

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session — Eighteenth Legislature

December 19, 1977

The Assembly met at 2:00 p.m.
On the Orders of the Day

QUESTIONS

Air in Gas at SPC

MR. R.A. LARTER (Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier in the absence of the minister of SPC. We have some reliable sources that approximately 15 per cent air is being injected in the gas lines at SPC that is reducing the heating value to the houses causing premature failure of furnaces and I would like to ask the Premier if it is true that this air is being injected into gas lines and the people are paying for air as well as gas going into the homes?

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker. I would ask the hon. member to provide us with the reliable information and having received the reliable information I will certainly investigate the report.

Snow Removal Program

MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South): — A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The minister will be aware of the snow removal program in Regina of which is very effective for half the year from April to September but like the French Maginot line it seems to collapse when the snow comes, apparently because of an inability to properly finance a snow removal program. Is there some means by which the Department of Municipal Affairs might assist the city of Regina in respect of snow removal in periods of heavy snowfall such as we've had recently?

HON. G. MacMURCHY (Minister of Municipal Affairs): — Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been any request from the city of Regina for a special program on snow removal. I don't think that the problem is a serious one as yet. We've had a good — well I'm living in Saskatchewan and I've been in Saskatchewan for some time and we get winters occasionally and I think we are going to have a good normal winter contrary to what we had last year. The facts are, Mr. Speaker, that back in 1974 when we did have a special grant for snow removal amounting to a dollar and a half per capita, the municipalities including the city of Regina requested a change from those kinds of conditional grants to one conditional grant and the hon. member will recall that that year we stopped the conditional grant for snow removal and we went into a per capita grant program that year amounting to \$10 per capita. It amounts now to \$22 per capita. The city of Regina happens under that particular program, to have received this past year \$3.3 million which is considerably more than was under the old program of one dollar and a half per capita.

MR. CAMERON: — Mr. Speaker, if I might direct a supplementary to the Minister of Highways by way of some quick response to the minister to indicate that in the city of Regina in the past weekend, the problem was indeed serious and I'm sure it's contributing to the problems of the Minister of Government Insurance, with the number of accidents that are occurring in consequence. My supplementary to the Minister of

Highways is that I would assume there is some highway equipment that is used such as trucks, blades and the like which stand idle or are not fully utilized by the department during the winter. Is there some way in which the Department of Highways could be of assistance to the city of Regina in lending some of its equipment such as trucks and graders and perhaps some men to get at the difficulties the city has had in clearing the snow from the streets and after all we're dealing with the population of 150,000 people? It isn't a small problem.

HON. E. KRAMER (Minister of Highways and Transportation): — Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much that during this last while with the weather the way it is, if we have any surplus equipment that's not on the road working quite often day and night in order to keep those roads under our jurisdiction open. Certainly if there is a request for special assistance from the city, our department would consider it and do everything possible, as we have done in the past in some instances, to assist if there is surplus equipment that is not needed for the purpose it was bought for and is normally used for. I don't think I can say anything more than that but I say I am sure at this point in time there is little if any working equipment that would be available for off highway work.

Proposed New Brewery

MR. J.G. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — I would like to then direct a question to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. First of all welcome back but my question is, what is the status of the negotiations between officials of SEDCO and officials of Molson's Brewery and/or its parent company Carling's with the development of a new brewery in Saskatchewan and when can we expect the announcement?

HON. N. VICKAR (Minister of Industry and Commerce): — Mr. Speaker, I have no information on any negotiations with any of these breweries at this time and date.

MR. LANE: — I apologize, it's Carling's as a subsidiary of Rothmans and what negotiations are being acted upon at present and when can we expect the announcement or have you an announcement to make?

MR. VICKAR: — I have no information on any negotiations with any of the breweries. If there are any negotiations, they are at a lower level, maybe in Industry and Commerce that has not as yet been brought to my attention.

Police Grant re Revenue Sharing Program

MR. G.H. PENNER (Saskatoon Eastview): — A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I wonder if you could indicate to me what the government's position is with regard to including the police grant in the revenue sharing formula that is presently under discussion with SUMA and municipalities?

MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member has mentioned, the revenue sharing program is still under discussion with both SARM and with SUMA. Our position that we have put forward at the meetings we have held and there has been some number of them, I think as high as nine or ten, is that the police grants should be rolled in. A request was for a new unconditional grant program under revenue sharing and I think that if you are going to take that approach and provide operating grants unconditionally, then it would appear to be sensible to roll the police grant in and make it unconditional as well. I think we have to provide, as I have indicated, as special formula within the revenue sharing to take care of police costs and differences in police

costs should it be rolled in.

MR. PENNER: — Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. The minister's answer indicates some desire on the part of his government, as I understand it, to recognize the differences that exist insofar as police grants are concerned. In the light of the fact that the crime rate in Saskatchewan, and I think that most people who look at the statistics would agree, that it has been on the increase, would the minister not agree that the best way to approach the particular situation is to have the police grant visible so that there is an obvious connection between the amount of money that the province is giving to municipalities for that specific program, and that the best way to do that is to keep it outside of the revenue-sharing formula?

MR. MacMURCHY: — I think the key issue, Mr. Speaker, is this discussion that is going on with SUMA is not so much whether the formula with respect to police is visible or not visible. It will be visible whether we are into revenue sharing or whether we're not, how you arrive at the funding. The issue is that when the council gets its money whether it can decide its own priorities, and we think it is important in the whole discussion of unconditional grants, that once the money is there, they decide the priorities of how to spend the money themselves.

Snow Removal Grants

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs pursuant to the question that was raised from the member for Regina South regarding snow removal in the city of Regina. Would the minister not agree that if assistance was given, and I'm not saying that it is not needed, but if assistance was given to the city of Regina, that would be placing other local government boards in Saskatchewan in a very desirable position to also ask the Minister of Municipal affairs for assistance in a similar way.

MR. MacMURCHY: — Well certainly, Mr. Speaker, when one considers the general snowfall in Saskatchewan that if we were going to have a special program for assistance for snow removal, it would have to be on a general basis rather than on a single municipal basis.

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — I would like to tell the Minister of Municipal Affairs that I think this is . . . Would the Minister not agree that the situation in Regina has almost reached a critical and emergency state? Haultain Crescent is a disgrace. Mr. Speaker, would the minister also agree that Mayor Henry Baker doesn't have the funds? He has used it for priorities in other ways. Would the minister not consider initiating a discussion with the city of Regina in this regard?

MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I think there is a problem in the province right now because of the recent snowfalls and it isn't just located in Regina. There is a problem, but I think given a bit of time the problem can be taken care of. Certainly that's what providing funds to municipalities should be all about. Rather than making funds on a conditional basis they should be on an unconditional basis so that the local council can decide its own priorities.

Cable Television

MR. W.C. THATCHER (Thunder Creek): — Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the alderman from Moose Jaw has not been on his feet to explain what a marvellous job

Moose Jaw has been doing. But to get to my question, Mr. Speaker. A question to the Attorney General, or the minister in charge of cable television. Mr. Minister, it has been noted that Sask Tel on its charges to the potential, or the cable television licensees throughout the province, four of them, has been placing a provision charge which is approximately 10 per cent of the anticipated capital cost. Would the Attorney General agree that this provision charge is basically the charge that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan are going to have to pay over and above what they would have originally had to pay in order for Sask Tel to own and control this hardware?

HON. R. ROMANOW (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is clearly, no. I want to say that the provisioning charge as I am advised, I don't know the full details of it, is one which is apparently a relatively normal commercial feature of this kind of contract.

May I say to the member opposite who in this question seems to imply that the fight that Saskatchewan undertook for control of the cable ownership was somehow a wrong fight, that when his father was the Premier of this province the policy of the government of the day was, as well, to make sure that the cable hardware ownership maintained itself with Sask Tel. This has been consistent policy of governments including the former Liberal government for years.

MR. THATCHER: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Attorney General just suggested that this was a normal commercial charge. Would the Attorney General tell this Assembly why such a provision charge of this nature, approximately 10 per cent of the capital cost, is not written into the contract of CPN, the closed circuit concern. Would the minister tell this Assembly why CPN is presently operating not under the terms of the contract which has been signed, why CPN — granted they are not fully operational but nonetheless they are using the cable, Moose Jaw for one, I am not clear where else — is not being charged by Sask Tel, not charging their subscribers, consequently, if this is a normal charge why isn't it being charged to CPN?

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know the details of the provisioning charge. I must candidly confess I will have to look at that and get further information and advise the hon. member. But I would say with respect to the CPN the charge is higher than it is on conventional cable to subscribers, both in Moose Jaw and in other places where it is 'operational'. CPN is under contract with Sask Tel or Sask Tel is under contract with CPN and has been for quite some time and the provision of the closed circuit function is made pursuant to that. Whether there is a technological or other difference on the nature of the systems of delivery which would account for this, I don't know but I repeat my answer that I am advised that as far as cable, conventional cable, is concerned and the so-called provisioning charge this is a relatively usual and normal charge for doing business.

MR. THATCHER: — A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, I think, if I understood you correctly, you are suggesting that CPN is paying a provisioning charge. Mr. Minister, I will give you an opportunity in this last supplementary to change your answer if you wish. The point is, it does not appear that CPN is paying a provisioning charge. You, yourself, just suggested that this is a very normal process and again, I ask you, why has CPN been exempted from what the other normal cable licensees are having to pay?

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I did not say that CPN was paying a provisioning charge whatever that term means. I frankly do not know. I did not suggest that in my

second answer.

With respect to the second part of the question I repeat again what I said in the first two questions and answers.

Return No. 76

MR. MERCHANT: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question and a couple or three supplementaries to the minister in charge of SEDCO regarding Return No. 76 which he was good enough to have forwarded to me a few days ago regarding some written questions.

Part of the return, Mr. Speaker, indicates that in 1976 there was a small profit while in 1975 there was a \$2.3 million loss. I ask the minister whether he would not agree with me that the only reason that the loss of approximately \$2.5 million from SEDCO operations was not duplicated again in 1976 was because of an accounting move of transferring a debt of \$2.5 million owing by SEDCO into equity and thereby appearing to make a profit because \$2.5 million in interest charges was not assessed to SEDCO.

HON. N. VICKAR (Minister in charge of SEDCO): — Mr. Speaker, I think this question was raised last year in the House and I am quite satisfied that the answer was given to the member for Wascana in Public Accounts and, furthermore, I think the Minister of Finance has explained the situation and I have no further comment.

MR. MERCHANT: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister regarding Return No. 76, new information which the minister didn't have and I didn't have last year, how can he explain that the number of loans of SEDCO has risen in terms of being in arrears from \$4 million in 1974 to \$7 million in 1975 to \$11.5 million in 1976. These are loans in arrears which have not been paid and I ask the minister whether this is not indicative to the people of Saskatchewan that their money is being badly mishandled by SEDCO?

MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker. I would suggest that the member bring these questions to Crown corporations and we will be prepared to answer every one in detail.

Canadian Spending in United States

MR. L.W. BIRKBECK (Moosomin): — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources. The Financial Times, Mr. Minister, reports total spending by Canadians in the United States last year was \$2.3 billion and a record number of Canadians expected to travel to the United States next year is projected to be 12.8 million. What specifics, Mr. Minister, has the government detailed to attract Canadians to visit this province?

HON. A.S. MATSALLA (Minister of Tourism and Renewable Resources): — Mr. Speaker, in reply to the hon. member's question, we have continued in the past and we are going to continue in the future to carry out promotional work in the northern United States, particularly to try to lure tourists into our province and into Canada as a whole. We have also set up various tourism districts in the province; they too are going to undertake to promote Saskatchewan, in the province but also within Canada and hopefully we might be able to improve that deficit position that we find ourselves in at this time.

MR. BIRKBECK: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I would naturally assume that you would be viewing the attraction of tourists to our province on an annual basis and that would be including the winter months. Mr. Minister, in the Moose Mountain Provincial park area, the main thoroughfare, Manitoba Street, running down to the lakefront is continually blocked with snow and adequate snow removal in that park area on the government side is not sufficient. We could be attracting tourists onto that park and I'm sure other parks and ski resorts in the province if the government was making sure that the snow was removed. Now, Mr. Minister, are you going to be concentrating on these park areas in the winter months and getting the snow removed and let the tourists come in during the winter months?

Mr. MATSALLA: — Mr. Speaker, wherever there are tourist facilities for winter recreation, we are making every effort to clear the roads and attract tourists into that area. With respect to park area, I think that the hon. member will agree with me there really aren't many attractions for winter recreation, unless for tobogganing and we have been designing trails for tobogganing as well as cross country ski skiing. I think insofar as downhill skiing is concerned we are doing all we can to attract the tourists to various ski hills in the province.

New General Manager for SEDCO

MR. A.N. McMILLAN: — A question to the Minister of Industry and Commerce. I'd like to know, Mr. Minister, in view of the fact that some time ago you indicated that you were prepared to make an announcement about a new general manager for the SEDCO office in Saskatchewan, if in fact you are at this time prepared to stand and tell this House whether or not you have had anyone commit themselves to the general manager's portfolio on SEDCO on a permanent basis?

MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, no we have not. We are negotiating with a couple of people for that position at this time.

MR. McMILLAN: — ... know if the minister is still pursuing the elusive Mr. Leslie from eastern Canada or if you have turned your sights to someone with a little more predictable response to your inquiries regarding permanent employment?

MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, we are looking at various applications to the position of General manager for SEDCO.

MR. McMILLAN: — Would the minister not agree that in view off the fact that this sort of on again off again employment of a permanent manager has been going on for some considerable time, would the minister not agree this lack of consistency in the senior management portfolio is badly hurting SEDCO's ability to perform on a long range basis?

MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the member that we are very concerned that we do not have a general manager for SEDCO, however, we want to make sure we have the right man at the helm of that particular ship. That is why we are taking time to interview the various people who come along and as far as the operation of SEDCO at this time, we are operating with an acting manager and I think the boys are doing a favorable job under the circumstances.

Snow Removal

MR. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Preface, I am sorry — first of all the snow just didn't fall in Regina. I know it fell in my constituency and would the minister tell us if he has had representations from communities outside of Regina for assistance for snow removal and if he has had requests, would he give them fair consideration?

MR. MacMURCHY: — Mr. Speaker, I have not had any requests from any councils to

this time outside of Regina nor have I had a request from the Regina council with respect to special assistance for snow removal as a result of the recent snowfall.

MR. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Would the minister not agree that the efforts of some members to restrict their political activities to just areas where they are seeking federal election, does a disservice to the people of this House and when a general question applies that we should be approaching it as a provincial party on a general basis?

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, the member for Wascana.

SEDCO Loans

MR. MERCHANT: — I would like to direct a further question to the minister in charge of the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation. I ask firstly, whether the minister does not agree with me that the .0026 per cent that the province of Saskatchewan is earning on the \$41 million that has been invested is a rather low return for Saskatchewan to expect, particularly when one remembers that usually it is a loss situation? I ask, secondly, whether there have been any new loans in 1977, loans like the \$25 million last year from the Treasury to move into equity, transfers of money from loans to equity, so that again Saskatchewan people will attempt to be deceived into believing that SEDCO made a profit rather than a loss?

MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, I might tell the hon. member that there have been no new loans of that nature in 1977 and furthermore that this will come out in Crown Corporations and we will be able to define their position.

MR. MERCHANT: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Have any further funds been advanced from the Treasury to SEDCO for the year 1977 and perhaps you would leave it to the House to decide whether it is designed to deceive people into believing there is a profit?

MR. VICKAR: — Mr. Speaker, no there have not

Exodus from the Province of Quebec

MR. R.H. BAILEY (Rosetown-Elrose): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Premier. From time to time the news media carried reports of a somewhat of an exodus from the province of Quebec due to rather unstable conditions within that province. Mr. Premier, has Saskatchewan benefitted in any way from the exodus of the people from the province of Quebec and have you any idea of the number of people who have come to Saskatchewan from Quebec?

MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, so far as I am aware, the movement into the province of Saskatchewan from the province of Quebec has not in any dramatic way, been accelerated since the election of the Parti Quebecois government. I have, over a number of years, looked at a table of people who come into our province from other provinces in Canada and my recollection in looking at this monthly table indicates that there has been no dramatic increase from the province of Quebec. Accordingly, I do not think that the political situation has meant a major increase in immigrants to our province from the province of Quebec.

STATEMENT

Committee Branded Kangaroo Court — Leader Post

MR. SPEAKER: — I wish to make a correction which has appeared in the Leader Post on December 13 and December 14 evening editions. Articles are as follows: The heading of the first news item is “Committee Branded Kangaroo Court” and in that article halfway through it says, “The letter was withdrawn at Brockelbank’s request and the Speaker accepted the withdrawal.”

The subsequent article on December 14 stated “Brockelbank considered the Berntson letter to be a slur on the Speaker’s impartiality although he later accepted the PC Whip’s withdrawal of the document.”

I wish to state that I did not request the withdrawal of the document and the House did not accept the withdrawal of the document, just to keep the record straight.

On Thursday, December 15, 1977 the Hon. Member for Quill Lakes raised a Point of Privilege to the effect that the honorable members for Thunder Creek and Qu’Appelle were in contempt of the Legislative Assembly by referring to the Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections as a ‘Kangaroo Court.’

I refer all members to the following citation in Beauchesne’s Parliamentary Rules and Forms, Citation 108 (4), page 98 which states that ‘Scandalous charges and imputations directed against members of a Select Committee are equivalent to libellous charges brought against the House itself’ and further in Erskine May’s Parliamentary Practice, 18th edition, page 132 which states that ‘any disorderly, contumacious or disrespectful conduct in the presence of either House or any committee thereof, whether by strangers present or by persons attending as parties or witnesses will constitute a contempt.’

It is not the function of the Speaker to decide the question of substance of whether a breach of privilege has in fact been committed but rather it is my duty to determine whether a prima facie case of a breach of privilege has been made out by the member for Quill Lake. In my opinion, this matter fulfils the conditions of a prima facie case of breach of privilege and I therefore leave the matter in the hands of the assembly to deal with as they see fit.

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could speak just to a Point of Order for a moment. Rule 6 (3) says ‘when a prima facie case of privilege has been established it shall be taken into consideration immediately.’ As I understand your Honor’s ruling you have found that it is a prima facie case of privilege. Would your Honor care to interpret to me, as ridiculous as this may seem, what the word ‘immediately’ means, in that context? When can we deal with this?

MR. SPEAKER: — I think that the Assembly should decide . . . perhaps I better seek some advice. I have an opinion but I want to check it. It means that the member must exercise his options to take care of the matter as they see fit now, and that could be by a motion of some nature. The members will recall the motion that was dealt with previously and the conclusion of the Speaker’s statement which brought the subject matter to the attention of the House which subsequently was sent to the Special Committee on Privileges and Elections.

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, rising then on this particular matter I feel that the

situation does warrant some action by the members of the Legislative Assembly. I think all members would agree, Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats alike, that it would not be in order or appropriate for members of the Assembly to do nothing where Mr. Speaker has in effect ruled that there is indeed a prima facie case of privilege. If that is the ruling and there has been a prima facie case of privilege, to do nothing and to move on to the next order of business I think would make a mockery of the matter and would make a mockery of the question of having raised this issue in the first instance.

Mr. Speaker, I will be moving a motion at the conclusion of my remarks. Could I just make one or two preliminary remarks before I move the motion?

I think we have seen in this session of the Legislature probably more kinds of statements, which have necessitated on you Honor to make such rulings, than I have seen over the past several years as a member of this Assembly. I don't say this necessarily as any partisan. No doubt I have on occasion, in the course of debate, made comments which perhaps have contributed to the general lack of decorum.

It does bother me though, Mr. Speaker, very much that the source of much of the concern of the House stems from some of the members who come from the Progressive Conservative caucus sitting in this Legislature. It does bother me because the question of decorum is something which has been placed directly in issue by that caucus and by the leader of that caucus, urging us as legislators to be responsible in deliberations and in matters which are for consideration of this House.

I think that his words are words which were well stated although I don't totally agree with him. Certainly the intent of them were well stated. I do, however, say more in sorrow than in anger that the words have not been followed up by actions and deeds by the members of the Conservative Party. I think that while I am not on the Committee of Privileges and Elections the fact is that it is a committee of the Assembly. The fact is that it is a committee which has been established by this Assembly. It is an extension of this Assembly. The mandate or the resolution, which has been forwarded to it, Mr. Speaker, is a resolution or a mandate which has been given to it by this Assembly. Whether we agree or disagree with the decision of the House is really not the issue. The issue is not, as far as the Conservatives are concerned, whether it was a proper decision for the Assembly to refer this matter to committee. The issue is not whether or not the subject matters are motivated by political overlay or whatever.

The simple issue is that these matters have been directed to the committee and that as such the committee deserves the full respect of all members of this Assembly as I would expect all members of this Assembly expect one of the other in ordinary course of deliberations.

I think an allegation of 'kangaroo' court in this Assembly, publicly stated, would be dealt with by the House immediately and properly so and in the normal course of events would result in, I am sure, the appropriate members withdrawing their remarks. I don't think there has been one of us who has perhaps not overstated the case with respect to our arguments as they arise from time to time, but I think there hasn't been one of us who has failed to withdraw unqualifiedly those statements we made in heat, in anger, or in purposeful deliberation at that particular time. I think that we are here facing the same situation. We are members who exhort other members of the public to follow our example. We are members who exhort other members of the public to obey the law, to show respect for the law, to show that we are the kind of people, who by our example will not bring institutions into disrepute. In my judgement Mr. Speaker's observations

about those words being a prima facie case are, indeed, correct judgement calls, correct interpretations of the impact of those words.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the ordinary solution for this matter is for the two hon. members having been found by Your Honor to have committed a prima facie breach of privilege, the easy and simple way and totally proper way is for them to rise in their seats at the conclusion of my remarks, or elsewhere during the course of this debate and to withdraw those remarks unqualifiedly. This is obviously the proper thing to do when Mr. Speaker has ruled a breach of privilege and if I can put it, it is the simple thing to do, the right thing to do. I know in the case of the member for Qu'Appelle he is a member of the legal profession, not that that makes any special difference, but I do believe that he knows the rules of law, the procedure of rule by law, the principles and perhaps a little added importance to my remarks might be carried with him since it is also he who is attributed to have made these statements.

I believe, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that is the simplest and best way so that we can get on with the business of not only the committee, and I am not sure at what stage the committee is at, but to get on with the business of the committee and also to get on with the business of debating the other important issues that you have before you in this House, the question of Bill 47 and there is a Priority of Debate resolution that is I know pending that has to be disposed of by this House yet as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would move seconded by the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Mr. Smishek and I would hope that members would consider this because I think this is the proper way to deal with this: I would move, seconded by the hon. Mr. Smishek, that this Assembly request:

- (1) that statements by the members for Qu'Appelle and Thunder Creek referring to a Committee of the Legislature as a Kangaroo Court be unconditionally withdrawn forthwith and
- (2) that the said members tender apologies to this Assembly in respect of the said statements.

MR. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Mr. Speaker, we are faced with some difficulty, not because of the allegations made, but by the precedents established by this House. On November 21, the member for Souris-Cannington, made what you yourself called, Mr. Speaker, an unqualified withdrawal of his letter, an unqualified withdrawal. That letter, of course, is the very subject of the motion made by the member for Indian Head-Wolseley. It's a substantive part of the motion; the reason for the motion made by the member for Indian Head-Wolseley. Yet what happened? The members of this Assembly would not accept, refused to accept, and I say distinctively refused to accept the unqualified withdrawal of the letter by the member for Souris-Cannington — the first time in history of this House that such an unqualified withdrawal was ever rejected by members of this House. Now, Mr. Speaker, he withdrew his letter and the letter is the subject matter of the motion and read that motion very carefully, Mr. Attorney General.

MR. ROMANOW: — Outside the House he said he still believed the contents to be true.

MR. LANE: — No, he said there was deal. He said there was a deal. Now you read the motion because a lot of things have happened, Mr. Speaker. First of all that happy little committee went far beyond its motion already. Now, why would a committee, supposedly set up by this Legislature to look into a letter which is a substance of the motion go far beyond it? We'll tell you why, Mr. Speaker, because it's remarks made by the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, when he stated on November 21 and I'm going to quote because I think its germane and I think it's an indication of what is going on in this Assembly when he said about 'the unqualified withdrawal' and this makes me very, very angry and I'm surprised the press hasn't picked it up because this political little game that's going on is stated right here about the 'unqualified withdrawal' and I'm quoting from the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, the mover of the motion, when he said: "If it's only to withdraw the letter and only to eliminate the danger of public scrutiny into their Conservative Party." That's the reason for that committee and it makes me angry and it should make the house leader and the Attorney General angry that you would use a committee of the Legislative Assembly for public scrutiny into a political party. That is not the intention of this Assembly and the reason for the existence of the committee as stated by the mover of the motion colors the activities of the committee beyond belief.

Now, speeches by the members of the committee criticizing the Conservatives — speeches in this Assembly and I refer for one to the member for Regina South, who criticized during the debate on the actual motion to send it to the Privileges Committee, before he heard evidence, before the facts were called before the committee, before the committee heard one person, said that the Conservative Party was guilty, before he heard anyone. Other members, before they heard one person, had their minds made up, we will not participate in those types of activities.

You know if we followed the statements in this Assembly by members opposite criticizing the Supreme Court on the CIGOL case and applied the same principles to the Privileges and Election Committee, then of course there isn't one member in this House that can cast judgement on another — not one, not one of you has the right to cast judgement on a member of this House, especially when he made an unqualified withdrawal of the letter. The true facts, Mr. Speaker, that the committee, in the words of the mover of the motion, is designed to look for public scrutiny into the Conservative Party — that is not the original intention of the Privileges Committee. The Privileges Committee hasn't sat for 60 or 70 years for a very good reason because every other Assembly took it seriously and knew that they were serious matters that went before the committee. Never in the history of British Parliament has a Privileges Committee been used for public scrutiny into a political party. Never before, and yet in the words of the member for Indian Head-Wolseley that is the sole purpose of that Privileges Committee. It went far beyond from the press statements that I've seen, far beyond the activities of looking into a letter that had been withdrawn. They are now calling all sorts of people before the committee. Mr. Speaker, public scrutiny into the Conservative Party by partisan members of this Assembly, which is the reason for the Elections Committee, will not be accepted by the Conservative Party and I think in fairness nor should it.

If we are prepared to set up a system for members of the House where the members of the House can carry public scrutiny into activities of every political party, of course, the whole system falls apart and that's not the intention of the Elections Committee. I can't withdraw, Mr. Speaker, for several reasons. First of all the very reason for the committee. Secondly, the bias of some of the members who prejudged the committee and then sat on the committee — something our courts would not

tolerate. We have for example, the comments of one of the committee members, the member for Regina Centre, a Cabinet minister, who in a news release stated that PCs have no defence, before he had heard any evidence. First of all publicly we call it a court and then it turns out that half the members are biased. Now if we give to the members opposite the right to criticize the Supreme Court as they've done, then surely the Conservatives have the right to criticize the Privileges and Elections Committee and we did that and we will do that. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, that this whole committee is a waste of the public's fine effort and we say and we stand by our position, then let's get down to the public's business where we should be, what we're paid to do and that's the position of the Conservative Party.

MR. CAMERON: — Much of what we have just heard, Mr. Speaker, is largely nonsense. If the member for Qu'Appelle had spent the time in the committee which he should have done the last several days, he would know as does every member on that committee and every member of the press and every other person who has been present during the inquiry of the committee, that it has limited itself to two questions. The one question whether or not the letter which Mr. Speaker found was a matter *prima facie* of breach of privilege is a contempt of the institution, is the first question, by its implication of Mr. Speaker and the alleged deal. Then the second question is if the committee finds it is, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated having already as a *prima facie* matter found it is, the second question then is, what action will the committee recommend to the House that it takes in respect to the author or the signatory at least, of the letter. Now, the member for Qu'Appelle says, the reason they refuse to attend the committee is that it was struck for the purpose of public scrutiny into a political party. Now I am not suggesting there ought not to be some careful public scrutiny of the Conservative Party, both within and without it. I would be the last to suggest the public ought not to take that question in hand and give the Conservative Party some close scrutiny. But members will know that that committee in its last several days of functioning has directed itself to the question that I've indicated. It has not gone afield. It invited Mr. Berntson on its second day to be present, before the committee, prior the time it began its substantive inquiry. He didn't see fit to do it. The Conservative members have not resigned from that Committee, they've not come to the House and tendered their resignation, they still sit on the committee but they don't attend. The Conservative Party and the member involved had a right to counsel before that committee, there was a counsel there, although no indication formally to the committee that counsel was there on behalf of the member for the Conservative Party. There has not in my term on the committee been one question, one question directed to the Conservative Party, its internal workings or inviting any public scrutiny by this body of the Conservative Party. That portion of what the member said is sheer nonsense. If he had been attending the work of the committee the last several days he would know that that's the fact.

Mr. Speaker, let's review the facts again of this matter. The first fact is that the member for Nipawin made an issue early and continuing of the decorum of this institution. He expressed concern when he first came here and it has been a continuing concern that he's expressed about some of the proceedings of this Assembly and some of its habits supposedly because its undermining the respect the people ought to have for this institution. Many of us had a great deal of sympathy for what the member for Nipawin first said about that and what he has continued to say because the decorum in the Legislature is clearly a matter of some importance and so is the way in which it proceeds and the limits that are prescribed and that apply to all members with respect to their conduct here. That's fact number one. He is the one in this discord session who has made that an issue. Now he is either sincere in making that an issue or he isn't and

the evidence that we have had in the past two and a half to three years is that he has not been sincere, because the chief offenders on every occasion of the traditions of this House have been the Conservatives. Fact number two. His letter was delivered to Mr. Speaker on the 16th of November which Mr. Speaker found the following day to be in a prima facie way in breach of the privileges of the House. I draw that fact to the attention of the member for Qu'Appelle who said some members made a judgement in advance of the Committee sitting. The fact is Mr. Speaker made the first judgement. Mr. Speaker said "Here is a letter I received;" Mr. Speaker said. "I have examined it;" Mr. Speaker said, "I find it to be a breach of the privilege of the House." It was the Legislature that then determined there ought to be a committee to inquire into the matter further to determine among other things, how the member who breached the privileges of the House, in Mr. Speaker's judgement, ought to be dealt with. That's the fact. Another fact is that the member for Thunder Creek, who first referred to the work of the committee and the committee as a 'kangaroo court', may very well have been speaking in the heat of the moment. While I think it is improper, I think members might have let that pass as a comment made in the heat of the moment. The member for Qu'Appelle however, can claim no such heat of the moment remark. He went on television a day or two later still peddling this snivelling nonsense about not getting on with the work of the province, fiddling around on the committee and I say to the member for Qu'Appelle there are two respects — one is why isn't he doing his duty as a member of the legislature by being at that committee when it is sitting every morning and, secondly, and this is what I say, if they are so concerned about the work of the government and the province not participating more fully in respect to the debates and particularly the debate on Bill 47, for him to say it's a waste is nonsense, Mr. Speaker.

The point is, though, that he had an opportunity to think through the charge of the member for Thunder Creek. He repeated it a day or two later to the television cameras, then, he came back into the House and he said it again in the Legislature. It was evident to all members as to why he was doing it. He made some comment about the remark being referred back to the committee which is a 'kangaroo court' itself, we'll judge whether or not it's 'kangaroo court'. He knew what he was saying, no question. He had time to reflect and he, for one, isn't going to be able to plead that he made a remark in the heat of the moment.

Now Mr. Speaker, fact number three is the same background here. Mr. Speaker has made a decision today at the request of the chairman of the Privileges and Elections Committee that the remark by the member for Thunder Creek, repeated by the member for Qu'Appelle on two occasions — once on television and once in the House — is in breach of the privileges of the House. Stress the fact that that's Mr. Speaker's decision. Then Mr. Speaker turns it to the members of the House and says, "What action do you want to take?" Let's understand two important facts here, with respect to the letter. It was Mr. Speaker's decision that it was a breach of privilege and that's the way in which the committee got started. Secondly, it is Mr. Speaker's decision today that the remarks of the members are beyond the rules of the House. Now, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General has moved a motion asking the two members to withdraw the remarks and apologize to members of the House and I want to say that I support that motion. I was appalled as a matter of fact at the length to which the member of Qu'Appelle went, given a couple of facts, one is his own experience in the House and secondly, is the issue which his leader took about the need to preserve respect for the institution, that he should go so far as to refer to the committee as a 'kangaroo court'. He, I think, clearly knew that that was in breach of the rules of the House and in breach of proper conduct and if he had been attending the committee meetings these last several days he would know that the committee in fact has been conducting itself formally and fairly and along

well structured rules, limiting its inquiry to the point that subsequently Mr. Speaker's decision was referred to the committee.

Now there is all kinds of room here and we see it all the time, for all kinds of tough partisan debate. The members are protected from the usual laws of the province in respect to many of their comments. They are shielded, given special immunity, because of the value to have full exposure in this Assembly of issues touching the people's business. But there are rules that have been prescribed by long tradition with respect to power, rules that bear heavily upon members who have some sense of responsibility about the value of this institution but rules which apparently don't bear so heavily on some others. The rules clearly prescribe in terms of the tradition of the House, in terms of maintaining its respect and not bringing it into odium, that members not go beyond certain prescribed limits. These comments are not only beyond those limits, these are gross intrusions beyond the limits.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that both the member for Thunder Creek and the member for Qu'Appelle would without further debate rise and have the courage to indicate to members of the House that they regret having made those remarks to withdraw them and apologize to members.

MR. C.P. MacDONALD (Indian Head-Wolseley): — Mr. Speaker, once again I have witnessed the reason why this committee was called. I would like to read what I stated in the words that the member for Qu'Appelle took out of context. Mr. Speaker, what bothers me is the man would deliberately get up and distort the facts of the truth in this House. Mr. Speaker, here is what I said and I leave it to you to judge:

But if it is only to withdraw the letter and only to eliminate the danger of public scrutiny into the Conservative Party and the reasons behind this kind of public allegation.

I didn't say the but into the intrigues or inside the Conservative Party. Mr. Speaker, let me examine two things. Number one, this committee is an open committee. Mr. Speaker, the press are welcome, the public is welcome. If that is not public scrutiny I would like to know what is public scrutiny. That's the first thing, I was merely stating a fact. The second fact, Mr. Speaker, is I said, "Into the Conservative caucus and the reasons behind this allegation." The letter was signed by the Conservative Party Whip on behalf of the Conservative caucus. Is that not the Conservative Caucus, the Conservative Party? Mr. Speaker, I say to you if any honest man, any honest man will read what I stated on page 82 on November 21st, 1977, and can in any way put it in context with what the member for Qu'Appelle has said, it is another indication, Mr. Speaker, that his attitude and the attitude of his party is an insult to the institution of parliament and I mean that. Mr. Speaker, decorum is far more than gum chewing, it's far more than reading newspapers, its far more than not clapping. I don't think there is anything more regrettable that has happened in this Assembly then this particular issue since I have been in this Assembly, some 15, 16, 17 sessions, nothing. But, Mr. Speaker, I look back on the last two years and on every occasion that this institution is challenged, I am not talking about the debate and the give and take, I can take what the member for Qu'Appelle says about me and not only that I look forward to it, as I love to get up and defend myself and my party and my principles, but every time that this institution of parliament has been challenged, has been brought to disrepute, has been sneered at, been laughed at, has been insulted, it has been by that party.

Mr. Speaker, I can recall on one occasion I was asked to leave this Assembly, I was

asked four or five years ago. I thought I was justified in the actions I took. The regret I have is not what I said myself or what I believed; the regret I have is what might have happened to the institution of parliament.

I am going to say that if that particular party thinks they can form government and come in here and sneer and insult the very institution that makes it possible, let me ask the Conservative Party, if we get in this Assembly and the NDP pass a law and I don't agree with it but the majority of this Assembly passes that law that I can walk out and say because it was them and because they have a majority in this Assembly, that I can ignore and break the law. That's exactly what they are saying, because they have a majority and because they are the minority that they will continue to ignore the law. I say to the members of the Conservative Party and I hope that everyone will please take my remarks and read them very carefully and to suggest that there is any relationship of truth to what the member for Qu'Appelle says. All I am say, Mr. Speaker, I do hope those two members will get up and withdraw their statement because if not the whole challenge to this institution and the ability of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly to pursue the public business in this province will be destroyed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, Hear!

Mr. J.A. PEPPER (Weyburn): — Mr. Speaker, I find this rather difficult but as one who has sat in the House going on 14 years and has watched the procedures and the parliamentary system as we have learned, from when we first entered the Legislature I certainly think there is no system that can touch it, if we follow out our positions as elected members in an honorable way and in the way in which our constituencies expect us to do.

I would ask the two hon. members to reconsider their stand and to certainly bring themselves back up to the honorable way of operation of this Assembly by withdrawing their statements, and I think it would certainly, as they leave this Assembly whenever that time might come, they will never regret that they have risen in their seat and withdrawn the statement. I'm afraid if they do not they will not be able to say that. So, Mr., Speaker, I ask them humbly and in as respectful a way as I can, that they consider the withdrawing of that statement.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. R.L. COLLVER (Nipawin): — Mr. Speaker, I think today perhaps in a quiet way without raising our voices in this Assembly, perhaps we can all reflect on the meaning of the Legislative Assembly and on the meaning of parliamentary democracy in this country, because what has been stated by the member for Saskatoon Riverside and what has been stated by the member for Regina South and the member for Indian Head Wolseley, applies equally if a party and if the views of that party are being held down by the majority in any situation. If for example, an individual member of this Legislative Chamber believes that the majority of the Legislative Chamber, and has substance to believe that the majority of the Legislative Chamber are placing his rights to speak and his rights to put forward his ideas in jeopardy, then the whole system is in jeopardy. If that minority in a minority position in the Assembly can be stepped on by the entire Assembly, by the majority of the Assembly merely because they hold different views merely because they reflect different views, is to put not the institution is disrepute but is to put the entire system of parliamentary democracy in jeopardy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have seen a number of minutes and hours of this

Assembly taken up in this session with accusations against an entire political party—one member and an entire political party. Accusations that somehow, even though in the Assembly where the Assembly is required to accept the word of a member as stated in this Assembly, even though those members of the Progressive Conservative Party for example, on every occasion stated that the letter written on November 16 by the Progressive Conservative Whip, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party was not intended as any slam against the Speaker individually or the Speaker's office in general. Every speaker stated that. Every speaker in this Assembly on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party stated there was no intention within the letter whatsoever that the Speaker or the Speaker's office should be placed in jeopardy.

Furthermore, what we did state in this Assembly was that we were attempting to call attention to the Speaker and to the people of Saskatchewan through the Speaker, that deals have been made between two parties to jeopardize a third party, another party. We have, Mr. Speaker, as individual MLA's and as spokesmen for various individuals in our province, the right without fear of retribution and recrimination to speak against the views and actions of other political parties in any way we see fit, other political parties. And Mr. Speaker, I will quote from Beauchesne as Mr. Speaker has done before on many occasions. Page 419 — 'Expressions which are unparliamentary when applied to individuals are not always considered when applied to a whole party.' Mr. Speaker has used that quotation and that citation on many occasions to explain to this Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan that statements made about parties are not construed in the same way by a Legislative Chamber as statements made about individuals.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are asking us, the members of this Legislative Chamber, to go forward with the people's business. They are asking us to debate important pieces of legislation, they are asking us to come to grips and come to a vote on important pieces of legislation that are before this Legislature. I would like today to give this Assembly and every member therein, the opportunity both from our party and from the other two parties to get out of this dilemma in which we find ourselves today, where on December 20 we are still debating a letter written on November 16.

Mr. Speaker, therefore I would like to move an amendment to this motion, seconded by my seatmate, the member for Estevan, that all the words from 'forthwith' be deleted and the following words be added:

and that this Assembly also accepts the withdrawal of the letter from E. Berntson, MLA for Souris-Cannington, dated November 16, 1977 and that the Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be suspended immediately.

The debate continues concurrently on the motion and the amendment

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, if you have made the ruling that the amendment is in order that's fine. Quite frankly I am surprised at that ruling, very much so, because the subject matter of the Berntson letter has already been dealt with by the House and been referred to the Committee of Privileges. That's the deposition of that. This amendment is predicated on assumption of facts which the House has already not viewed to be the case by referring it to the Privileges Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: — If the Attorney General is seeking a citation I'll dig it out for him

MR. ROMANOW: — Let's dig it out.

MR. SPEAKER: — O.K.

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, may I also rise on a further point of order while you are considering this matter. I would like to make this argument if I can very simply and that is this. The subject matter of the motion which I have moved requests that the comments from the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek respecting 'kangaroo court' be withdrawn, that's the subject matter of the issue or if you will, translating it, the subject matter of the motion are certain comments made surrounding the activities of a certain committee. What we are seeing by this amendment is a new additional subject matter. It is the new and additional subject matter of a purported withdrawal, the motion says, accepts the withdrawal, but a purported withdrawal is a debating point in any event, I say purported withdrawal. This should be the subject matter of a second separate resolution, since quite clearly, with notice, since clearly it raises another subject matter and that is the question of purported withdrawal of the letter from one E. Berntson, MLA for Souris-Cannington. Now how can we meld these two together? I, frankly, Mr. Speaker, cannot see. I raise that to you as an additional new argument to the first point that I raise about the question of the subject matter having dealt with elsewhere. But let's assume you have ruled on that, would your honor at least consider the second point that I raise in this regard?

MR. SPEAKER: — Now I refer members to Beauchesne, fourth edition, page 126 citation 140:

It is a wholesome restraint upon members that they cannot revive a debate already concluded and it would be little use in preventing the same question from being offered twice in the same session if without being offered its merits might be discussed again and again. (Continuing) It is irregular to reflect upon, argue against or in any way call into question in debate the past

acts or proceedings of the House on the obvious grounds that besides attending to revived discussion upon a question which has already been once decided, such reflections are uncourteous to the House and irregular in principle inasmuch as the member is himself included in and bound by the vote agreed to by the majority and it seems that reflecting upon or questioning the acts of the majority is equivalent to reflecting upon the House.

I refer you further to Beauchesne, page 137, citation 162:

Sometimes the House may not be prepared to rescind a resolution but may be willing to modify its judgement by considering and agreeing to another resolution relating to the same object. Thus a resolution having been agreed to which condemned an official appointment, the House by a subsequent resolution withdrew the censure which the previous resolution had conveyed.

I would ask the members to give me a further moment.

The member's question was raised without notice. This is an amendment to the resolution which is before the House and consequently does not require notice.

MR. MALONE: — Is Mr. Speaker saying that the amendment is in order?

MR. SPEAKER: — My position is that the amendment is in order . . . the amendment so you can dispose of it as they see fit.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you wouldn't mind reading the full motion now as amended assuming for a moment that the amendment would go through.

MR. SPEAKER: —I will do that immediately. The motion as amended would read, if it were accepted:

That this Assembly request: (1) that the statements by the Members for Qu'Appelle and Thunder Creek referring to a Committee of the Legislature as a 'kangaroo court' be unconditionally withdrawn forthwith and that this Assembly also accepts the withdrawal of the letter from E. Berntson, MLA for Souris-Cannington dated November 16, 1977 and that the Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be suspended immediately.

MR. MALONE: — Mr. Speaker, the amendment is difficult to grasp unless it is read together. What it appears to say is that the Conservatives are prepared to have the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek withdraw their remarks about a 'kangaroo court' providing this Assembly immediately disband the Committee on Privileges and Elections. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the Conservatives are trying to rescue two of their members, or perhaps three of their members at the same time with this motion and I would have to give it some consideration before I can determine whether we would support the motion as amended or not.

It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the thrust of the amendment certainly would indicate that the remarks by the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek were not well taken as it appears the Conservative caucus is ready to have those

remarks withdrawn unconditionally by those two members.

Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak, briefly, on this motion that has taken us all somewhat by surprise today, let me say that I, once again, regret as I do all members including the members to my left, that so much time has been put on this particular situation that arose at the opening of the House.

The member for Nipawin in his remarks talked about accusations against his party and he seemed to infer that the reason that all this time was being wasted is because the Liberals and the NDP are accusing his party of doing certain things.

I would like to remind you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of this House how this particular situation arose. It wasn't by accusations by the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party that created this situation, Mr. Speaker, it was improper accusations by that party that created this situation.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. MALONE: — It was a proper accusation, Mr. Speaker, saying that you, you had corrupted your office by participating in a deal between ourselves and the NDP Party — two accusations there, Mr. Speaker:

1. That the Liberal Party and the NDP had made some improper deal, a deal which we have denied vehemently from the moment this particular issue arose, something that the NDP, I believe, have denied vehemently and, indeed something that you have denied vehemently as well, Mr. Speaker.

So I say, Mr. Speaker, that we are in this position not out of anything we have done in the Liberal party or that you have done as Mr. Speaker, or that the government opposite has done, we are here because of the actions of the members who sit to my left and that is the only reason we are here, Mr. Speaker, in this regard.

The member for Nipawin indicated that the member for Souris-Cannington had withdrawn his remarks. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that he did withdraw those remarks so far as they affect your particular office. It goes beyond that, Mr. Speaker. It goes beyond that because it talks about so-called deals and arrangements being made and not only, Mr. Speaker, it did not deal with these other things in the letter that not an hour later the member for Souris-Cannington was standing outside that door saying to a member of the media that all the allegations, every single one of the allegations, were true in substance and in fact, Mr. Speaker, what kind of withdrawal is that? That is no withdrawal whatsoever!

Again., Mr. Speaker, I refer you back to the day that this debate originally started and when the member for Souris-Cannington did rise in his chair and said that he wanted to withdraw the statements, members on this side of the House, and I believe members on that side of the House, were prepared to consider that. Indeed I asked, I believe, to have the matter adjourned over the dinner hour to give us a chance to consider our position. I believe at that time most members in the House were prepared to consider withdrawal by the member for Souris-Cannington. It was only afterwards, Mr. Speaker when we found out about his taking to the media in the corridors of the Legislature and we found he put us in the intolerable position that we couldn't accept a withdrawal made in the House, which later, not within an hour later, is withdrawn outside the Legislature and he is telling the media that everything he says is true. That is not a

withdrawal, Mr. Speaker, that is showing a complete disregard for this institution.

Mr. Speaker, that is what all this is about. It is this institution, this Legislature. It is not a matter of politics between ourselves and the Tories or ourselves and the NDP or vice versa. What we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, is respect for this institution. Unless this institution has respect from all its members, Mr. Speaker, we can't function as an institution. We can't possibly deliberate on the bills that are put forth before us by the government, bills put forth by private members, resolutions put forth on private members' day. That is the issue, Mr. Speaker. This institution, I say, Mr. Speaker that when we are talking in this day and age about law and order and respect for the law we, as legislators, must show the way. We must show the people of Saskatchewan that we respect the very institution that we are elected to. And you don't show that type of respect by attacking your office and you don't show that type of respect by attacking the parties that make up this particular Legislature at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, I think the motion as moved by the Attorney General is well taken. I think that the very least that is required is that the members that are referred to, the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek withdraw unconditionally the remarks that they have made.

I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, what the implications are of the amendment submitted by the member for Nipawin and I want to consider that matter further, Mr. Speaker.

I say, once again, in closing, Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of politics, it is not a matter of what Mr. Berntson said. It is this institution that is in jeopardy, Mr. Speaker, if we allow this behavior to continue and I, for one, want it to stop now. I believe the members of this party want it to stop as well.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. ROMANOW: — Mr. Speaker, I want to address a few remarks to the amendment which has been tendered and accepted by yourself.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment says that this Assembly also accepts the withdrawal of the letter from E. Berntson, MLA for Souris-Cannington dated November 16, 1977 and it goes on to say some other words and I want to address my remarks to what I believe is a wrong assumption or a wrong statement of the facts in that amendment.

The amendment says that there was a withdrawal of the letter by Mr. E. Berntson. The facts are that there was a withdrawal in the afternoon of the debate, which took place on or about November 21, 1977. The facts are also, Mr. Speaker, that a few minutes after making the withdrawal in this House, the hon. member then repeated substantially, in different words, the same matters and same words outside the House.

The member for Humboldt was on his feet at 7:00 o'clock when we asked to consider the question of withdrawal at that time. Hansard shows on page 92 as to the fact of the so-called withdrawal, the following words — I'm quoting now, the words from the member for Humboldt. He says as follows:

Mr. Speaker, after the debate in the House this afternoon I assume the interview took place in the hallways of this Legislature and the reporter on CKCK radio said, "After offering to withdraw the letter, Berntson said in an interview outside the House with me, that he still believes a deal was made."

The reporter, Mr. Speaker, asked the question, "Do you now say that no deal was made?" The member said "I can't say that" and the reporter said, "Why can't you?" And the member, Berntson said, "Because only they will know for sure, I guess." And the reporter said, "Well, you obviously felt when you wrote the letter that a deal was made, you're changing your mind now?" And the response was, "I'm suggesting and I have suggested before that in light of past activities such as the two by-elections in February and the by-election in Pelly, they worked hand in hand together and there is no reason to believe that they would not do the same thing here."

Now, Mr. Speaker, those were the facts which were never rebutted, subsequent to, before or during, culminating in the House's resolution which referred that letter to the Special Committee on Privileges and Elections. Now that is the situation that we found ourselves in and those who allege that there was a withdrawal have failed to explain these words and this transcript. At no time did they seek to explain it whatsoever, none whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, and that's the reason why the Committee on Privileges and Elections was set up and why the issue was referred to that particular committee.

Mr. Speaker, there has been no withdrawal as I can see on those facts. Accordingly I find unless I hear some evidence or some other amendments to the contrary on the bald amendment which has been set out here, that the statement which said that there was a withdrawal, is based on a mistaken set of facts.

MR. MERCHANT: — Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly address myself to two areas. I'm not a member of the committee that has been dealing with the matter and I have followed the problem with interest in the newspaper like everyone else. I note that the members to my left now say. "look, it's not very serious because we really didn't mean the insulting things we said," and indeed I have seen a pattern develop in this House by which members particularly to my left say things which they think might grab some press attention, sort of relying on an ability to then say "Oh Gee, I didn't mean it," but they always leave the impression that they very much did mean it. So they will make insulting remarks about Mr. Speaker or about other members of the House, and then they are quite prepared to withdraw those remarks. I note for instance that the Hon. Member for Saskatoon Eastview has fallen into that trap more than any other. Having come to the House, he seems to think that . . .

That kind of an attitude, Mr. Speaker, and that's what they ask us to believe now about the remarks, that kind of an attitude more than any other drags down this institution and drags down respect for this House. I regret saying to one of your deputy speakers some years ago that I thought he was biased or something to that effect. I felt very badly both about saying that about him personally and also about saying that about the institution, because this institution as with the military, as with the court of law has to depend on a respect for the person or the principle that the person is enunciating. As soon as you lose what we call in the military, an ability to salute the uniform as opposed to saluting the man, then you destroy the ability of this House to function in a proper and appropriate way, just as you destroy the ability of any court to function in a proper way and a legislature is after all, the highest court we have.

Now, they come before us today and they say, "Well Gee, we didn't mean to do all the damage that we did." But, Mr. Speaker, that's not really the question because they did quite a bit of damage. So they say, "We didn't mean all the damage but we obviously meant some of the damage." It's very much like a man charged with causing death by criminal negligence. He goes through the trial and he is about to be sentenced and he gets sentenced to three years in jail and he says, "But my Lord, I didn't mean to kill the man." And the judge should respond to that, "Young fellow, if you had meant to kill the man, we'd be hanging you not sending you to jail for three years." And clearly that's one of the questions that the committee will take into consideration. Did they mean all of the damage that has been done? What was the intention when they wrote the letter?

Now the only remark I wanted to make about the amendment and I'm a little more troubled about the amendment, and the question for me becomes, as I try to decide how I feel about the amendment, will the member for Souris-Cannington who tried to withdraw once, in a manner of speaking, and really tried to withdraw in the way that the member for Saskatoon Sutherland withdraws but he really means the impression to be left with the press that he thinks it to be true. Will he rise before we vote on the amendment and first, admit that he was wrong to have said the things that he said, and second, that he was wrong to have written the letter. Whether he was put up to that by somebody else or not we don't know. Third, that he apologizes unconditionally to this House, and fourth, and this is more important than all the previous three, that he does not believe that there was a deal, and that he has no evidence to believe that there was a deal, because indeed in the very interview to which the Hon. Attorney General referred and which some of us had an opportunity to listen to, he made it obvious that he had no evidence upon which to surmise that there was a deal. All that he really was doing was saying, "I'll throw out a charge. I don't care about the effect of that charge upon Mr. Speaker and upon the House. I'll throw out a charge and I'll see whether it results in any political advantage to my party."

Now, if he says those four things — he was wrong, he apologizes and so on and fourthly, that he had no evidence to believe that there was a deal when he said that, then my mind about the amendment might be changed somewhat. I have a pretty fair idea where my thinking is about the amendment is in the absence of that kind of statement from the hon. member.

MR. LANE (Qu'Appelle): —The amendment, Mr. Speaker, we are getting some

strange statements in that the Attorney General has just said that there was no withdrawal. He said point blank that there was no withdrawal and that any indication that there is no withdrawal is false. That's the impression that he left and secondly I'm going to address to the comments made by the hon. member for Regina Wascana. In the words of the Speaker, Page 83, November 21 when he said as follows:

We are dealing with the letter or we are not dealing with the letter, Mr. Attorney General. You have a choice. I would remind the members (and I am quoting, Mr. Speaker,) there are two parts to the letter — one part is a political charge which if I may say so is fair politics — if one member of one party charges the other parties are conspiring against that party as it were, that is a debating point.

That's got nothing to do with the matter at hand and to vote on that, I suggest the hon. member for Regina Wascana is misreading the amendment. Now I would hope that he would consider his position to vote because really what we are voting on, of course, is whether or not we get out of this whole thing, or we don't and that's what it's down to. Let me talk about whether or not there was a withdrawal. I think it is fundamental to a repudiation of the Attorney General's remarks because the Attorney General's remarks was whether or not there was a withdrawal. Here is what the Speaker says, Page 82 in Hansard, November 21.

The members are all aware of the motion that is before the House (Mr. Speaker if I can continue please) and in view of the member for Souris-Cannington's statement on a matter of privilege at this point that he withdraws in an unqualified fashion the letter which was said in his subject of the motion, I would ask the members of the Assembly if they would agree unanimously (I would ask, I would ask, this is a request from the Speaker, how more direct can Mr. Speaker be) to drop the motion which is before the House at this time. I think this would clear up the matter as the member has now unqualifiedly withdrawn the letter which he has sent to the Speaker.

That's Mr. Speaker's comments. They are not a member of the Assembly, they are Mr. Speaker's comments and he goes on and then the question comes about whether or not the members from the other parties were prepared to accept it and wanted to discuss it and assess it. The statement of Mr. Speaker perhaps got caught up in the debate at the time but then he came back. Mr. Speaker warned members of the Assembly, all members of the Assembly.

I think the member should treat this matter in as serious a fashion as possible at this time. The member has made an unqualified withdrawal and I would be the first one to admit that any member of this House including myself occasionally makes a move in the wrong direction and wishes at a later point to change direction and usually has the opportunity to make that change of direction without any personal embarrassment. This is not the case. I think that the member in making the withdrawal is subjecting himself to some small amount of embarrassment at this time and some members may say that is justified but that is beside the point. I recall the other day in the debate, without wishing to take part in the debate, that one of the hon. members or several of the hon. members were calling for a withdrawal. Had the member risen at the time and withdrawn the letter I think his withdrawal would have been accepted.

I think and I am quoting again and I think it is important that all members hear again the words of Mr. Speaker, "I think his withdrawal is no less genuine at this time in the proceedings." And then he goes on to the comments that I started my remarks with and I directed them in particular to the member for Regina Wascana who, I am sure, would want in no way to have partisan debate in any way restricted in this House being an active participant in the same. But to say that the Speaker didn't treat it as a withdrawal. I think flies right in the face of the very words of Mr. Speaker and I do not know how the Attorney General can make that statement. I think, Mr. Speaker on the amendment . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, order. I hesitate to get onto the debate. Members will know that the position of the Speaker at certain times is to try to facilitate a withdrawal of a motion. I stated specifically today in correction of some statements that appeared in the newspaper, that I did not ask for a withdrawal and the House did not accept the withdrawal. I took my position as being that I was not in a position to accept a withdrawal so I don't want the member to misconstrue in any way what I said.

MR. LANE: — I apologize, Mr. Speaker. My understanding of your motion today was to correct what was in the Leader Post and all I did was read from Hansard. Now if there was a correction in the Hansard, I am sorry I was not aware of it. I am quoting directly from Hansard, Mr. Speaker, not the Leader Post you know and at that point the words I gave I quoted directly from Hansard. A withdrawal was accepted by Mr. Speaker but not by the other members of the House. On the amendment, quite simply, speaking to . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order. The point I was making to the member without getting into the debate that I felt I was in no position to accept a withdrawal from the member; it was up to the members of the House. It had gone beyond the point where I could accept a withdrawal.

MR. COLLVER: — If I may rise on a point of order, was it not Mr. Speaker himself who tabled the letter in the Legislature?

MR. SPEAKER: — Yes. I tabled the letter with the statement.

MR. COLLVER: — If Mr. Speaker then tabled the letter in the Legislature and Mr. Speaker accepted in accordance with his own words in Hansard the withdrawal, is it not true that Mr. Speaker, therefore, advised the House that they should accept the withdrawal.

MR. SPEAKER: — Absolutely not. My statement stated that the matter was a breach of privilege, in short. I later tabled the letter and I say at this time that I was in no position to accept the withdrawal from the member. It was not in my hands, it was in the hands of the House.

MR. LANE: — And I think that is borne out, Mr. Speaker, in your words. I would ask the members of the Assembly if they would agree unanimously to drop the motion which is before the House at this time. I think that this would clear up the matter as the member has now unqualifiedly withdrawn the letter which he sent to Mr. Speaker, so it was a request. I say a very pointed request which was turned down by the House. Speaking to the amendment, I think the amendment is designed to allow all members to get on with the public's business. I am prepared, assuming the amendment is accepted by this Assembly to withdraw my comments. And should the amendment be accepted by this Assembly, my withdrawal will be unqualified. Unqualified and I would urge members to accept it. Mr. Speaker, and unconditioned. Mr. Speaker, again the amendment is designed to allow

members to get on with the public's business. It's designed Mr. Speaker, its designed to allow the public again, to have some confidence in the committee itself which had not sat for some 70 or 80 years, a committee that is traditionally to be taken seriously on much more serious matters, and I would urge all members to accept the motion as amended.

MR. S.J. CAMERON (Regina South): — Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a comment or two to the amendment. The member who moved the amendment and the member who just spoke keep saying, "Lets get on with the business of the people and get on with the business of the House." Now there are some fundamental questions here, and let no one misunderstand, that there are some basic fundamental questions of importance here. If the institution, that I charge members on the other side, with poisoning the atmosphere of this institution ever since we began, as they did last year, when we began . . . If the institution itself is to be slandered, if members of the institution are to be slandered, I say that's the business of the people. If members are to be found in contempt, surely that's the business of the people. If they threaten to bring into disrepute and dishonor, the most fundamental institute in our democracy, surely that the business of the people. And surely to goodness, there has come a time when members bear the consequences of their acts. That too, is the business of the people. The question here is, what limits do members have in making comments? About other members and about making allegations of the kinds of deals and so on and about the institution, what limits are there? There are limits, there are limits imposed by tradition, there are limits imposed by the rules, there are limits imposed by decency and honesty. Those limits are all there, you can't transcend those limits, always without consequence. As though, as the member for Wascana says, you've done all the damage and then you merely say "Look, I'm sorry." That's the only sanction. The question is, what are the sanctions? What deterrents are there going to be in the future, for actions of this kind?

The member for Souris-Cannington, who always sits so quietly, in respect of all these debates he delivered the letter to Mr. Speaker. Then he stands up in the course of the debate in the House and says, "I'm prepared to withdraw." Then he goes behind the door and repeats to the radio station everything he said in the letter, and I'll tell you something else, he did . . . on Friday last he gave an interview to broadcast news in which for the third time, he reinforced everything he said in the letter. And that was only Friday after the committee had gone through much of its sessions already. That's his attitude. Says he, in the House, he withdraws his letter, immediately goes outside in the corridor and says to CKCK News that, "There was in fact a deal and I don't retract that." The committee is in session and then on Friday last, he goes to a radio reporter with broadcast news and again repeats the allegation. Then he says, "Now, I'm prepared to again withdraw." And not understanding what the sanction is or the deterrent for the future to conduct of that kind. I'm going to tell you something else. Something else. I don't know that ever in history the Speaker has had to testify before a Committee of Assembly, under oath. And this Speaker has done that in direct consequence of the conduct of the members Opposite. Secondly the Clerk of the Assembly had to give evidence under oath, and he too, I think for the first time, certainly in the history of this Assembly and perhaps anywhere, had to give testimony under oath; it was a difficult experience for him, because they're tough questions, he has to continue to be the Clerk. The Leader of the Liberal Party gave testimony this morning under oath, again. Now, we get this amendment designed to stop the proceedings of that committee — when? When the Leader of the Conservative Party is scheduled to give evidence tomorrow morning under oath. Now they want to bring it to an end, you see? Look at the attitude. You make an allegation, then you stand up and you say, I withdraw, then you

go outside the House and you repeat the slander and then you say well, I'm prepared to withdraw. Then several days later, you go back to the radio, repeat the allegation and then you come back and say, I'm prepared to withdraw. Well, when is that kind of silly dance going to end? That's the question.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. CAMERON: — Then the consequences of your act as the Speaker testifies under oath, the Clerk testifies under oath, the head of a political party testifies under oath, when your turn comes, never having attended a single session, to testify under oath, then you want it all stopped. Well, I'll tell you for one, I'm not prepared to buy that kind of junk from the member for Nipawin and he's going to account for his actions . . . like everyone else has to do.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. CAMERON: — It's like this question, Mr. Speaker, you know of the old lady that members will recall, that let lie, that slandered and after the lie was told, it was repeated countless times and great damage was done, and then she simply proffered an apology. You recall the penalty she had to bear. She had to go out and loose a bag of feathers into the wind and then try and go out and collect them all because the damage had been done. Someone had to show that there was some sanction and some deterrent to conduct of that kind in the future. I just think it's the height of nonsense for this member for Nipawin to move this amendment in the circumstances with the timing and I don't know when the member for Souris-Cannington is going to have the simple, simple guts to stand up in an unqualified way and say, look, I made a mistake, there was no deal. And there had to be perforce the involvement of the Speaker and the Clerk says, "I didn't intend it." When is he going to stand up without fluffing around in the thing and say, look, I made a mistake. I'm sorry. I apologize to the members. I apologize to the Speaker and the clerk and I'm sorry I got all this stuff unravelled. And I apologize and I ask members to accept it. When he has the courage to come forward and do that at some appropriate time, I'm sure the members' attitudes will change. In the meantime I will not support the amendment.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

HON. A.E. BLAKENEY (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I want to Add a word or two. I very much regret this whole debate. I say that we are debating two questions. One, the question of the attitude of the member for Thunder Creek and the member for Qu'Appelle to a duly constituted committee of this Legislature. Question number one. Question number two is, what has become known as the Berntson letter and the committee which was set up to deal with that and the matter duly referred to that committee by most of this House. The matters have become inextricably linked by the amendment of the member for Nipawin and accordingly, we are in a position of having to debate both. I regret very much the state that this Legislature has descended to by the actions of the three members to whom I have referred. I have a great deal of sympathy with the position taken by the member for Regina South. I think that the justice of the matter would certainly require that having allowed proceedings to continue while the Speaker gave his evidence under oath, the Clerk gave his evidence under oath, the Leader of the Liberal Opposition gave his evidence under oath. And for the member now for Nipawin whose turn will come up tomorrow to suggest that this is an appropriate time to discontinue the committee, I think reflects more about the member for Nipawin and the party which he leads than anything I could say about their

attitude to this House. However, I think it is important to get this matter resolved, out of the way, the member for Nipawin has offered an amendment. I propose to offer a sub-amendment, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Snyder, the member for Moose Jaw South. And the sub-amendment will be that the amendment be amended by deleting all the words after — dated November 10, 1977 and substituting therefore the following, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Synder:

That this Assembly request the member for Souris-Cannington to acknowledge to this House that there were no proper grounds for the contents of the said letter and that following receipt of such withdrawal and acknowledgement of the proceedings of the Select Committee of Privileges and Elections with respect to the said letter be suspended.

The motion will then read in its entirety and I do not have the original motion before me but it will read approximately as follows: That this Assembly requests; (1) that the statements by the Members for Qu'Appelle and Thunder Creek referring to a Committee of this Legislature as a 'kangaroo court' be unconditionally withdrawn forthwith; and that the Assembly also accepts the withdrawal of the letter from E. Berntson, MLA for Souris-Cannington, dated November 10, 1977, that this Assembly requests the member for Souris-Cannington to acknowledge to this House that there was no proper grounds for the contents of the said letter and that following receipt of the said withdrawals, that's the ones from Thunder Creek and Qu'Appelle, and acknowledgement, from the member E. Berntson that there was no proper grounds, the proceedings of the Select Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections with respect to the said letter be suspended.

It will, I think, be seen, Mr. Speaker, that the purpose is to assist the member for Qu'Appelle and assist the member for Thunder Creek to withdraw unconditionally and forthwith their allegations with respect to a committee of this Legislature being a 'kangaroo court'; will be to underline the fact that the member for Souris-Cannington has in fact withdrawn his letter of November 10, 1977; it will give some support to the position taken by the member for Regina South that withdrawals of widely publicized allegations, publicized in and out of this House, are not fully sufficient and that at least they ought to be accompanied by a clear acknowledgement to this House that there was no proper grounds for the contents of the letter in the first place. We ask for that, and that following the receipt of these withdrawals and this acknowledgement, then the proceedings of the Select Standing Committee of Privileges and Elections with respect to the said letter be suspended. I may say, Mr. Speaker, that I think that that is a position which asks the members of the Conservative Party, the member for Thunder Creek, the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Souris-Cannington to do the absolute minimum which the situation requires and I can well understand if some members think it is too little. I think it is the absolute minimum that the situation requires to maintain the dignity and decorum of the House. I think that if they have any appreciation of the tradition of the House they will unquestionably withdraw and acknowledge as requested by the motion. I do, therefore, suggest that the House accept this

sub-amendment. I know some will do it with reluctance because they believe that it is less than the situation requires. I understand their sentiment and I suggest that in all the circumstances if this is done clearly by the three members involved that the traditions of the House will be appropriately maintained and that we can proceed to the other matters before us.

MR. SPEAKER: — I would just draw one point to the mover's attention. You are probably reading from a photocopy of the original amendment and the 16th may have come out as the 10th. That should be the 16th.

MR. MacDONALD: — Mr. Speaker, may I make a request. There have been some rather dramatic events that occurred, so many motions, and I know that I have a great deal of difficulty expressing the wish as the House Leader and I am sure our own Leader as to our own caucus, and what the feeling, it is quite an emotional issue and I would like to request that with leave of the House that all three parties be given 10 or 15 minutes to consider the position and the amendments. We haven't even got the amendments as yet and then I think we could speak intelligently on the subject matter thereof and come to a decision that might be best for all concerned and for the House and for the people.

MR. SPEAKER: — I hereby declare a rest of 15 minutes if that's sufficient, and I will present copies of the amendment to the members.

When we adjourned for the brief recess I had just accepted the sub-amendment which had been offered to the amendment which is before the Assembly for consideration and I will now accept debate on the sub-amendment. The member for Nipawin.

MR. COLLVER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker

MR. ROMANOW: — I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker

MR. COLLVER: — Well, I'm on a point of order as well, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker before the mover of the motion takes his chair, would he permit two questions about the motion?

MR. SPEAKER: — The member for Riversdale has a point of order.

MR. ROMANOW: — Well, my point of order has resolved itself, the Liberals weren't here, I wanted at least to alert the House to that effect.

MR. MacDONALD: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the amendment to the Premier with a certain degree of disappointment. Disappointment for a few reasons and I would like to ask how we arrived in the situation today. First of all two Conservative members called a committee on Privileges and Elections a 'kangaroo court.' That is what has precipitated the motion of the Attorney General today. Number two, the Attorney General then introduced a motion to call them to order after the Speaker had indicated that they had presented a prima facie case of privilege. Three, how does the House solve the problem with the Premier's sub-amendment is by letting them off the hook with the original charges. And that is exactly what the Premier's amendment does. It calls them to task for calling a committee of this Assembly a 'kangaroo court'. Number two, the Speaker indicated it was a prima facie case of privilege. The Attorney General then comes forward with a motion to . . . address itself to the problem and the Premier brings in an amendment which clearly then, lets him off the hook for the

‘kangaroo court’ by removing the Committee on Privileges and Elections, because that is exactly the substance of what the amendments of today will do. It will not only eliminate the problem of the ‘kangaroo court’ but all of a sudden it will cease and desist the Committee on Elections and Privileges, and somebody brought forward the fact that it is right on the verge, Mr. Speaker, of the Conservatives being called to task to provide some evidence. And you know, I think just the common rules of decency would support the proposition that after over a month of this particular accusation being presented to this Assembly, that it would be incumbent upon the person who made the accusation to substantiate the charges. And despite the feeling, sincere or non-sincere of the Conservatives to my left, common decency demands that evidence be presented to the Committee on Elections and Privileges. And, Mr. Speaker what is to prevent — the great tragedy of the Premier’s amendment is that now on two or three or four occasions, (two of them have been mentioned in the House) in fact the tape of the comments of the member for Cannington are to be from what I understand, admitted as evidence in the Committee and Elections and Privileges.

What is to prevent the Conservatives from going out and saying, “It was a ‘kangaroo court’, there is a deal, the Speaker was involved, the two parties were involved,” and going up and down the province of Saskatchewan and repeating the charges that they have repeated many time since. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the problem that faces all of us here today, and it is with regret because I sincerely believe in my own heart, that if a man makes a charge against me, my party or the Speaker, the least the man can do is have the common decency to stand up and give evidence. And I would like to suggest that the member for Cannington request the Premier to withdraw his amendment and voluntarily come to the committee tomorrow morning, give whatever evidence he has because I think he’s got a deep sense of responsibility — that deep sense of responsibility to make a charge and even through the smear . . . the only thing that bothers me most is the smears of the members to my left because they’re using the rules of the House which they deliberately broke to create this situation to get them out of the situation. The end justifies the means.

Now, I would like to see him come and provide whatever evidence. It will justify his position, it will justify the Conservatives’ position, it will vindicate the member for Qu’Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek, it will vindicate their party and the Leader of the Conservative Party, and the NDP and you, Mr. Speaker and the Liberals will then be subject to the chastisement of the public of Saskatchewan. But if they don’t have that evidence, then isn’t this a clever motion? Isn’t this a clever motion on behalf of the member for Nipawin, isn’t this a clever motion? We have taken him . . . right down . . . the original amendment to the Attorney General. Isn’t this a clever motion. All of a sudden now they’ve demonstrated that what we say in here is not important. They’ve demonstrated that what kind of withdrawals we make in this House are not important. The only thing that is important is what we say to the press outside. And, Mr. Speaker, if that is the situation, then I regret very, very much having to support the Premier’s motion and I will do so under two conditions and I want to state the conditions. First of all, that before the vote is taken on any amendment or sub-amendment, and I’m going to move another sub-amendment, Mr. Speaker, that all the withdrawals take place and I’m going to listen to the withdrawals and the apologies, because for the member for Qu’Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek withdrawal is subject to the eliminating of the committee and the suspending of the committee which is a qualifies withdrawal right off the bat. And if I don’t get up and make that a qualification of the withdrawal then I hope that the members opposite, the Premier will support me in this proposition, that these withdrawals must be made before any vote takes place, and it is not subject to the acceptance of the amendment of the member for

Nipawin. That is to me, the most basic and fundamental — if so I will stand up and vote against the Premier's amendment and I will vote against it all the way down the road.

If that apology is given in sincerity by the three members in question and you will accept my sub-amendment, then Mr. Speaker, very, very reluctantly and I say it's a shameful day in this Assembly that we have let the shenanigans if you want to call it, or the violence and the accusations and the insinuations and the imputations of the last month go off so easily, so easily because of the genuine desire of members of the House to get on with and proceed with the business of the Assembly, for the genuine desire of the members of the House to let a man who probably is no more responsible than the other members of his party and for whom all of us have some genuine respect, because all of us have a genuine desire not to criticize or prosecute or persecute another member of the Assembly.

And I'm going to tell you what my motion is — my sub-amendment, moved by myself and seconded by my seatmate, the member for Lakeview, to delete the word 'suspended' in the last line, and substitute adjourned the following: "be and subject to the call of the chairman."

And I would like to tell you the reason for that, Mr. Speaker. That would mean that this committee would remain in effect until the end of next March or next April, but that it would be the advice of the House and in the Debate and Proceedings, that the chairman not call that committee together again. But it does place a bit of an onus and a sense of responsibility to check the sincerity and the genuineness of the withdrawal of the members to my left, the member for Cannington, the member for Qu'Appelle and the member for Thunder Creek. And I would say then, Mr. Speaker if one word by one member of the Conservative Party in the next six months, then Mr. Speaker we will be able to call that committee back together very quickly.

MR. LANE (Saskatoon-Sutherland): — The committee . . .

MR. MacDONALD: — Well, you know the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland — when you've been here for awhile you kind of understand that this is a kind of hallowed place and it's not the back alley in Saskatoon where you grew up.

MR. LANE: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of personal privilege, I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that the member be asked to retract the comment, "the back alley in Saskatoon where you grew up." I would ask him to retract it now.

MR. MacDONALD: — Mr. Speaker, to facilitate, I will withdraw unconditionally, but I want to say, Mr. Speaker, the comments, the back jeers of the member for Saskatoon-Sutherland about an issue as important as this is an indication about what I'm trying to say about letting them off the hook.

Mr. Speaker, I am sincere in this amendment, so Mr. Speaker, I don't know if I can say anything else, but I do hope that the Premier will consider carefully, the sub-amendment that I am suggesting and that the members of the government and my own party, ensure that there is no implication in the amendment about a threat to the Conservative Party, there's no implication in the amendment that the Conservative Party has done anything — all it requests is that the committee remain in effect until this current session of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly is completed.

Mr. Speaker, I will move that we delete the word, 'suspended' in the last line and

substitute by the following . . . Pardon me?

MR. SPEAKER: — The member cannot move a sub-amendment at this time. It will have to be up to some other member to move it after the present sub-amendment has been removed or accepted, then the member may move a sub-amendment. We have before us now a motion, an amendment and a sub-amendment. We cannot move a further sub-amendment until the sub-amendment has been dealt with. So it will have to be moved by some other member later, if some other member desires to.

Mr. MacDONALD: — Perhaps then I may make a suggestion, is it in order, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier would consider moving the amendment to a sub-amendment? Or if not, Mr. Speaker, we'll proceed, vote on the premier's and then we'll have one member of my caucus move the amendment.

MR. ROMANOW: — Speaking to the Premier's sub-amendment, or more particularly the remarks made by the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, as I understand it, we have to dispose of the sub-amendment. If the sub-amendment passes, we'd be prepared to vote for your . . . which you had intended to be sub sub-amendment, but can't be moved until the sub-amendment is disposed of. So, that's the way I think we have to deal with it, to get rid of the sub-amendment and if one of your other members wants to reintroduce it, then we can incorporate the two into one.

MR. MacDONALD: — Another question, is the Attorney General going to address himself to the problem that I bring before the vote? If the premier's is to be endorsed that the withdrawals occur prior to the vote, is that?

MR. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Speaking to the sub-amendment. I think we've heard now, possibly one of the strongest statements of blackmail of members that I have ever heard. When the member for Indian Head-Wolseley says, "The Conservatives may not speak for six months and we will watch you every step of the way, and if you step out of line once, we will call the committee." Never, never have we heard words like that, in this Assembly before. I don't think the member for Indian Head-Wolseley was serious in his remarks and I know the Attorney General will want to clarify his statement on the point of order that we would be prepared to vote for the sub sub-amendment made by the member for Indian Head-Wolseley because if that's the position of the government. If that's the position of the members to my right, then our case is proven and I'm sure that's not what the members want. I can't believe the Attorney General's statement, and I'll assume that it's made in the heat of debate. That he was prepared to consider the proposed sub sub-amendment, or whatever stage it is. But to come before this Assembly and say we will hold one political party up to ransom for approximately six months, is an abuse of the House, and I can't believe the hon. member, he's talking about having been around for a long time. I don't think he's ever done anything that — inane before that he would even suggest it.

The day started out on a matter raised by the Attorney General. And oh. What a tangled web we weave as we tend to get a long way from the issue that we originally started out with this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and on the sub-amendment the Premier has made a proposal. We will want clarification and the member for Nipawin wanted to ask a question which regrettably wasn't answered. As the whole exercise was protecting the Chair. That's what this whole thing is supposed to be about: protecting the Chair. We've somehow devolved into parties, protecting parties, getting parties. You know that historically parliament doesn't even recognize political parties something that is not recognized by parliament today. If the Premier's motion

sub-amendment is that the imputation against the Speaker be withdrawn, we agree. And we agree. And, if there's the hon. member for Indian Head-Wolseley says the committee will meet tomorrow, let's get on with it. And we'll see, we'll see how serious the members to my right are or do they just want to prolong the debate for another few days? Because if that's the object, the letter was withdrawn. The letter was withdrawn. The Attorney General and the Premier know full well that the withdrawal of the letter is a withdrawal of the letter. Now, it's strange that we can talk for what . . . three hours this afternoon, when we have \$600,000,000 losing money daily, according to the Premier. That's the matter we seemed to have forgotten about.

We will not be blackmailed and we will not be in the position as proposed by the member for Indian Head-Wolseley, that the Conservatives do not say anything for six months. Completely corkery, and that's the type of government, the hon. member, if he ever had a chance would run. We will muzzle, we will stop and no one will be allowed to speak unless we deem it advisable to allow someone to speak. I go back and I urge the members to look again at the remarks of the Speaker. There are two aspects to the letter. The political aspect which is a debate and the Speaker himself says that's fair debate. And those were his words Mr. Speaker, if the Premier's comments as I say, were to withdraw any imputation to the Speaker, we've done that and the hon. member for Souris-Cannington would do it again. He made it clear. Made it clear. But somehow we're going to have to go back to the words of Mr. Speaker and start the letter and he's the one who said there's two aspects to the letter, there's a debating point which is fair comment and if it is the position of members of this House that their debating point is not allowed by other members of this House, if that's the true principle and I suggest it is principle and I suggest it is that it's a sorry day in the history of this House, that the imputation against the Speaker is to be withdrawn. That's been done. It will be done again if it's not satisfactory to the members of this House. We are prepared again to withdraw any imputation of the Speaker but we will not — and we will apologize to the Speaker if that's necessary, if the imputation is taken. Now I have given my position on the 'kangaroo court.' I stated it earlier and I can't repeat it unfortunately. I am speaking on the sub-amendment. I have already spoken on the amendment . . .

MR. ROMANOW: — Why not?

MR. LANE (Qu'Appelle): — Well, all right, I've stated, I'll state it again that we are prepared to get on with the business and restore, and I suggest this is important, restore the Privileges and Elections Committee to its true stature as a very serious committee, and not a political committee. I am not suggesting purposes today. I think it incumbent upon members opposite that we restore that committee to its previously sacrosanct position in the Assembly as one that took serious matters.

Mr. Speaker, I have given my position in the past that, you know, if you're prepared to get on and withdraw it, then I am prepared to withdraw the imputation of the 'kangaroo court'. I've suggested that and my remarks are in Hansard but I will not accept, and if the Attorney General and I hope he clarifies it, if the Attorney General is saying as he said that he would support the Liberal sub-amendment if he is saying that, then we cannot support that and I am sure the hon. member for Weyburn can't support that. I know he can't because he spoke and he spoke sincerely as he usually does. I can't believe too that if a sub-amendment is to be proposed and all the riders and the retractions down the line at the time — You know I remember when that 'filthy hospital' — We tried to do it in the House and it went on for hours. We don't intend to allow that to happen. I suggest we do as follows: I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it be incumbent upon the members of this House to take some time after supper, during their supper hour, to think again and decide that we either retract the letter, retract the comments made by myself and the member for Thunder Creek, dissolve the committee or suspend the committee and get on with the business. That's where we stand and that's what we are prepared to agree with. Anything beyond that we are not. Mr. Speaker, I call it 5 o'clock. I called it 5 o'clock.

MR. SPEAKER: — I'll remind the members that I will call it 5 o'clock if necessary. If I don't call it 5 o'clock don't blame me for giving up your position in speaking.

The Assembly recessed until 7 o'clock p.m.