Saskatoon again primarily, predominantly Saskatoon, Saskatoon, another one from my constituency from Warman, Nipawin -- Mr. Speaker -- Rosthern, Delisle, a number from Delisle. This next page quite a few of them from Martensville, the rest of them from Saskatoon, Saskatoon -- no, pardon me, correction on that, Regina.

Maidstone, North Battleford, Mayfair, Battleford, again. Coleville, Battleford, Wilkie, Leopold . . . (inaudible) . . .

even one from Regina on that one. This next page is exclusively Regina. Regina, again -- exclusively Regina. Here's one from Pilot Butte, Balgonie, La Ronge, Prince Albert on this page.

Martensville, Warman, Hanley, Perdue, Saskatoon -- quite a few of Saskatoon there. This next page again exclusively Regina. Regina, Regina, Montmartre, Regina, Montmartre . . .

An Hon. Member: -- Montmartre.

Mr. Neudorf: -- And I used to be a geography teacher. Regina, Regina, Regina, each of those pages has about 30 names all from Regina, Mr. Speaker. Lumsden, Regina Beach; again, Lumsden, Lumsden; Regina; Craik, from my colleague's seat here; Moose Jaw; Lumsden; Bethune; Briercrest; Holdfast; Herschel.

Then we have another sheet, Mr. Speaker, from Regina; another sheet from Regina; another sheet from Regina; one from Avonlea on there.

Then we go to the west part: Kindersley, Doddsland, Eatonia, Kerrobert -- many from Kindersley. This next sheet the same thing: Herschel, Rosetown, Kindersley, Rosetown, Southey. Quite a few from Regina again; next sheet, mostly from Regina, one from Craven; Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the total list of petitions now are numbering around the 6,000 mark as far as chiropractic are concerned, and they're still arriving on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker.

We have further, Mr. Speaker, another petition, and this is the first one I think that we're tabling of this type. It says:

To the Honourable Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth:

that impaired vision is a highly prevalent disorder, costing millions of dollars, and causing distress to thousands of Saskatchewan people;

that early detection of eye disease and related medical conditions by optometrists is a highly cost-effective, painless, and effective part of our health care system;

that quality optometric care is vital to the working poor and that there is a direct correlation between workplace safety and good vision;

that the government publicly asserts it remains committed to the basic principles of medicare, namely universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability, and public administration;

that the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to optometric patients;

and that the government's proposed de-insurance

of optometric care will clearly cost more, both in dollars and patient harm.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to de-insure optometry and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against optometric patients by refusing them coverage under medicare equal to other patients.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, if I went through all the places where these petitioners come from, it would be a litany of every town in the province. I have almost 4,000 petitions in this one package here. And I am pleased now, on behalf of the citizens of the province, to present them to the Legislative Assembly.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: -- According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed, and pursuant to rule 11(7) they are hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Crop Insurance Questionnaire

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, my question will be to the minister of Crop Insurance, and we've noticed, Mr. Minister, that from time to time you've admitted that you flew over some of the dry areas or difficult areas in agriculture to consult with the farmers. And now we find out that you've spent a large amount of money doing a survey of farmers in agriculture.

We have learned that the NDP (New Democratic Party) government is in the middle of another massive expenditure on surveys and polling, and they have ensured that they get the answers they want. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because when we go through the questionnaire, they've asked loaded questions; they've asked non-farmers; they leave out key questions; and they dump all over the agents.

Now, Mr. Minister, you have sent out a questionnaire which contains questions designed to shed this unpopular light on Crop Insurance agents and to paint your '92 GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program as the key to preventing moral hazards. Mr. Minister, is this your idea of consultation? Other than flying over, do you send out surveys and do this polling of farmers and non-farmers about GRIP, after you've ramrodded it though, used closure, been sued . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Do you have a question, sir? If the members has a question, I'd like for him to put

his question immediately. Order.

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Minister, I ask you, is this how you consult with farmers about crop insurance? You put out a poll like this and . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. We'll let the . . . I think the member has put the question. Let the minister answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, the document that I think the member opposite is referring to is not a poll but a questionnaire which was sent out to all producers. I think the members opposite need to get their line straight. One day they're saying we're not consulting with farmers and we didn't send a letter and didn't personally phone every farmer before we made the changes to GRIP last year. And this year as we contemplate changes to and improvements to the Crop Insurance program, we've sent out a questionnaire to every producer asking for their input.

So I think you can't have it both ways. Either we do it without consulting and save the price of stamps, or we send the stamps out and hear what the farmers have to say and make changes that they ask for.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- Well, Mr. Speaker, the public has been informing us that in this expensive polling that you're doing of the farming and non-farming population that non-farmers in towns and villages are getting the questionnaire. So that you are . . . you have a biased sample right off the bat -- asking them questions with respect to agriculture.

So that if you're dropping it in mailboxes of those that have crop insurance and those that don't have crop insurance, you're going to have a biased result anyway. Because you're going to go to seniors, people that belong to unions or people who belong to co-ops or people who are farming or people in this . . . regardless.

So is this your form of consultation? After you've ramrodded it through and after you've brought in closure and after you've been sued by the farmers, that you're going to consult and poll non-farmers, how do you like us so far? Is that part of your package of consultation in the province of Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, I think that we have never said that the changes that we've made to the GRIP program or to crop insurance are the last ones that we're ever going to make.

And certainly we need to consult before we make any more changes and we certainly realize that there are weaknesses in the GRIP program and in the crop insurance program; and they're changes farmers have been asking for, and we want to get input from them to get those numbers and those ideas from farmers.

The Leader of the Opposition may be surprised to learn that some farmers do live in town as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- The surveys are going to everybody in town, whether they're farming or not.

But, Mr. Minister, some of the questions in the survey showed that you're trying to solicit information to retroactively justify, retroactively justify decisions and programs that you've already put into place.

You have been, you've been harassing the marketing agents . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I would ask the members to please not interfere when the member is trying to ask a question.

Mr. Devine: -- It's no secret in the towns and the villages as well as in the farms that the NDP administration as been harassing and badgering the crop insurance agents. And now the survey asks the questions, and it puts it in a context like this:

. . . premiums do not cover the administration costs of the Marketing Agent system. In order to retain the Marketing Agent system, how much would you be willing to pay for this service?

Mr. Minister, will you admit that you were either already planning to implement a fee and a very large fee for marketing agents, or is it that you really just planned to do away with marketing agents because the previous administration put them in, and you're trying to find out the threshold in terms of what price would really discourage people in terms of what price would really discourage people from using marketing agents?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, generally when you send out a questionnaire to ask people what they think, that's the reason you send it out; you want to get some input from it. If we'd made up the decision, we wouldn't be sending out the questionnaire.

Now again if the members opposite say we shouldn't consult, we consulted on the changes to the GRIP program. We had a committee. We had 300 submissions to it. They said, well you didn't individually consult every individual farmer and individually go out and talk to every individual farmer.

Now when we send out a letter to the individual farmers asking them what they think of the delivery system of crop insurance, the members opposite say well you shouldn't be consulting.

You have to make up your mind one way or the other.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, they don't consult, and then they implement it, and then retroactively they try to justify it. And even, Mr. Speaker, their own candidates don't like this.

And in the *Leader-Post*, Saturday, August 8, here's what Mr. Oster says. He says:

"Just because I ran as a candidate doesn't mean I'm going to be led around by the nose by Romanow and the Cabinet . . ."

"I don't think six months was long enough for the (Romanow) government to research all the facts and come up with the changes."

(And) in addition to paying higher premiums for reduced coverage, Oster is miffed by the absence of hail insurance in GRIP.

If your own candidates don't like this retroactive justification of a program that's unpopular, how can you justify coming up with questions that are absolutely biased? And I refer to question 28 which says: which of the following moral hazards has the program improved?

(i) Farmers taking advantage of the programs by utilizing poor farming practises; (ii) Farmers selecting crops based on program benefits rather than market price; (iii) Farmers making decisions based on program features rather than good . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order, order. Order. The Leader of the Opposition is taking a very lengthy time in his questions today, and he'll have to shorten them. I'll ask the Leader of the Opposition, please put his question directly.

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Minister, don't you believe that you have put forward a biased questionnaire with respect to moral hazards? And wouldn't it have been much more fair if you'd say: how does this compare to last year's coverage of if I have a problem with drought, if I have a problem with frost, or if I have a serious crop insurance problem, rather than exclusively linking it to moral hazards?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, it's quite evident that members opposite do not even want to debate the substance of the changes to the GRIP program. Because I think, by and large, everybody agrees that the changes that we made were changes that needed to be made. And they continue to fuss about retroactivity and so on, instead of talking about the actual substances of changes which are very important.

I think, with regard to Mr. Oster, I'd like to point out that he's one of 288 people who signed a petition over 60 or 70 days, which doesn't sound to me like there's a great ground swell of discontent with the changes that we made to GRIP program.

And I like the quote that they made, quoting Mr. Oster saying that hail insurance was taken out. Well, as the members opposite well know, hail insurance was taken out last year and was not part of the changes this year. And I think of the 288 people who are signing the petition, they're probably all misinformed by the opposition. It's

the only reason they signed the petition in the first place. So I . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, now the NDP minister of Crop Insurance is picking on his own NDP candidates and saying that they are misinformed. And I quote the paper again:

. . . Oster said if a farmer's crop is destroyed by hail, it's treated as a case of bad farming if his neighbors' fields were spared.

And that's what he thinks of your new program. And he's asking if in fact . . . He's asking if in fact that you would be more sensitive, because six months isn't time enough to make an appropriate assessment.

Would the minister tell the Assembly the costs of doing this rural farm and non-farm polling, so the taxpayers of Saskatchewan have some idea what the NDP government is up to in retroactively justifying what they've done in Crop Insurance?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, in regards to the hail, again I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that hail was taken out of the GRIP program last year. The spot-loss hail was removed last year by that administration. We did not make that change. That is not one of the changes that we are debating in here today.

And I think that speaks well to the argument they have, the substance of the changes. They are arguing against the changes that they made to the program and not the ones that we made. The changes we made were good changes to the program. As to the cost of this, it's certainly a lot less than the cost that we've had in hold-up in the House because of the obstruction of the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- I ask the hon. member what this NDP polling cost, and he hasn't answered that. Is it true that you've also sent these questionnaires to 70,000 homes across Saskatchewan, Mr. Minister? Can you tell us if this sample includes only farmers, and what percentage of them would not be farmers, and if you break down sort of the sampling of this polling to find out if in fact non-farmers are having some impact on the judgement and retroactive judgement of an agriculture program designed by the NDP which is very, very unpopular particularly across the northern central grain belt?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: -- Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that this is not a poll; it was a survey. The questionnaire, it was done by professionals and to get us unbiased answers to questions that we want so that we know how to make changes to the program. I don't have the exact numbers. It's not an expensive program. It was done in the cheapest manner possible to collect information.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the opposition wants us to be

consultative, we have to go and talk to people. We have to travel out to meetings. We have to mail out letters. That is part of the consultative process. If they're saying that it's too expensive to consult with farmers, then we should make the changes here and without consulting. If that's what you're saying, I think that's one thing. If you're saying that we should consult, the least you could do is let us mail out a letter to get farmers' input.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Changes to GRIP

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, I want to redirect the questions with respect to crop insurance and the Bill to the Attorney General this time. Mr. Attorney General, obviously this Bill is controversial, the GRIP Bill. It's before the courts; it has invoked closure here; a lot of people upset. And I'm just going to give a couple of lines of the Premier of Saskatchewan as he talked about this, and then ask you a question with respect to the action that you could take.

This is the NDP Premier, June 23, '92, about GRIP:

I worry about contracts and all of that. I mean, one has certain rights. That's where the merit of the PC walkout is.

Mr. Attorney General, when we had a controversial Bill here before, The Representation Act, or The Boundary Act, in 1989, the attorney general of the day referred that Act to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, and then it went on quickly to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Attorney General, don't you think the honourable thing to do and the best thing for the taxpayer and the decent thing to do, given this unique Bill and all the people it affects, is to do as was done in 1989 with The Representation Act and refer this Bill to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: -- Order.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, the members opposite forget about the rights of Saskatchewan people that they are really concerned about, the right to get their business done in the legislature and get it done on time and get . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- They forget about the right of people to expect to hear the truth. There is no closure moved on the GRIP Bill, and the members opposite know it. The members opposite have had an offer from our House Leader to take all of private members' day tomorrow to debate the GRIP issue. The House Leader has had no response from the members opposite. The members opposite talk about wanting to talk about the issue, but talk about everything else.

And with respect to the concerns of the farmers the

members opposite mention, may I quote from the paper, from one of the people involved in your court case, says:

My greatest concern (it wasn't about the deadline, it) was that my 10-year individual production record was being kicked out of my contract, (and) hail insurance was being kicked out . . .

Both not true statements. The new program respects individual production records, both for crop insurance and for revenue insurance. And as the members opposite have already been told, hail insurance was taken out by the members opposite.

So their own people who they're talking to are misled, and the members opposite continue to give inaccurate statements to the press, to the public. The public has a right to know accurate information.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Isn't that just a pathetic response to a question to an Attorney General about a decent, honourable thing to do for the taxpayer, for tens of thousands of farm families, for all kinds of people who are worried about contracts. We've got the Attorney General; we have got the Premier of Saskatchewan saying this, outside the legislature, about GRIP: the courts will have to decide that question -- end of quote. That's what he says.

Mr. Attorney General, I go back to you with the same question. If in fact the courts will have to decide, and if in fact you don't have any right in court now to go at the Government of Saskatchewan, there's only one thing that the Premier could have been referring to, that is, refer the GRIP issue to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, which can then perhaps go on to the Supreme Court.

That's the only way that you can take it to court because you've taken out all other rights of farmers to get at the Government of Saskatchewan and their Charter of Rights and Freedoms or other freedoms has been . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. Does the Leader of the Opposition have a question? I'd like him to put his question.

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Attorney General, given the evidence and this last statement that the Premier of Saskatchewan said, the courts will decide, the courts will decide, won't you, Mr. Attorney General, refer this Bill to the Court of Appeal, as we saw with The Representation Act of 1989? Clear it up for the taxpayer, clear it up for the Lieutenant Governor, clear it up for . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. Order. I think the minister should answer.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that the courts will decide. The courts will do what the courts are empowered to do. But the question is: what will the members opposite do? The members opposite, when they had the opportunity to govern . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. The Leader of the Opposition just

had a minute and a half to ask his question. I wish he'd let the minister answer.

An Hon. Member: -- We don't want to listen to this guy again.

The Speaker: -- The government will decide who's going to answer.

An Hon. Member: -- Since when are you the government?

The Speaker: -- It's up to the government to decide.

An Hon. Member: -- Going to fall on your lap anyway, Bob.

The Speaker: -- Well that's fair enough.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, the question is: what will the members opposite do? Because when they were in government, when they were in a position to do something about farm programming, they were more interested in political construction than good, sound management. There's that interesting letter in the paper that asks some questions. It says:

I heard, in my opinion, a very knowledgeable farmer say on TV that the 1991 GRIP was easier to understand, but that the 1992 plan gave farmers more incentive to farm as they ought to.

I have, in the past at political meetings, heard Devine equate the NDP with, Soviet communism. One identifying factor of Soviet communism was that it repressed the agricultural sector so there was no incentive to farm.

Now, tell me why there is such a switch in roles by Devine's "free enterprise -- open for business) faction . . .

The question is: what will the members opposite do? They designed a careless program, and now when they're supposed to be in the House debating the issue, they're raising any other issue and asking questions that farmers aren't interested in having answered.

The question farmers want to know is, will you help us get the right amount of money for farmers from the federal government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Speaker, my question, my question is to the Attorney General. Mr. Attorney General, we have heard what the Premier said on two occasions, that he's concerned about people's rights in this Bill and PCs are justified, that he thinks this should go to court.

And now I'll quote from another Saskatoon paper just recently, where an NDP lawyer, Audrey Brent, says she doesn't think the GRIP Bill is constitutional. And she says -- and she specializes in farm law -- and particularly where you can't sue the government. And I'm going to quote this. She says:

In court actions already proceeding against the government, the Bill states that "a court shall not consider any principle of law or in equity that would require adequate, reasonable or any notice with respect to any amendments or change to the contract." (She says) "I think this is the most disturbing aspect."

Because people have lost their right . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. Will the Leader of the Opposition please ask his question.

Mr. Devine: -- Mr. Attorney General, given the fact that lawyers don't believe this Bill is constitutional, farmers are suing you, the Premier says it should be settled in court, the Premier says people do have rights -- won't you refer this Bill to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal so that the public and the taxpayers know that you're going to do the decent thing with respect to this legislation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, in the debate on Friday, the member from Morse said that maybe your government did ignore the March 15 deadline about which you're making so much. Maybe they did ignore it year after year after year after year after year. And maybe you did make 105 changes after March 15 last year. And now the member opposite stands in the House as though he were incensed by that as somehow . . . some kind of a legal travesty that he is proposing. The fact is, farmers were given adequate notice to review the changes to the program, to understand it, and to make their decisions about the program.

Now there are 288 farmers signed a petition that the member opposite took out and allowed to come back in. Compare the travesty to the democratic process here where for 20 days they held up the House while they collected 288 names on a petition, when in the previous administration they went out and they understood that the public had a concern about it -- 120,000 names were gathered in a 20-day walk-out in the legislature. The members opposite were too busy playing golf to pay any attention to the interests of Saskatchewan people.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: -- Next question.

Mr. Devine: -- Well, Mr. Attorney General, from your experience you must know that any court in Saskatchewan and any court in Canada would love to get its hands on this piece of legislation -- they would. And you know that.

Also, Mr. Attorney General, you're aware that this Bill has not only local and national but international implications with respect to contracts and contract law and the Charter of Rights.

Now given the fact that it has these kinds of implications where you said, void on a contract, knowing that you were so weak that you had to then in a subsequent section

say, but I won't let them sue me, you've hit on two areas that people believe it's unconstitutional. One, you voided something retroactively; and number two, to cover yourself you said, but you can't take me to court in case I'm wrong.

In such circumstances where every court would like to get at this, why don't you do the honourable thing and refer this to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal and clean it up once and for all? It'll be done very quickly . . .

The Speaker: -- Order. Order. Let the minister answer.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: -- Let's move on because we don't want to listen to you. You're not the Minister of Justice.

The Speaker: -- Order. The member from Arm River is not going to decide for the government, I don't think, in this House who's going to answer the question. That is for the government to decide.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: -- Mr. Speaker, the members opposite seem to be more interested in fiddling with political games than they are concerned with the well-being of farmers. When we introduce GRIP changes, they play around. When we introduce the farm debt legislation, what do they do? They play with their federal counterparts and they encourage a court challenge to our farm legislation to deal with the farm debt crisis and to deal with farmers' stability and foreclosure.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite ought to begin to work with us in trying to get through the legislature the important pieces of legislation that support farmers; to get on with the business of the House and let farmers get back to helping us design better programs than the ones that were designed by the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 87

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Hon. Mr. Wiens that Bill No. 87 -- An Act respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation be now read a second time.

Mr. Swenson: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will be making a number of comments this afternoon as pertains to Bill 87. And I think that what we saw in question period today was indicative of the problem that this legislature faces and indeed all Saskatchewan people that believe in the rights of individuals to have their day in court, to sign contracts that are legal and binding, and to have the ability to trust those people that have been duly elected to govern our province.

And it's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the highest lawyer in the government today chose to duck this issue because it's one I don't think that he should properly duck.

One only has to look at the Bill and see the number of "whereas's" in it which I believe in constitutional terms is only usually reserved for those issues that deal with the constitutionality. Most Bills don't have several dozen "whereas's" at the beginning, and it's indicative that the government was trying to cover off a number of circumstances.

It means, Mr. Speaker, that we in this province are faced with, as my colleagues have said in this debate and in others previously, dealing with a government that is setting itself above the law, that says that individuals in our society don't have any recourse, any rights. By a simple act of this Legislative Assembly, those rights can be extinguished for ever, in fact that we can void, we can void several years of happenings just by a stroke of the pen here. And it's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that this Assembly has sunk to this level.

The alternatives, Mr. Speaker, I think were many for the government, in the case of the GRIP issue, that could have meant a far different outcome to this particular Bill. Instead of having ourselves embroiled in this whole mess that the Minister of Agriculture has brought upon this province, if some of the people that honestly understood the GRIP program had been talked to, I think the government realistically could have made some changes to the '91 program that would have been accepted by and large by everyone in this province, that would have met some of the criteria that the Minister of Finance and his officials have obviously put upon the Minister of Agriculture, that a number of those things -- the minister of Crop Insurance always likes to talk about his moral hazards -- a lot of these things probably could have been dealt with in a manner that would have been acceptable.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this government has a built-in bias toward anything that occurred prior to November 1, 1991. In other words, anything at all that occurred prior to that time had to be bad. It had to be wrong. It had to be unjust. It had to be all sorts of things. Because these people after so many years, I'm afraid, began to believe their own rhetoric, totally.

And it's sort of like the quotes, Mr. Speaker, that we've read into the record from 1989 about the rhetoric of the members of the New Democratic Party when they were either defending democratic rights or rule changes or they were defending their rights not to have closure put upon them. All of these things that they were always defending with great vociferousness in this Chamber, we found have simply been words. They haven't been anything else. In other words, members of the New Democratic Party became to believe that everything they said was true and obviously anything anybody else said wasn't true.

And therefore, we get in a mind-set. When we come to change something like GRIP, we can't listen to anybody that has another point of view because they must obviously be wrong. And the very marketing agents, Mr.

Speaker, that this government is trying to get rid of, the very marketing agents that they've sent this polling out, this questionnaire out to rural Saskatchewan to try and skew in their favour as they get rid of these people, came up with a set of recommendations that by and large would have done the government good stead to listen to, instead of ignoring.

These are recommendations, Mr. Speaker, that these people came up with just simply by listening to the folks that they were charged with doing business with. These are recommendations that several thousand farmers had input into. These are recommendations that I think crop insurance agents had no bias built into other than reporting back to government exactly what they were hearing from their clientele.

And this is the very stuff that unfortunately this government chose to ignore totally. And by ignoring and just ramming ahead, have now got themselves and this province in a terrible place. It's the kind of advice that the Minister of Agriculture could have taken prior to March 15 and built something with, instead of saying, well it doesn't matter what anybody else thinks, I have a large majority, I don't care if I have legal problems, I'll simply ramrod ahead, I'll get around them, I'll get over top of them, I'll simply push people out of the road.

And that kind of attitude, Mr. Speaker, has obviously got us where we are today, where we're asking the Attorney General of this province to take a reference forward to the Court of Appeal because of the shemoz that attitude has brought about.

(1500)

My colleague from Morse the other day talked about some of these areas, Mr. Speaker. And as I go through my talk this afternoon, I also will talk about them. Because I think it's important that before we get to the final hour in this debate, that the Minister of Agriculture have the opportunity for some sober second thought, that he can recant before all is said and done and come up with something that is far more acceptable, rather than dragging this province through the courts for the next several years.

One of the suggestions that I've always found appealing, Mr. Speaker -- and it's not from a political bias -- it's that over the years people in crop insurance and then later on in gross revenue insurance said that it was very important at some point that we move producers to an individual account, an individual basis, that the least amount of distortion in crop rotations and incentives is if you have people on an individual basis.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that many times I've often in the past felt penalized by the fact that I was sort of lumped into this area business, that if you are diversifying, if you're doing things in soil conservation, if you're planting tree rows, if you're doing any number of agronomic practices that can make your farm more productive, you should have some ability to have that productivity recognized.

And it was one of the things that, when I attended GRIP

meetings all over this province in the spring of 1991, that people were in favour of. I think the only people that weren't were those that perhaps had been using their neighbour's good farming practices in order to prop themselves up. But by and large, farmers out there prefer to be treated as individuals. They prefer the fact that their own averages, the things that they do to build those averages, mean something.

I mean farming is a very individualistic occupation, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of pride . . . there's a lot of pride in being able to do things a little bit differently and perform to the best of your ability and produce a good crop. And what we have now in my case in risk area 8, I believe it is, is that wheat and durum make up 80 per cent of the crop grown in that area. Therefore when we're figuring out revenue insurance for my area, it is very heavily weighted toward those two crops; that how the price of those two crops goes on the world market-place determines what the ability of the revenue insurance in my area to be paid on.

And it has nothing to do with whether I'm a good farmer, bad farmer, or anything else. My agent tells me that my irrigated crop which may go 60 or 70 bushels to the acre will have the ability to garner the same amount of revenue insurance as my dry-land crop which faced an extreme drought situation in June and was severely hurt at that time.

Now it seems strange to me, Mr. Speaker, that there would be that difference. Obviously my irrigated crop, in my view, shouldn't get what my neighbour across the fence on non-irrigated class P soil would be getting in the way of revenue insurance. That seems a little bit bizarre to me that I would get those dollars on top of the very, very high production, because this year irrigation is treated the same as everything else.

And that's the problem. There is no difficulty, I don't think, Mr. Speaker, in recognizing those extra inputs, those extra things that I do in irrigation, and recognizing that hard work and endeavour. But you don't do it at the expense of everybody else simply because my crop risk area is 80 per cent in wheat and durum. That makes no sense at all, and it doesn't make sense to the folks out there. And I think the Minister of Agriculture obviously missed something early on this spring.

Pulse growers would like to have the option to include or exclude specialty crops from GRIP. And I think it's something that should have a realistic ability to look at. The moral hazard argument that has been touted by the government time and time again centres on one crop, and that's lentils.

Well lentils, Mr. Speaker, are only one crop, but it seems to be the one that sticks in the craw of the government the most. Yet the acreage went up in the face of very low coverage. The acreage was up. The minister could have looked at some of the recommendations coming back in from agents in regards to pulse crops.

Mr. Speaker, the soil classification in Saskatchewan is outdated. Almost everyone associated with farming in the last few years and the various programs that have been

attached to it know that there has been too much discrepancy in the types of soils that are being compared with each other. There are too many, too many classifications. There are too many in order to get a realistic, long-term, individual coverage.

And if there is one place that the minister could have started making realistic changes that would have had a very significant impact, I say to him, on the budget, it would have been in this whole area of soil classification. It's something that -- I believe it was Dr. Henry, Les Henry from the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) has been recommending to government for years and years and years, that because of all of the different classifications, that we have had both unrealistically low and unrealistically high yield data attached to certain places in the province. And that has meant the probability of pay-out in many cases has been increased.

And I think it would have been prudent of the government, given that this has been a big problem for a long time and one certainly attached to the whole question of revenue insurance, that would have been wise to look at.

But once again, they seem to have had this bull-headed approach to this problem in saying that, well because the agents came up with it, the fact that Dr. Henry talked about it doesn't matter. I'm simply going . . . I'm going to go ahead in the face of everything else and I'll push my way through.

Good experience discounts should be earned on the same basis as with crop insurance if no payment is qualified or if payment is less than the premium charged. That's an integral part, Mr. Speaker, of giving value for what is needed out there. That good experience I think is something that every farmer will opt for. It's only the people, Mr. Speaker, that knowingly want to abuse a program that won't appreciate anything like this, you know?

And it's sad to say that, as my colleague just reminded me, they put people on the board of directors of Saskatchewan Crop Insurance that knowingly would abuse . . . knowingly abuse the system rather than trying to do the best that they can so that they can get a good experience discount down the road.

Producers would favour premium deductions at point of sale. Last year, Mr. Speaker, I was at the Agridome shortly after the election and it was one of the points that producers were saying to the new government. Sit down with the federal government, sit down with the Canadian Wheat Board, sit down with the livestock auctions association, sit down with the various people, the people that run the various processing plants in the province and work out a system so that we can have deduction at source, rather than have these large bills come payable months and even years down the road; that the government had an opportunity to move ahead and try and figure out a system, and naturally, it would take time to evolve where producers could make payments at source.

Did the government do that? Did they make any attempt

to do that? No. It was simply take your orders from the Minister of Finance. March ahead. Come up with a Bill that is retroactive and ram it down people's throats. That's a far, I suppose, easier approach, Mr. Speaker, than trying to work something out with people to allow deductions at source.

Interest-free status for any outstanding premiums if GRIP payments are still owed. I think, Mr. Speaker, the grains area today is one that isn't going to have an easy haul. And I can remember members of this legislature, New Democrats particularly, standing on their feet and bemoaning the fact that the Canadian Wheat Board was going to move off interest-free cash advances.

And I really wonder, when the government obviously knew that farmers were in the position they were in and were making recommendations like this, that they would not have wanted to address it. I mean after all, this is the party that in last year's election talked about having a full cost of production built in in the future about, you know . . . And I remember well last spring, Mr. Speaker, going around to GRIP meetings and there was an outfit that was closely associated with the party of the Minister of Agriculture attending those meetings and raising quite a ruckus at some, and they had their sheet that they were handing out to the folks there that showed what the full cost of productions entailed.

And of course this is what the New Democratic Party was campaigning on last fall. And what we have today is a far cry from full cost of production.

Producers would feel more competent if support prices were projected after harvesting. Many producers are concerned that they cannot make proper management decisions and rotation plans in the spring of the year.

Well I don't know if I totally agree with that statement, Mr. Speaker. And I brought that up just to show the Minister of Agriculture that I'm not going to agree with everything that is in this report. I think that farmers are moving in an age when they have to do their homework. And it would be unrealistic to post those prices afterwards.

I think that there are enough opportunities for farmers to make those kind of agronomic decisions in the spring. And this is one that I would really want to see some numbers on. I would want to see how many people were consulted. I would want to see how many of the policy holders actually felt this way because it's something that I don't agree with.

But that's the kind of thing, Mr. Speaker, I think that it would have behoved the minister to do, that as you go through the points that were made by the crop insurance agents and recommendations -- after obviously talking to thousands of people -- it would have been nice to build that data base and really do an honest consultation with people. The Minister of Agriculture knows full well that the GRIP program as it is nationally in Canada will be going into a period of review again. It was always understood amongst everyone -- producers, the people selling the program, politicians, grain companies -- that by the time that third year rolled around, the contract that people signed, the commitment that the producers of this

province signed up for, that in the third year there would be a review. There would be a review.

An Hon. Member: -- After the first year.

Mr. Swenson: -- And the minister says, after the first year. Well that's a little bit of a minister's wishful thinking. The minister is looking for justifications, Mr. Speaker, all the way through this debate.

And I have no doubt in my mind that the Minister of Agriculture in this province cannot stand on his feet today and tell this Assembly or any farmer in this Assembly exactly what the guidelines for GRIP '93 will be. And I would challenge the minister at any time to get up and do that, to tell me what farmers in Alberta, in Manitoba, in Ontario, all across the land, in conjunction with the federal government, what kind of program we are going to have in 1993.

And he can't do that, Mr. Speaker, because I would suggest to you and to this Assembly that that's all going in the hopper this fall, that the changes that the minister has made in this province, in this Bill, may not be around in '93 because you will see a lot of negotiation go on, as was originally intended with the GRIP program Canada-wide. And there is no way that that minister would dare go out on a limb in this Assembly and tell the folks exactly what the program's going to look like eight or nine months from now. If he can, I'll certainly appreciate listening to him, Mr. Speaker, and people will hold him at his word.

(1515)

But I don't think he's got the courage to do that because I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that review is going to talk about a number of things. It's going to talk about over-production. It's going to talk about the ability to deduct premiums at source. It's going to talk about adding crops to the mix. It's going to talk about the whole area, as the minister likes to say all the time, about moral hazards. And rightly so. If farmers in Alberta and farmers in Manitoba under 1992 are going to receive a top-up from the federal treasury -- and they very well might, as might farmers in Saskatchewan -- they not only get the benefit of their own program, they will get exactly the same amount of money as Saskatchewan farmers.

So not only will they get higher coverage levels on spring wheat and durum and every other crop that is in the program, they would also get any special payments. And I think rightly so, Mr. Speaker. The federal government finds that a bit strange. I think any farmer in this province, any reasonably minded person, would find that strange, the way you would have the province with the most arable acres in Canada, the province that grows most of the grain or a good percentage of the grains, export grains in this country, would be so diametrically different than the other two provinces, that producers here will be affected negatively, that we won't be able to garner the same amount of dollars. And I don't think the federal government, rightly so, is going to let a program like that exist.

Now it would have been different if you'd had the situation where everybody was the same across Canada

and the provincial government here had chosen to top it up. In other words, if Saskatchewan producers were getting more than Alberta or Manitoba, then that's the responsibility of the provincial government, that's the responsibility of the provincial taxpayer, and those judgement calls would be made.

But that's not the issue. The issue is that the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Finance, have changed the program so drastically that you have basic inequities.

And it makes me wonder, Mr. Speaker, what members of the New Democratic Party would do if he we had that situation existing in health care or education, where you have very large federal transfer payments coming into this province, where you have cost sharing involved. Adult education. You can think of all sorts of areas where there are very significant amounts of federal dollars coming into provincial programs. Programs that northern Saskatchewan has enjoyed over the years -- large amounts of federal dollars.

I can remember the program that when the roads were built from north of La Ronge so that some of the mining areas could be opened up.

An Hon. Member: -- Roads to resources.

Mr. Swenson: -- My friend from Athabasca says, roads to resources. Very heavy federal involvement at the time in order to open up some opportunities for Northerners. And of course the province then committed some money, some equipment. I believe they had some native hiring stuff in place that allowed those roads to get built.

Well what would happen if we had the same attitude with roads to resources that we do with GRIP? There'd be all sorts of gnashing of teeth and standing in this legislature on a stump. And I can just imagine the speeches that would be given by members of the New Democratic Party, much like the speeches I suppose they gave in 1989 on closure and rule changes and all those other things that they were the great defenders of. But that would be the reality. And yet we have this government saying, no, we can have this basic inequity because it occurs in rural Saskatchewan. It occurs with farming people, and therefore it's all right.

Well I find that a strange logic, a very strange logic, Mr. Speaker, that you would apply and justify that double standard, and that not only do you apply that double standard, you are so afraid of those people that you somehow have to structure legislation so they can't get at you in court. In other words, I don't want to . . . I can't have the same rights as the provinces on either side of me and I don't have the right like they do to take my provincial government to court.

You know, every farmer that's signed up with GRIP in Alberta can take the Alberta government to court, and every farmer in Manitoba that is signed up with GRIP can take the Manitoba government to court. And every farmer in NDP Ontario can take his provincial government to court as far as the gross revenue insurance program goes. But in NDP Saskatchewan, that's not the case.

Now that in itself, Mr. Speaker, is a fairly large inequity, fairly large inequity, and I would think it's right and proper that that inequity be addressed. And I guess the only place that you can rightfully do that would be in the Supreme Court of our land, which doesn't allow provincial governments to tread on the rights of individuals. And if farmers in Manitoba and farmers in Alberta and farmers in Ontario can take the government to court over gross revenue insurance, then I suspect that the federal court, the Supreme Court of our land, would be very interested in hearing why farmers in Saskatchewan can't take their provincial government to court.

I suspect they would be very interested in a Bill that in three different sections talks about voiding contracts, talks about rewriting history, talks about the minister's ability to change things in the middle of a crop year.

I mean I find it utterly bizarre, Mr. Speaker, that a cabinet minister of any stripe, regardless of his party, would even want in legislation the power to say to a farmer in August that I'm going to de-insure your canola crop. I don't want it in gross revenue insurance any more, therefore by Bill 87 I'm going to de-insure it. I mean I don't know why a cabinet minister would even want that power.

Or that you signed up for gross revenue insurance on your pea crop and the world price is at such and such, and this is the range that you're anticipating, and all of a sudden they come along and say no, no, Finance minister ran out of money last week and we've decided that the pea crop gets the chop this year. And that's what we've got in Bill 87, Mr. Speaker. The minister has the ability to do that.

Now it was never, never intended, I don't believe, in designing this program over a number of years, no matter what the Minister of Agriculture says, over a number of years, that it was ever intended to have those types of powers built into it.

What was intended was to come up with a program, a national program that worked on long-term averages on commodity price, tied to long-term production averages on the farmers' side. That's the only way that stability is possibly achieved, is a long-term look at what is going on, with the ability of that program to adjust itself to those long-term realities. Anything else simply doesn't wash in the world of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).

I mean I sympathize with the farmer out there who always says, if they would just give me an extra two or three dollars a bushel at the elevator for the first so many bushels; I don't need all of this paperwork and all of this malarkey. Well you sympathize with them, Mr. Speaker, but quite simply that doesn't fly in international trade relations these days.

And whatever program is designed, whether it be straight crop insurance or revenue insurance or a combination of both, has to have the ability to stand up in the world today. I mean there we are, Canada, a member of the Cairns Group of nations beating on the Europeans, beating on the Americans, telling them to clean up their act, come to some sort of GATT settlement that will allow

our producers the ability to compete fairly and yet we would change things that would put Canada at the back end of the list. That's why we had to come up, Mr. Speaker, in this country, with a program such as GRIP.

Now imperfect as it was, it meant that there had to be changes. The agents have recommended changes. Many people around the province have recommended changes. And I think the government could have done many things to change this Bill without getting into some of the Draconian stuff that we have seen.

I would just like to go through a few quotes, Mr. Speaker, that I think are pertinent to this debate because they involve people that obviously are in decision-making roles in the government today. And I think that members should be aware of what people have said on this particular issue.

This quote is from the *Star-Phoenix* I believe, of July 18, 1992. And I quote:

. . . the argument of Premier . . . Romanow that the situations are not analogous is as vacant as the NDP's legislative (majority . . . no, morality, sorry) morality. He says that because the NDP campaigned to change the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan . . . it has the democratic right to push through (this) bill.

But did the NDP campaign on the promise of making changes after the GRIP deadline and using the power of government to, as the Tories say, "tamper with (the) evidence" in a case now before the courts?

However the most offensive aspect to the government's behavior has been the way it's ramming through arbitrary changes to the legislature's rules. Ignoring the parliamentary tradition of all-party consensus on such changes, the NDP has applied 30-minute time limits to bell-ringing. And to do it, the NDP brought down the heavy fist of closure to silence debate after only four days. This can only be described as a tyranny of the majority.

And that's from the *Star-Phoenix* of July 18, 1992.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I quote the Premier of the province, and this will be from the *Star-Phoenix* of June 23, 1992.

I worry about contracts and all that. I mean, one has certain rights. That's where the merit of the PC walkout is.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that one has to also read this one because I think this is important. When you listen to the Premier -- and we heard a number of quotes in question period today as to what the Premier's view is of how this thing should be handled vis-a-vis the courts -- then you stack that up against what the Agriculture Minister says; and this will be from the *Star-Phoenix*, April 29, '92:

Agriculture Minister Berny Wiens has threatened to bring in retroactive legislation changing the (GRIP) contracts, but he refused to comment on that Tuesday.

Agriculture Minister Berny Wiens was (reportedly) . . . asked whether changes to 1991 GRIP contracts after the March 15 deadline would create legal problems, say members of the crop insurance advisory committee.

But Wiens told committee members: "We can get around it somehow."

And that's quoted from the *Leader-Post* of June 17, 1992. And once again from June 17, '92:

"Essentially, he (Wiens) didn't seem concerned," said the committee member who asked not (to) be identified. "He thought we could get around that (legal question) . . . He said we would get around it somehow."

So on one hand, Mr. Speaker, we've obviously got the Premier of the province who has felt that there are some legal concerns here that need addressing and we have a Minister of Agriculture that simply says that he's going to get around things. And I think those are two diametrically opposed positions, Mr. Speaker.

(1530)

They're as diametrically opposed as the Americans and the Europeans are on some of their GATT stuff, you know, where they both accuse the other of the highest degree of cheating. And it's pretty hypocritical, I think, of both the Americans and the Europeans on the agriculture question to be sort of throwing aspersions at one another.

Well it's also very hypocritical in this Chamber for the minister . . . the Hon. Premier to be saying one thing about people's legal rights and what not, and then to have the Minister of Agriculture simply saying, well it doesn't matter what those legal problems are, we'll just . . . we'll get around them somehow.

And it looks like getting around them, getting around them . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the Minister of Agriculture says, where am I making it up. I'm quoting from the *Star-Phoenix* on June 17, '92. That was one of your committee members who was scared to be identified because he was obviously afraid that the government would use its heavy hand to do something to him.

But anyway the differences obviously have meant, between what the Minister of Agriculture says and what the Premier says on this, means that obviously the Minister of Agriculture won out. And the folks were instructed in legislative drafting to come up with this Bill 87 that has 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 . . . we got 10 whereas's in this particular piece of legislation because, as the people in the legal community tell me, they help the Minister of Agriculture when he gets into the constitutional wrangling that is sure to occur on this Bill; that if you have the more whereas's, you are . . . the more

fear that you have of constitutional infringement and challenge and trying to justify what you're doing.

And obviously I'd say to members of this legislature, when you've reviewed the other 86 Bills that we've had brought forward to this House, how many whereas's have you seen in them? Because I don't think anybody was particularly worried about the constitutional ability of these Bills to stand up. But obviously now No. 87 has some ramifications that the government isn't quite prepared to take on unless they think they've got themselves covered in many different ways. So we have 10 whereas's at the beginning of this Bill in order to cover off the problems that the Minister of Agriculture created when he ignored people. Earlier this year he said that it wasn't proper to do some of these things.

You know, Mr. Speaker, section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is an interesting one. It's one that maybe members of this Assembly should take time once in a while to review and read its impact on what we do as legislators in this province.

Section 7 talks about a person's rights, and it covers a whole, wide spectrum of things. It covers, I believe . . . and I've sought some legal opinion in the last couple of days, Mr. Speaker -- that would say that the contracts and how those contracts affect your everyday life, how your financial standing as per those contracts, the ability of you to maintain yourself in society -- all of those things can be affected by section 7.

And I think it was very important. It would be very important, Mr. Speaker, that we have the ability as a province and as a legislator and as ordinary taxpayers to have some confidence that that section is being upheld. And that's why today you saw the Leader of the Opposition questioning the Minister of Justice as to the possibility of that happening. Because I believe that if a person's economic wherewithal is dramatically changed because of a broken contract, a contract that the government has broken, then you should have the right as an individual to challenge that government.

And certainly what we see in Saskatchewan today with a large section of drought, for instance, across the northern part of our province where we'll have many producers faced with just diametrically changed economic circumstances because of what the government has done, that their rights as per a signed contract have obviously been infringed upon.

It means that in some areas you'll have a line, Mr. Speaker, and on one side of the line where there's been normal rainfall that you will have people under the 1992 program getting paid so much per acre on an area basis. And a few short miles away, where you have terrible drought, where you've had many thousands of acres already worked down, you will find those individuals without any crop at all but only getting the same amount as the fellow with maybe a 40 or 50 bushel crop. And they will only have recourse under their crop insurance to 80 per cent instead of the 100 per cent that they thought they had in the contract. And that's on the production side.

And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that that is very serious

because that line, as I understand it, talking to people up there, extends clean across the province. It's in a band that goes from the Alberta border to the Manitoba border. And the circumstance will exist right within crop risk areas of several thousand acres being worked down in, say, one area; and right next to it, a normal crop or above normal crop, and yet they're both going to get the same amount of money. Now I would think the person in need is the one that's had to work down his entire crop.

One RM (rural municipality) councillor phoned in to our caucus office from an area somewhere -- I believe it was around Star City -- and said that in one division, one division, that's six miles by six miles, that there'd been 5,000 acres of crop worked down. Now that's pretty darned significant, Mr. Speaker, in an area six miles by six miles. That's a lot of crop. And that means that those individuals there, if they're all in the same risk area as people close by, are going to be discriminated against -- discriminated in a major way that they never anticipated when they signed their contracts in the spring of 1991.

I don't think anybody in their wildest imagination could have believed that a political party, that a politician would come along and change the rules so diametrically that there you are, working down your crop, and you don't have a clue what your coverage is going to be. And you have a neighbour a few miles away, going to do very well while you're almost . . . well, some of those people, I suspect, Mr. Speaker, will be faced with analysing whether they're going to stay in farming or not because of what this minister has done to them. And I don't think anybody, in reviewing the rule changes to the GRIP program, ever wanted that to happen, that because of the vagaries of nature that people would be placed in that situation.

I mean can you imagine somebody with a 50-bushel crop, 10 miles from somebody -- and it can happen -- somebody that's had their crop entirely worked down. And the guy with a 50-bushel crop, if there's a good quota situation, is going to sell all his grain. He's going to get his revenue insurance on top of it. And this poor schmuck over here has no grain whatsoever.

You know, I mean that simply isn't the kind of program I would have envisioned coming out of New Democrats, you know. I mean we've always . . . they've been the great equalizer in our society, or at least that's what they've always claimed, where they sort of take from the rich, you know, and pass it on down to the poor, and that they try and level everybody out.

But now we have a minister that's doing his best to make as many inequities as possible. I mean it's simply ludicrous that you would have that situation occurring. And we asked the ministers in this House different times about how serious the situation is. You know, we say to the minister responsible for Crop Insurance, well how many thousand acres have been worked down, so that we can put this problem in its proper perspective. And he says, well I don't know; I flew over it once; took a look.

Well the situation is serious enough I think, Mr. Speaker, that it would bear a little closer examination. That if we have this very serious inequity arising where you can

have people in that circumstance, I would think a full-blown sort of tour around would be the proper way to handle it. I would think the minister for Crop Insurance would want to head out there for about a week. He might as well go, because half the government members are never around the place anyway, so he might as well go out, he might as well go out and take a walk around for about a week. And he could publicize it, so farmers knew he was going to be around and then would take the opportunity to go visit with him about these inequities in the program.

Now sometimes, Mr. Speaker, that kind of thing takes courage to go do that. And I haven't seen a great lot of courage from either the Minister of Agriculture or the minister responsible for Crop Insurance, when it comes to talking to folks.

But I would think if we have this serious situation, that they would want to, they would want to go out and do it. I mean, if they lack the personal courage to go do that, maybe the committee -- the Standing Committee on Agriculture, which the opposition proposed as one of the ways around this mess that we're in here -- maybe the standing committee, which is an all-party committee, could go out to some of these areas where these very serious inequities have arisen because of the changes to GRIP, and could confer with people; could actually hold some public meetings; could go out and walk around some farmers' fields. I mean they could look at things so that at least when the changes that are going to occur in 1993 are brought forward, that there would be some on-the-ground experience.

There's certainly members in our caucus -- a member from Arm River, former minister responsible for Crop Insurance. I'm sure that if the standing committee went out and looked at these things, that he'd be an ideal representative from the official opposition.

And I'm sure that the government somewhere could find six or seven members with the courage and the foresight to go out and actually look at the problems before doing the absolutely unthinkable act, and that's ramming this particular piece of legislation through this House, in the face of those problems.

I mean I can think of so many alternatives, Mr. Speaker, that people would find acceptable. That people would say: yes, that's a consultive government; that's a government that's listening to people; that's not someone that's simply is using its massive majority to walk over top of me in solving this particular problem.

And I thought that amendment that we had proposed earlier on in debate was one that was . . . was one that the government would jump at. I mean it certainly would have probably precluded now the next step, Mr. Speaker, which is the opposition asking the Minister of Justice to seek a reference from the Court of Appeal.

I don't know what references to the Court of Appeal, and ultimately challenges to the Supreme Court cost, Mr. Speaker, but that's where we've moved to. I mean we can have every other committee of this Legislative Assembly sort of out taking the measure of problems in

Saskatchewan, but when you suggest -- and that's nearly two months ago -- that the Standing Committee on Agriculture go out with this big problem we've got and sort of take a look at things and talk to people and bring back some recommendations to the government, instead of doing that two months ago and negating possibly the challenge that will now have to probably go through the court system, once again this government displayed its arrogance and said no, we're not going to do that.

We don't want to have a Standing Committee on Agriculture go out and talk to farmers about the problem because they might come up with something that's different than what we propose. They might come up with some reasonable solutions.

They might come up with . . . And quite frankly I suppose the Minister of Finance lived in fear of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, but he might have surprised himself. Standing Committee on Agriculture might have come back with some reasonable solutions to some of the economic problems that beset the government also.

(1545)

But even with the guarantee of a very large majority on that standing committee, this government said no, we'll find a way around it. We'll just put our heads down and we'll bull ahead. Whether that means unilaterally changing the rules to the House or using closure day after day, it doesn't matter. We'll simply bull ahead.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it brings me back to a quote that I've used often in this House, and it's one that I'm becoming quite fond of. And I'd like to read it to members of the New Democratic Party in this debate because I think it's one that they should seriously listen to. And that's once again quoting the Premier, the member from Riversdale. And this is from May 11, 1989:

What new-found Democrats are these, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What new-found democracy is this? What kind of a charade is this? What kind of an unprecedented action is it for these people to bring forward a motion for rules change without any consultation . . . without any consultation from us; out of pique.

And that seems to sum up the entire agenda for this government, Mr. Speaker. It sums up the entire GRIP debate. Because as I have just outlined, we have had so many opportunities -- so many opportunities to change the way the process has unfolded, but none of them taken.

And the words that the Premier spoke in 1989 when he was challenging the government of the day, so aptly apply to his own government now. Because it has to be out of pique. There can't be any other reason why you wouldn't listen to the agents who came forward with several dozen recommendations, the people that actually talk on a daily and weekly basis to the folks out there -- why you would ignore recommendations from your own committee to not go ahead; why you wouldn't want the Standing Committee on Agriculture some two months ago to go out and actually listen to people.

It's got to be out of pique -- there can't be anything else, Mr. Speaker, because these new-found Democrats, the people who were the large, the big champions of democracy in this province of people's rights, are trodding all over people, and it's got to be out of only one thing -- pique. Arrogance, perhaps. The fact that a large . . . the feeling that a large legislative majority gives you the ability to sort of walk all over people's rights.

I wonder at times, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier doesn't lay awake at night, sort of wondering what some of these people are up to, because obviously we have a minister that is committed to unilateral change at all cost.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of other quotes that I think are fairly applicable here, and they deal with the walk-out that the members of the opposition undertook earlier this year. And I want to remind the members of the government because they often raise their walk-out . . . and I heard the Minister of Agriculture earlier today sort of in his mind justifying his actions once more to this House. And I want to remind the members of the government . . . this would be from June 12, 1992:

The facts be known, the Tories are right on. The NDP government is dead wrong . . .

And right now the Tories' reasons for blocking the government's legislative agenda and effectively holding the province hostage is far more justifiable than the reasons for the NDP's 1989 walkout ever hoped of being.

. . . the Tories have now walked out of the Assembly over a matter of law -- one the NDP (and the NDP) is now attempting to rewrite so as to appear as if they have done nothing wrong.

In changing the 1991 GRIP contract with farmers, the NDP government -- according to a court ruling this week -- acted illegally by failing to notify producers of the changes to the program by March 15 deadline.

The simple solution -- the government has obviously determined according to court affidavits -- is to introduce legislation that will effectively say farmers were properly informed of changes to GRIP before March 15.

It's ridiculous revisionism from an NDP government that's already put a gun to farmers' heads and said: "You either accept our version of GRIP or you will receive no GRIP."

This is why the PC's bell-ringing is completely justifiable.

Leader-Post, June 13, '92.

I don't think a whole lot has changed, Mr. Speaker, in the intervening two months. We finally have the Bill before us, and it is even worse than anyone probably could have imagined. I mean, not only once do we override people's abilities to challenge this government, we see it three

different times in that Bill.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to know, in the intervening two months from when that article was written to now, is that why the government, in that intervening two months, has been so absolutely stubborn on this issue when there were so many alternatives that were possible, so many political solutions that were possible, so many opportunities for the Premier to look reasonable, so many opportunities for this government to come out a winner with farm families in that intervening two months.

What is it that has made this government so intransigent, so unmoving, so unthinking, so uncaring, that in that intervening two-month period they would move this legislation ahead at all costs? And it has to make . . . makes one wonder if it isn't just the salvation of the political hide of the Minister of Agriculture till we can get through this session and then we can watch the Premier shuffle the deck so that this person is hived off into something else where he isn't quite as dangerous, because there isn't any other logical conclusion.

I mean, farmers and media and people in the legal community were all saying way back in June that we had a major, major problem on our hands; that because we were tinkering with the law of the land, that something should be done about it. I mean, even the Premier is on record back then of saying that:

"I mean, one has certain rights. That's where the merit of the PC walkout is."

This is way back in the middle of June. This is two months ago, okay? Two months ago. But we've got all sorts of evidence to show that there is a big problem there, and yet the opportunities that were there for the government to step in and appear very, very reasonable on this issue have all gone past -- all gone past. And we've seen this Legislative Assembly so fundamentally changed that it will never be the same again as far as how members' rights are protected in here. And yet all that has gone by so that the Premier can shuffle his cabinet some time in October or November and send the minister from Rosetown-Elrose off to a safer place.

And I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if that isn't a little bit short-sighted. I mean, there's no guarantee that that safer place won't be just as dangerous for the government as what we've seen in agriculture. And unfortunately if all the government have the same attitude as the member from Rosetown-Elrose, then the replacement probably won't be any better. It's obvious that the member from Canora has been influenced a long way down this road.

The Speaker: -- Order. I find the member's arguments on speculation very interesting, but I think I would like him to speculate on the principles of the Bill that is before us.

Mr. Swenson: -- I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I must remind myself that I'm not to get in second reading into too many details of the Bill or I will have also an adverse reaction from Mr. Speaker. It's a fine balancing act where one must talk in generalities all the time about this particular piece of legislation, and observations about members of this Assembly and the government.

And I guess that's why members on this side, Mr. Speaker, have decided to read into the record so many quotes from the members in the New Democratic Party, because it gives us the opportunity to deal with things in a more specific manner, and yet at the same time ascribe to the rules of the Assembly where we're not supposed to get too general.

One other issue that we haven't covered, Mr. Speaker, that's very important in this whole debate, and it goes back to the alternative portion of my argument and it's one that hasn't been talked about, and that was the reaction of the partner, the third partner in all of this, between the provincial government and the farmers, the federal government.

As you know, way back in June the Minister of Agriculture for Canada was saying that time that he was quite willing to abide by some deadlines that had been in the 1991 program, that he was still willing to live up to his responsibilities, that the federal taxpayer was quite prepared to live up to certain responsibilities vis-a-vis the GRIP program.

And as we saw time go on, we saw the minister get quite proactive and make offers to the provincial government as to certain levels of funding, about topping up the insurance, the crop insurance portion, to make sure that coverage comes from 80 per cent back to 100 like it was in '91. In other words, offering the minister in Saskatchewan and the government, the NDP government, sort of some outs that wouldn't be very expensive -- some ability for them to sort of move back onto the contract that was signed in '91 so that people wouldn't feel that they had been . . . had their contracts broken.

And the minister, McKnight, was quoted as saying in the *Star-Phoenix* on July 22:

The difference between the old and new plans is the basis for the federal offer.

Saskatchewan farmers lost anywhere from 30 to \$40 per acre in coverage because of the provincial changes.

So what the federal government was saying, that they had an offer that would help bring that shortfall back and negate some of these legal problems that the provincial government had got themselves into.

And some of the farm groups, Mr. Speaker, were quoted as saying that they thought it was a reasonable offer. At least it was a good point to start negotiating, that it would behove the provincial government to sort of move off this intransigent place that they had been and start talking.

Because I mean there was \$40 million put on the table and there was the option for farmers not to have to make any premium payments in regards to changes until further down the road, until the crop insurance . . . or rather the pooling accounts were closed off and all those things that mean that payments are stretched out over a period of time.

(1600)

But what have we seen of that? I mean here was an offer by the federal level of government to the provincial to sort of get them off of the post that they had got themselves skewered on and get back to a more reasonable approach. And we had assurances, if I remember correctly, Mr. Speaker, at the time, as the government was still talking about bringing Bill 87 into this House and sort of in their mad rush to do it, that they were going to seriously talk to the federal government about this problem. And that hasn't occurred. I mean, I haven't heard an update. Here we are in second reading of Bill 87, here we are discussing court challenges to this particular piece of legislation, here we are embroiled in what may be a constitutional morass, and I have heard nothing from the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Saskatchewan in regards to the federal government for a couple of weeks now.

Is it simply that they wish to ram this piece of legislation through first, rather than assure farmers that there is some reasonable negotiation going on, that that \$40 million that the feds have put on the table is going to just sort of disappear because the provincial government is stonewalling?

I mean, I don't know what the threshold of the provincial government is these days, Mr. Speaker, but I suspect that with lowering interest rates and with various things happening that there may be more room for the Minister of Finance to move. I don't know.

But the federal minister has made an offer. If 40 million isn't the right number, maybe 35 is, and maybe the provincial government's right number is 15. I don't know.

But the problem, Mr. Speaker, is that the minister refuses to talk about it, to consult with people to ensure that those negotiations are going on. I mean, I haven't heard one farm leader in this province comment in the last couple of weeks about the minister sort of conferring with them about various options and positions.

We have the president of Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and we have other farm leaders on record in the last weeks saying, you know, I wish that these politicians would get off the political stuff and get down to some honest negotiation. But we don't have any negotiation going on. We don't have our Minister of Agriculture out front keeping people informed, giving some people assurance that he's being diligent.

Instead, all we see is this single-minded attack in this legislature on jamming Bill 87 through. We don't see anything that would show us that there's any other intent from this government than to simply ram this Bill through this legislature in whatever way is necessary and before people have the opportunity to challenge it in court or anything else. It's simply sort of a one-mission statement here, and that's to get GRIP through. And then we can talk about other things, but we've got to get GRIP through at all costs. And I find that a little strange, Mr. Speaker, in the face of an argument by the federal government to sort of get us off the horns of the dilemma here.

I've got a quote here, Mr. Speaker, that I think is important for this debate because it shows the state of the client. As you know, one of the things about the 1991 GRIP program that farmers really appreciated after a long, long time was the fact that it was predictable and it was bankable. And what we had happen this spring was that neither one of them were the case. And it's like I challenged the Minister of Agriculture earlier on today to stand on his feet and tell me what GRIP '93 is going to look like. And I know that he can't do it.

One of the things that they enjoyed was the predictability about it because unfortunately so many people are having to use operating loans these days. This is a quote from the *Star-Phoenix* from April 18, '92. And it goes: a significant number of lenders are refusing to accept the revised GRIP as collateral for farm operating loans this year, says Swift Current lawyer Neil Gibbings. They are most certainly not accepting it, says Gibbings, whose law firm deals with a large number of farm clients. The general coverage is down substantially and it's unpredictable.

You see, what everyone is tending to forget, Mr. Speaker, all through this whole debate is that the whole reason that you should be doing anything is so that these people out there are going to stay there, so that the farming public is going to be able to stay viable, and so that our communities are going to stay viable. That should be the whole premise, the whole thrust of this Legislative Assembly -- not the sort of the personal rising and falling of political careers in here or all the jockeying that goes on, but actually the 60,000 farm families that you want to stay out there.

Now unless, Mr. Speaker, there's some agenda to get rid of a significant number of those people . . . but I've always heard New Democrats stand in this legislature and always cry for more to make sure that farmers stay on the land, that they're viable.

An Hon. Member: -- They've been crying for nine years.

Mr. Swenson: -- Yes. As the member from Arm River says, in the nine and a half years that they've spent in opposition, that's all they ever talked about on agriculture was that there wasn't enough to keep these people viable other than the government owning all the land, which people don't consider an option.

So given that whatever farm program came along had to have some predictability and some bankability attached to it in order to meet that criteria, what we have now is just the opposite. We have people from all over the province saying that this summer has been a bad one, that lending has dried up. Even in the face of interest rates dropping to, I think they said a 23-year low last week, Mr. Speaker, you would think that lending institutions would be more than happy when interest rates are that low, to lend money out.

The Speaker: -- Order. I think the member from Turtleford is aware that during second reading we are not allowed to have coffee in this Chamber.

Mr. Swenson: -- So here we are, Mr. Speaker, with a very

large number of people this summer not being able to access operating capital. We know that there are a large number of people that are in difficulty with lending institutions, with ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan), lands branch, all these sorts of things, because the cash flows are so terrible. And because of that fact we should sort of be, I think, changing our focus a little bit from what we've been doing in this legislature.

I mean we have a problem that was described last fall as being a disaster. I mean it was described last fall as being just absolutely awful. A crisis was the term, I think, that was used most often. I was at the Agridome when 7 to 8,000 people were there and I heard all of the various political leaders speak, and they were just talking about a crisis in agriculture.

Well I'd like to know what's changed, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to know what's changed. Inputs are up; taxes are up. GRIP is neither predictable nor bankable any more. Wheat is basically the same price it was then. All other farm commodities, to my knowledge, are either the same or lower. So I say to the members of this House, what's changed? If it was a crisis when we were looking for votes, is it not a crisis now? If it was a disaster then when we were looking for votes, is it not a disaster now?

Well I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we can't go around using those words when we're only looking for votes because people are going to become cynical.

And I think it's one of the reasons that this government is in such deep political trouble so soon into their mandate -- is because people do find it cynical. That if we have a crisis on our hands in October of '91 and all of a sudden the crisis is evaporated in August of '92 -- that's simply unacceptable because it's every bit as bad, if not worse.

Now if the agenda is to get rid of a significant amount of farm people, then obviously the minister has got the proper piece of legislation to do it. And I suppose if he wants them to go quietly without a whimper, he couldn't have designed it any better. Because by not being able to challenge the government in court it means that as they leave the farm they will be forever silenced; that they, in righteous indignation, won't stand up to this minister and this government.

But if they are leaving in significant numbers because of the changes, then what else is on the agenda? Who will be the minister of this government that stands up and brings through the new Bill to redistribute the seats? That can't be far behind significant depopulation in rural Saskatchewan.

I suspect that might be part of the agenda, given the minister's bull-headed approach to this particular Bill, because this Bill will do the dirty work about removing those people from rural Saskatchewan. And if that's the case, then I think the other will follow shortly behind.

I've often wondered, if I stay in this legislature long enough, if we won't refer to the member from west of Regina and the member from east of Regina. Because that's about where this government's legislation is leading us. And this GRIP Bill will go a long way to

facilitating that.

I mean, you tell me what clause in this Bill would give anyone in rural Saskatchewan reason to hope for the future? What clause in this Bill says that there isn't a crisis on in rural Saskatchewan any more? What clause in this Bill says to people 1993 is going to be a better year?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I've read that Bill closely and I can't find any of those clauses. I can't find a single clause, either in explanatory notes or in the main Bill, that would have me as a farmer stand up and say, the crisis is over. I'm going to be able to get operating money next year. I'm going to be sure that I can meet my loan payments in the coming year, that I'm going to be able to buy the diesel fuel and the fertilizer to grow another crop, that I'm going to be able to go in and get financing from the bank or the pool to buy some feeder cattle this fall.

There isn't a darn thing in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, that would give me that kind of optimism. I mean I wish there was a clause in here that . . . And I'd break the rules of this Assembly to read that clause into the record even though I'm in the wrong reading period to do that. It would give me that kind of optimism. It would be worth breaking the rules, Mr. Speaker, to find a clause in this Bill that would say we are addressing the crisis in rural Saskatchewan by implementing Bill 87.

But I can't find a darn thing that would give Mr. Gibbings, the lawyer in Swift Current, some reason to talk to his clients and say, the heat's coming off, boys; there's a better day coming. I can't find a thing in Bill 87. I'm wondering what all of his clients are going to say when they see this thing.

(1615)

Got another quote here; this one's from July 29. That's not that long ago, Mr. Speaker. And this is someone I would think that the government would want to listen to in this area. And I quote, July 29, *Leader-Post*:

The 1991 version of GRIP would have given solid, bottom-line protection to farmers and that's what attracted them last year.

But the Saskatchewan 1992 version ended that backing . . .

"It rewards you when you have a crop, but it doesn't protect you when you don't have a crop . . ."

That's Bernard Kirwan, the president of SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities).

Well I hear snickers from the government benches. I suppose, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that one could take that as a sign of arrogance. I don't know if I'll ascribe that to all members of the government because . . . Obviously the member from Churchill Downs, in his case, it probably is arrogance, but some of the other ones probably do have some ability to respect a man like Mr. Kirwan.

He is only elected by several thousands of his peers up

through the SARM system. But he is someone, I think, that would have some effect on this government. I mean the arguments that I've been making about this Bill and any clause in it that would give a person hope that the future would be better, I think, is summed up in Mr. Kirwan's remarks just on July 29, that there's nothing there in the way of backing.

I mean what this House desperately needs, Mr. Speaker, is not a Bill that goes through machination after machination to strip people's legal rights away. It's a Bill that would come forward to this legislature and give people hope, hope for 1993 . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I'll say to the member from Saskatoon Broadway, you're going to hear it a lot more times before we're done on this. You're darned right.

It seems to be the one tool, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes works with New Democrats. If you repeat it often enough, if you repeat it often enough, it seems to sort of get in between the left ear and the right ear, that large impenetrable space that seems to exist in a New Democrat between the left ear and the right ear, that if you say it over and over and over again, you might get through there.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we have to read into the record the comments of people like the president of SARM so that they'll start to listen, so that that dead space that obviously occurred in their souls when they brought forward this type of legislation -- that dead space that's in the soul of these New Democratic members of this House -- will get something in it that'll get some compassion in it, that'll get some morality back in it, that'll get some ability to give farmers hope, rural people hope that the next time they bring forward a Bill that deals with agriculture in this Assembly, that it'll be something with good news in it instead of all bad news.

And I'm afraid we're going to have to repeat so many of these things that I'm sure they'll get tired of listening to them. But it's the only tool that's available to the opposition . . . is to read them their own words back -- read back to them their thoughts and deeds of yesteryear when they were supposedly championing the rights of people in rural Saskatchewan, read back to them all the things that they said were absolutely necessary for rural Saskatchewan to survive.

That's the only way we're going to bring about change with these people. That's the only way we're going to get them off of this single-minded path that they've headed on where they think nothing of changing the rules of this House unilaterally. Or they think nothing of bringing in closure day after day. That's the only way that we're going to get them off of that tack.

Because as we stand in this House and we talk about it and we remind them, you hope that the folks that are out there watching will think, yes, these people have sort of changed: they say one thing in opposition; then they do another in government. These aren't the people that I voted for in October 1991. These are people that are besotted with power, with political power, that simply want to exercise it -- exercise it in whatever way happens to sort of soothe their egos that day.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that that's not the role of government. That's not the role of elected members of this Assembly -- to simply want to exercise political power indiscriminately just for the sake of it, that there has to be something behind it, some substance.

And that's why we take so much exception with this Bill. It's all negative stuff. There's no substance. How can one say that denying people's rights in court is substance? That's all there is here. There's nothing else, no good news. It's pick on somebody.

It's almost like there is sort of a revenge factor attached to some of this stuff. And I wouldn't want to think that there was any of that there, Mr. Speaker, but one only has to look at the actions of certain members of the government, and you almost get that feeling that there's some revenge motive tied to some of this stuff that's coming forward.

Because when you look at the alternatives to be politically liked -- and I laid out a number of them today, alternatives that the government could have taken in this whole GRIP thing -- then you would have realized that those alternatives were politically, probably, a lot more saleable. I mean, I can see situations where the Minister of Agriculture could have probably been a hero to a fairly large part of the farming population with certain moves, that he could have still maintained his budgetary diligence and at the same time looked reasonable.

But that hasn't been the case. It has been single-minded. It has been . . . I can only think, Mr. Speaker, it has been some type of political vengeance almost that drives the member from Rosetown-Elrose in pushing and pushing and pushing this particular piece of legislation through this House. I mean, just think about the steps that we've gone through. These steps will be documented for years to come. When they write the political history of this place, they will talk about certain individuals and the steps and the excruciating pain that this Assembly's been subjected to in order to get this particular piece of legislation rammed through this House. And one has to start ascribing motives and values, Mr. Speaker, that you normally don't like to ascribe to members of this legislature when seeing this done.

Well I think, Mr. Speaker, that I've today laid out a number of alternatives, presented a number of arguments that would have allowed the government to choose a different course. And I suspect that as the opposition brings forward various amendments to this Bill, both in the second reading stage and again in Committee of the Whole, that the Minister of Agriculture will be presented with some alternatives that he's going to be hard pressed not to accept. There are a lot of people out there, Mr. Speaker, who have taken a great deal of interest in this debate, who I think feel there still is a sort of a ninth inning, that there is the opportunity for sober second thought, that there is an opportunity for the Minister of Agriculture to regroup -- if you will -- and present a package to Saskatchewan people that isn't so onerous and fraught with danger.

And I look forward to the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, of speaking to some of those amendments because they'll

have substance. They will present alternatives that are very clear. And they will present, I think, some sections of this Bill that when people -- the farming public in particular -- pick up and read this Bill and they see those amended sections, they'll say, finally I have a Bill that gives me some hope, some hope that maybe someone is looking at the financial crisis. The crisis that was so talked about in 1991 can be addressed by amending this piece of legislation. And that, along with those amendments, will return some hope for the future.

And I look forward to speaking to those and assuring Saskatchewan people that there can be some hope if this NDP government will get off this bull-headed track of jamming this legislation and taking people's rights away.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the approximately 15 years that I have spoke in this House, I always say when I stand up, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to speak in this House. But in this last session, there's been many, many times I've got to my feet where I can't say it's a pleasure.

We're here today, on August 10, talking about this Bill that will be the downfall -- I hope not -- of Saskatchewan people. I hope it's not at their expense. I hope something can happen. But it'll be the downfall of the NDP Party of Saskatchewan.

There is no way, Mr. Speaker, that any government will ever survive what they're doing here in this session -- from May till August and maybe September, October. We could be here a long time, Mr. Speaker. Also there's a chance that I may be the last speaker on second reading on this Bill.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, what this arrogant government is likely to do is somebody liable to get up any minute and say, we go closure. It wouldn't surprise me for a minute, Mr. Speaker. We're here talking about a GRIP Bill that it couldn't possibly happen any place else in the Commonwealth countries of this world. It couldn't happen that an arrogant government would bring such a Bill forth as we've got here for us today. It couldn't happen.

There is no government that would allow their front benches, the Minister of Agriculture and I suppose we've got to add the minister of Crop Insurance . . . that they'd make such a blunder that a government, instead of getting rid of them, are going to get rid of the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan.

There will be thousands of farmers will lose their farms over this Bill. There isn't . . . The member from Elphinstone said it isn't true. How does he know when he got swamped out of Shaunavon? They just said, enough with you, mister, and had to come in here and buy his way into Elphinstone, had to go out and buy a membership to get elected. So how, Mr. Speaker, does he know anything about farming any more? He's not even a farmer any more.

Because he thinks he's safe, Mr. Speaker, sitting here in

Elphinstone. And he's away from farmers. All he has to do -- and I challenge that member sincerely -- is to go back to his home town of Shaunavon and go to the first coffee row and into a few stores, call into the first 10 farmers that he comes to and say to them, my friends that I've grown up with, will you tell me what you think of what we're doing in the legislature? Mr. Speaker, that would be a sad day for the member from Elphinstone.

We get condemned because we're filibustering this House for 60 days -- 60 days. Goodness, we're pretty near done. There's just the GRIP Bill that's caused this problem. And when you talk about filibuster, who's been doing it? Who is responsible? The word filibuster, when it's not . . . something isn't happening. Something's holding it up. And who's holding it up is all the yahoos and ministers over here that won't answer questions.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I just want to caution the member that I believe that those kinds of words certainly don't help to keeping order in this House. And I just caution him to stay away from those words. There are much better words in the English language that he can use.

(1630)

Mr. Muirhead: -- Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is better words and so I'll just say those arrogant members across the front row, because that's what they are. And that word's been used for ever and ever. They're the ones that will not answer questions, Mr. Speaker. The reason why we're here in such a filibuster, because what do we see in question period today? What did we see when the member from . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I want to ask the member from Regina Elphinstone to either take his seat or maybe move back in the back so that he doesn't interfere with the debate that is going on over here. Churchill Downs is what I meant.

Mr. Muirhead: -- Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today what we witness in this House today when the member from Estevan sincerely, sincerely asked questions to our Attorney General, very sincerely pertaining to the GRIP Bill, and what we could do for a compromise, how to deal with it.

You couldn't possibly get a more sincere question when he outlined his questioning. And I won't get into it because we all heard it. But he outlined to the Minister of Justice, the now Attorney General, to stand to his feet and give his opinions on whether this Bill should be stopped momentarily in this House, be sent to the Saskatchewan Supreme Court, and then perhaps on to the Supreme Court of Canada. It's happened before and that's what should happen again. I do believe that. And I do believe that's where it's going to get some day.

But when, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Justice circled in his seat, smiled, looked nervous, and then the Minister of Agriculture gets up and never, ever has even come close to answering what the member asked. That's why we got filibuster because they're the ones that's doing it, Mr. Speaker. If every time that we'd asked questions

about GRIP, about anything to do with agriculture, or anything in this government, if the ministers would stand to their feet and even come a little bit close, remotely close to the subject, we wouldn't be in this impasse we're here today.

I have never seen it. I have seen governments from both sides. Mr. Speaker, I have seen the government of the day in '78 to '82, and I thought they were bad for not answering questions. I sometimes condemned some of our ministers when we were in government that they could have answered questions better, but I've never seen anything like this. There just isn't any questions being answered.

So if the House Leader wonders why we're in this impasse, and only at approximately the 60-day mark, maybe he should have been asking this question at the 120 day mark. Because the year that we had, Mr. Speaker -- talk about a hold _up over GRIP -- when we got in, it was over potash and the energy Bill. We sat 120 days -- 120 days.

Open your mouth in here, say too much, and they talk about holidays, want to go home.

Well we get extended hours. We get everything. Extended hours is not going to help. Did you ever see in your life, my friends, Mr. Speaker, I say to anybody, is extended hours going to do anything to speed things up if you don't work, if you don't bring on the Minister of Agriculture's *Estimates*, the Minister of Health's *Estimates*?

It's like me, Mr. Speaker, and I'll use this for example. I can't get my crop off for wet weather. Then all of a sudden I get some sunny weather and the wheat's ready to harvest. But if I don't go out and do it, the extra days didn't help any. I've got to have good weather and I've got to be willing to work.

So we get extended hours, from 20 hours a week to 50 hours a week. And until you people over here, Mr. Speaker, start answering questions about GRIP and don't talk about closure, you start answering questions, then you are the ones that are going to waste the 30 hours a week.

Because we here, the opposition, Mr. Speaker, we can stay here as long as they won't answer questions. As long as the members opposite don't want to answer questions, we can . . . Because we talked about it the other day -- free enterprisers have got a lot of ambition. Because we know, Mr. Speaker, that free enterprisers have been carrying the socialists of this province since 1944. We've been making a living for them and carrying them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to just say a few words about what our problem really is. We are into a real impasse and a fight -- let's not talk about it in the legislature -- over what 1992 GRIP really is. Well 1992 GRIP is nothing but a farmer to sit in his office or house or shop with his family or whatever, or with his crop insurance agent, and discuss what the price of wheat may be over the next year.

It's like going to Nevada, to Vegas, and you're going to . . .

if I throw a buck on there, will I get a buck back or two bucks back or lose it? So that's really what 1992 GRIP is all about. There is no other protection, because the crop insurance is separate, the revenue insurance just exactly covers what the price of wheat is.

And talk about moral hazards. You brought in the biggest moral hazard that every farmer in this country's ever known. Now I'm going to explain to you, Mr. Speaker, and if these people over here that are grinning from their seats don't understand this, then my goodness, Mr. Speaker, God help the farmers in Saskatchewan. Because what it is, that there is farmers in Saskatchewan that got zero bushels to the acre right now.

Now do you understand that? I wonder, Mr. Speaker, do they understand that, that there is some farmers that will plug their crop out or it had been hailed 100 per cent, they have got zero bushels per acre. There is some farmers that will get 50 bushels to the acre of wheat and 40 bushels . . . plus canola. There is some people going to get big crops and some with zero.

Now what I'm trying to explain to them on this revenue program, what it really means, so the listeners and the people in the Assembly will understand. Whatever you're going to be covered for for revenue insurance, we'll just use the example that they used for a farmer. The example . . . they went from hall to hall, meeting to meeting, and they used the same example. A farmer that's covered under the old plan for 115 bucks an acre, on the new plan, if the price of wheat is at \$3 a bushel or whatever, he's going to have approximately \$30 an acre -- 30 bucks an acre.

And that's the example we'll use. And nobody can contradict me in that figure because it came from them. But whatever it is, whether it's 20, 25, 30, whatever you're covered for on revenue, that person getting the zero bushels to the acre or the 50 bushels to the acre gets the same coverage. That's what he gets. Now if anybody can tell me that isn't moral hazard, I don't know what is.

Because I'm going to tell you also, Mr. Speaker, that there's the farmer out there, that he's sitting with hardly any rain this spring; he has no money in his pocket; he has a hard time getting credit for fuel; and he's just doing the best he can. And he sees his crop sitting there looking like maybe a 10-bushel crop, and it's not raining, Mr. Speaker. It's not raining out. And, boy, should I spray that crop, or shouldn't I spray it? Because I'll get maybe more money if I don't spray it. Maybe I better just hope that it doesn't rain and it'll disappear to zero. I can save the fuel for spring; I can save the fuel for swathing; I can save the fuel for combining; and I can save the fuel from hauling any grain to the elevator. Because this government Saskatchewan just elected are going to pay me the same thing. That's what you call real socialism -- pay the same regardless of what inputs you got. Pay the same. Average. That's what socialism is all about.

But in the 1991 GRIP, it wasn't that way. If you didn't produce anything, you didn't collect so much. You didn't have the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, he just -- I want to put it on the record -- he said, this is last year's speech. Well I'll tell

you, Mr. Speaker, how wrong he is. Because I'll tell you, I wasn't speaking last year on 1992 GRIP. Because I never thought the day would come that any government in Canada would introduce such a mess that this member over here has, Mr. Speaker. It is the worst disaster for farmers I've ever heard.

And the farmers will tell you out there that the only one that it works for . . . and farmers are thinking for themselves. There is places and pockets in Saskatchewan, and especially that north-east and some down into the south-east, where farmers had low assessed land. And the Minister of Agriculture knows I'm right, because there was low assessed land and they got a lot of rain and got a bumper crop and they out-produced themselves. They out-produced themselves from the 1991 GRIP so they had to pay a premium. And so what? They were upset about it. Ah, we didn't collect anything from GRIP.

But I never heard of anybody collecting from anything . . . putting insurance on anything. Did anybody ever insure their house and collect if the house didn't burn down? Did you? Did they, Mr. Speaker, ever collect if the house didn't burn down?

So there's farmers now out there now said yes, we want changes to our GRIP program. We want changes. No matter where I went in election time last fall, Mr. Speaker, I could get someone some day, well I wasn't too pleased with that '91 GRIP. I wasn't so pleased. This bothered me and that bothered me and I thought I was going to get more. Everybody always wants more when you're going broke. They want all they can get. But farmers are reasonable people, and they didn't understand it, but I tell you what they did, Mr. Speaker. They were telling people, they were telling the NDP, oh yes, I want GRIP overhauled. I want it improved. They told me that.

But I'll tell you, when the people started to appreciate the GRIP program, when they really started to appreciate it, is at this point -- when the cheques started coming out last fall. They were selling wheat from a bumper crop. They got cheques last fall. They got one at Christmas time. They've had two cheques now. They've had two cheques from GRIP. Now don't anybody say that . . . And the Minister of Agriculture chirps from his seat, Mr. Speaker, saying they didn't get anything last fall. They did get a . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, he said he apologizes for that. Well I accept that.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers in Saskatchewan that got their cheques, sold their wheat -- hey, this program isn't so bad. But even at that, there's a couple of very important improvements to the 1991 GRIP that I would like to have seen a year ago. But this government over here would never go for this.

But the farmers are asking me if you had of gone out, if the Minister of Agriculture had of went out and visited with farmers instead of calling a select few in, a dozen people or so to a committee and said what do you want us to do here, and I got my orders from the Minister of Finance that I'm not to spend too much money because we didn't get too many votes from farmers, and we got a bad financial situation . . . So Mr. Minister says to Mr. Minister of

Agriculture, go out there and get something that your farmers are going to think they've got something coming but it isn't going to cost too much because we can't afford it.

So they get 12 people out there visiting with people around Saskatchewan. People and farmers wrote in all over this province saying, this is what we want. I got copies of the letter sent from my constituency and from the Humboldt constituency and from Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency because that's where my sister's seat that I try to help look after and we haven't got a member there.

And I tell you what they said in those letters didn't happen The requests didn't happen. Because it was, their mind was made up before. What did they do, Mr. Speaker, pertaining to GRIP? They went and had hall meetings. They had hall meetings all over the province. I congratulate them for having hall meetings all over the province to get people's input about GRIP.

But when did they do it? When did they do it, Mr. Speaker? After they made the GRIP announcement. After. After they started talking about the changes. That's when they started to have hall meetings.

Why, in the town of Craik there was one person at a meeting in Craik -- the hall was full and the Department of Agriculture official was there -- and towards the end of the meeting this individual got up and said, sir, you must have booked this hall a year ago for the government to explain the '91 GRIP. Now you've booked it to explain the '92 GRIP. Have you got it booked for next year to explain the '93 GRIP?

That's the frustration of farmers out there. They know it's going to be changed and changed again.

And you know you jumped the gun because of the finances. You jumped the gun because of the finances. The only thing that you needed to do to have everybody happy on '91 GRIP, it would of had everybody happy -- everybody, and I'll guarantee this -- just say this to any farmer. I'm covered for X amount of bushels an acre. I'm covered for -- we'll just use the example -- I'm covered for 25 bushels an acre at this \$4.05 a bushel or whatever per acre. I'm guaranteed that.

But you see what happened, they got such a good crop, one of the best in history in '91, that some of the people did get . . . on the lighter land they got 40 bushels to the acre or 35 or 50 on land that should have produced, on the average, 25. So all they had to do for the improvement was to say to Mr. Farmer: you're covered up to your 25 bushels an acre just exactly how we did in '91 and anything over that is yours.

(1645)

And you say that to any farmer and they said, that's what we want. And that's what we were close to having implemented a year ago when the bureaucrats in Ottawa came out with this program.

There isn't one farmer in Saskatchewan, I don't suppose

liked it when it first started to come out. But there was a lot of input from the caucus in Alberta and Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and we got it changed to be acceptable.

Now if we could have added that -- that the farmer, he's covered exactly up to what his potential of farming is, whatever his land's produced for the last 10 years, and then he gets that yield . . . That's exactly what he receives. And he gets his guarantee. But if he gets 5 or 10 or 15 bushels, that's his own at market price. That's what the farmers asked for.

They didn't ask to have the whole plan just wiped, because that's what you did. You swiped the plan and brought in crop insurance by itself, revenue by itself, and say, we're going to just put a little guess on here and we're going to take your good farming practices away from you, and we're going to go with an area average. And we're going to come out and tell you sometime what your revenue coverage may be. You may hear before harvest; you may not.

Now I will guarantee, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture and the minister of Crop Insurance cannot stand to their feet in this House and give any farmer that we give the example to, and say, this is what you're going to be covered for. You can't do it.

The minister, if he can do that, that means he knows exactly what the price is going to be in January 1994. Because you do not know what a person's going to be covered for on revenue. With your own words, your own meetings, you don't know. You don't know.

And he'll have a chance to be able to prove to me that I'm wrong, but he can't do it. And I want that to be said in here, because he cannot do it. Until the price of wheat . . . until the Pool closes in July 31, 1993, we'll know what the price, the selling price of wheat has been. Then between July 31 and January 1, '94, they decide what the final wheat payment is going to be. Then we'll know exactly what the revenue insurance is going to be. Until that, they don't know. They don't know.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the Minister of Agriculture . . . it's awful hard for two people to have a continuous . . . I don't mind people, Mr. Speaker, chirping in, and I do that once in a while, but when I'm talking and the Minister of Agriculture has never quit, you know, it must sound bad for the . . . I hope *Hansard* isn't getting the both of us on there, because it would look like Chinese if they were both on there.

But, Mr. Speaker, I feel sorry for the Minister of Agriculture. I really do. I honestly do, Mr. Speaker, feel sorry for him. Because he's in a very bad situation. He's in a very bad situation. He has been told by the yahoos in the front row, like the member from Churchill Downs . . .

The Speaker: -- Order, order. I've asked the member before. I cautioned him on using that word in the House, and he's done it now the second time. I ask him to withdraw the word this time.

Mr. Muirhead: -- Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry. I'll just go back to that same word, the arrogant ministers in the front

row. And the minister from Churchill Downs, the Deputy Minister of Finance is one of those. Because it's him and the Minister of Finance and the House Leader, the member from Elphinstone, and the Minister of Justice -- they are the upper echelon of this party.

I am sure that the back-benchers, the back-benchers in here don't even know what's going on. I don't think they understand that this Bill is an unconstitutional Bill. I'll bet you they never heard about it until the last week or two. Any time I speak about this Bill in this House, I talk about unconstitutional, unconstitutional, unconstitutional.

Now I don't know how I could be wrong, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how I could be wrong when the Minister of Justice wouldn't get to his feet and explain himself today. He wouldn't stand up for . . . Yes, sir, he didn't stand up and say, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Estevan: this is a constitutional Bill and we don't have to take it to the Supreme Court of Saskatchewan; we don't have to take to the Supreme Court of Canada because I'm going to tell you for the obvious reasons why it's constitutional.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that every one of the people that helped him draft that Bill are very nervous about that Bill. Look at the Bill itself. I've never, ever seen all those -- as the member from Thunder Creek talked this afternoon -- all those "whereas's". They can't explain what the reasoning for what they're doing all these things for. You don't see those kind of things in Bills.

If anybody can ever, ever tell me . . . I'm not going to get anywheres near through my remarks, Mr. Speaker, before 5 o'clock. I won't even be close to it. As I said before, I'll probably be the last speaker on the Bill because I imagine some time there'll be a foreclosure before I'm through speaking. Because perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I could be speaking for hours and hours, and I'm sure that when the House Leader gets a chance, he'll get up and go closure.

But I want to go back, Mr. Speaker, -- I see a paper had on here, I have time to do this before 5 o'clock -- and explain what a moral hazard really is on the coverage. Because this is the figures that I got from the Minister of Agriculture.

This came from his office as he went throughout the meetings all through Saskatchewan and said to farmers: here you are if you get 10 bushels an acre and you get \$3 a bushel, you're going to get \$30 for income from that grain. You're revenue is going to be \$30 an acre. You're going to get \$42 an acre for insurance. That's a total of \$103 an acre.

Now this is for a farmer that was before covered for \$115 per acre -- guaranteed, no matter what, guaranteed 115, rain, shine, no matter whether he gets the grain or whether he doesn't or more or less. That's all, all he gets.

So what are they doing here? They're helping . . . What they're doing here is . . . I've had crop insurance since 1964 until 1980. I carried crop insurance for 16 or 17 years and I always thought that crop insurance, Mr. Speaker, was to help you out if you lost. The same as if you had your tractor burn down and your house burn down and you lose your crop, you collect insurance. But

not on this program.

Because now I'll take you through the next one -- 30 bushels to the acre at \$3 a bushel is \$90 an acre, and you still get the same \$30 an acre revenue -- and you collect nothing from crop insurance of course because you're over the coverage -- a total of \$120 an acre. So here's a guy gets \$120 an acre, he gets 30 bushels of wheat, he gets 30 bushels an acre, and so he gets \$120 an acre and his revenue stays the same.

Now the next example is 40 bushels an acre. The farmer gets 40 bushels an acre times this \$3 a bushel, he's going to get \$120 an acre for his wheat and he's going to still get the \$30 for revenue. It doesn't change -- good farmer, poor farmer, lucky farmer, blessed farmer -- it doesn't make any difference. That's what he's going to get. He gets \$30 an acre all the way through. This is from his example.

So he gets nothing from crop insurance. He gets a total of \$150 an acre. A hundred and fifty bucks an acre is what that farmer gets with a 40-bushel crop and gets the same revenue exactly whether he gets the ten bushels or the five or the zero, whatever.

Now just for the last example, the last example, Mr. Speaker, of 50 bushels an acre. He had \$3 a bushel, he gets \$150, and he still gets the \$30. They're going to still give him the \$30 an acre. As I said before and I can't say it enough, \$30 an acre for the farmer that gets 50 bushels to the acre, 30 for the guy that gets 10. So he gets a total of \$180 an acre.

And the member, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, will be able to read this in *Hansard*. I've put it there before in my throne speech last spring and he said he was going to check it out and get back to you. Now we'll just see how he comes up contradicting these figures.

So let's talk about now, Mr. Speaker, the farmer that grows zero bushels to the acre. He absolutely grows zero. So he gets zero for his dollars and cents. But he still gets his \$30 an acre for revenue. Okay, he gets his 30 but his crop insurance jumps to 90, so he gets a total of 120. He gets a total of 120. But the farmer that decided maybe to let his crop go, not bother spraying, and letting it go from the five or ten bushels to the acre by not good farming practices, and by maybe he couldn't . . . if it rained enough on it this couldn't happen, but if you missed all the rains he's going to get \$120 an acre, the guy with nothing. But the guy that sprayed and went out and worked hard, he's going to . . . and gets 10 bushels to the acre. The guy that said I'm going to spend every . . . (inaudible) . . . because most farmers out there . . . and I do believe, as they told me in Crop Insurance when I was the minister, that only half of 1 per cent of the farmers cheat. And that's the way I think it is today. I think the farmers are honest.

Because it proves it here. The 10-bushel guy, the guy with 10 bushels to the acre, he gets \$103 an acre, 103; but the guy that let his crop go to nothing gets 120. Now, Mr. Speaker, if anybody thinks that isn't a moral hazard, I'd like them to explain differently, because it is. It's a moral

hazard.

And then all this talk about moral hazards. It's in those forms and applications. These 70,000 forms you've sent out for farmers and business men, and anybody. And maybe half the farmers will get it and the rest will be non-farmers. You just . . . 70,000 papers went out in bulk. I talked to the post office. I happened to get one . . . or my sons got one. And I seen one. But I've got an 88-year-old man in the town of Craik, he got one too; never farmed in his life, never farmed in his life. So they're going to be asking him all these questions on here.

But the biggest thing seems to lead about is these here agents; are they worthwhile or not, and about moral hazards. If you talk enough -- and your form you sent out, the poll they're doing -- talk enough about moral hazards, you'll get the person filling it out thinking moral hazard. You'll have his head just thinking moral hazard. What a terrible farmer -- moral hazard.

Well I wonder if the Minister of Agriculture and the minister of Crop Insurance, Mr. Speaker, understands how moral hazard's policed in this province. It's well policed. When I was involved in 1982-83, we had some terrible poor crops and I had complaints, complaints, complaints about all the people that were cheating in crop insurance. So there were, there were some investigators brought in -- and they're still there, but they have more now -- to investigate where they figure somebody's cheating the system. And they're investigating.

Like last, Mr. Speaker, here last fall where it talked about us not wanting to measure bins. And they called to go out and . . . they called them the police that are going to go out and measure these here . . . bin police, they called them. Well they thought it was all right then to take that away. They didn't worry about a farmer with a moral hazard. They trusted every farmer last fall. They trusted, literally trusted, them all.

I trust you, Mr. Farmer. I'm not going to have anybody measure your bins to make sure that . . . but we want to show you and we want to believe in you, that we trust you, that there is no way that you're going to cheat. But now they come out with a program that says moral hazard. Moral hazards. It's all we hear about is moral hazards.

The only moral hazard, Mr. Speaker, is the NDP government. They're the moral hazards. They should have put on that application form that went out there, would you . . . who do you choose to be the ministers responsible for the GRIP program? Who do you choose? The Minister of Agriculture or the minister of Crop Insurance, or nobody at all? And I'll bet you, nobody at all would have got all the votes. That's exactly the way it would have been.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the members opposite now, and I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture, looked very carefully at the *Hansard* of the example I give, and I hope that he can come back. Because I challenge him now, Mr. Speaker, that when he gets up to speak or whenever . . . and if he doesn't, we're going to

ask him in the Committee of the Whole to show us and prove how he could tell a farmer exactly what his revenue insurance is going to be. That's what I want to have happen.

Mr. Speaker, it's getting close to 5 o'clock. And tomorrow . . . it's private members' day tomorrow, and I won't get on for a while. And I want to say this while I'm still on my feet here, that I am absolutely . . . again and again I repeat this. I've said it three or four times in the House. I want to repeat it again.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people in the front row that brought this here Bill in and going to have this clause in this Bill about a section in the GRIP program that's just going to be void, that a year of our life disappeared, then I'm ashamed of these here ministers, Mr. Speaker. I'm ashamed of the ministers. I'm ashamed of them not explaining to their back-benchers. And if they did, then I'm ashamed of them.

But I don't think they really understand it. I don't think . . . Because I know that I've talked to several MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) out there that aren't ministers, Mr. Speaker. They aren't ministers. And we have talked to some of their constituents and said that I've went to my MLA and he says it's over his head, he doesn't understand it, so I've come to you. And it's right, it's right over their head.

Because the member from Humboldt, Mr. Speaker, is chirping from his seat. And I challenge him. I challenge the member from Humboldt, when he's up here speaking on this Bill, because I know he will. I know that so many back-benchers will speak on this Bill because it's the most important Bill that affects the lives of people of the province of Saskatchewan, that every farmer in this here Assembly will be speaking for hours on end, defending what this here government has done -- defending this here terrible, terrible thing that has happened to all Saskatchewan.

And it just didn't happen, Mr. Speaker, to the farmers of Saskatchewan -- this here part of taken out of our life, this unconstitutional part. And I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, that I do not believe this here Bill will ever become law.

The Speaker: -- Order, order. It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 7 o'clock this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.