

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Clerk:** — I hereby lay on the table the following petition by Mr. Johnson, of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

#### Special Committee Appointed to Prepare Lists for Standing Committees

**Deputy Clerk:** — Mr. McLaren, from the special committee appointed to prepare lists of members to compose the standing committees of the Assembly, presents the first report of the said committee which is as follows:

Your committee recommends that, pursuant to rule 91, the quorum on all standing committees be changed to a majority.

Your committee recommends that the size and composition of the standing committees of the Assembly, under rule 86, be as appears on the lists that will be printed in tonight's *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Mr. McLaren:** — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the first report of the special committee appointed to prepare lists of members to compose the standing committees of the Assembly be now concurred in.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to comment in respect to the motion that has been put forward by the hon. member, and I want to, at the conclusion of my remarks, remove an amendment to the motion that has been put forward by the hon. members. That amendment that I will be proposing, Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks, is that the motion be amended by adding the following:

with the exception of the recommendation to change the quorum to a majority.

I want to make some comments in respect to the particular question before us, and I want to go briefly, Mr. Speaker, and deliberately, into the history of what we did this morning. This morning we met as a nominating committee. A nominating committee, Mr. Speaker, is made up of five members — three from the government side and two from the members of the opposition.

The purpose of the meeting this morning from all intents and purposes and from the precedent of the past is that the nominating committee then on behalf of their respective caucuses meet, this committee meets and makes

recommendations in respect to the membership of the legislative committees. And that was the intent and purpose that my colleague and I went to the meeting, to in fact put together a list of members on the respective committees.

And there's a large number of committees of the legislature. And I just want to, for background, indicate that there's non-controversial Bills; there's the agricultural committee; there's communications committee; Crown corporations; education; there's estimates; municipal law, private Bills committee; privileges and elections; public accounts. And there are other committees of the legislature also. There's the Board of Internal Economy and regulations committee. And as I say, Mr. Speaker, this morning we went for that purpose, to nominate our respective members of those committees.

I want to say that the rules governing the operation of the committees is set out in the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly 1981*. And I want to say that the nominating committee is but five people, three from the government side, two from our side. In dealing with a quorum in respect to all of these committees, the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan 1981* set out this:

Quorum in committees: 90(1) (and it says): One third of the number of Members of a select, special or standing committee shall be a quorum unless the Assembly has otherwise ordered.

I want to say in looking at how these rules were formulated and how they were adopted, there was a special committee established prior to 1981 who looked at the rules that should govern the Legislative Assembly and they, in fact, recommended section 90 as I have read here which says the quorum shall be one-third of the members.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, and that was done, as I understand, with the unanimous consent of all members of that committee. What we have today, Mr. Speaker, is one member from the government coming down to the nominating committee and saying: what do we want? And maybe he has concurred and maybe he has caucused. I don't know if the Premier set him down or whether he in fact thought it up himself. I don't know that. But I'll tell you, in my discussions with him that was not mentioned until this morning. And today, three . . . a five-member committee he is recommending to this legislature — five members should change the rules which were established by a legislative committee. That's what he is proposing. A unilateral change is what he's proposing.

But even more perverse in the direction that he's taking is that if you look at the Speech from the Throne, you will find in here this paragraph:

My government believes that changes can be made to enable the Legislature to better meet the needs of the members and the people. Accordingly, it proposes to refer the matter of a

revision of the Rules of this Legislative Assembly to a Special Committee of the Assembly.

Now that's what they told us here yesterday in the House. They're going to set up a special committee to do a revision of the rules. But what happened? Predetermining what they want, circumventing the very provision that they put in the Speech from the Throne, they come in to the committee this morning and say, well, we want to unilaterally recommend now, without going to the committee which is going to look at it, we want the legislature here to immediately supersede this regulation which says a quorum will be one-third of the members.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, in respect to this, that I have outlined a bit of the history of how the rule came about. The reason obviously was, members are very busy. The committees are meeting, other committees are meeting, members have a lot of business to do. And so in the wisdom of the regulations committee, they said, well, one-third will be fine; we can go ahead and proceed.

And so what I want to do is just take a look at two aspects of it: one, the unilateral proposal that was put forward by the member of the government in light of the fact that they have a committee they're recommending, a special committee of the assembly; and secondly, to look briefly at the effect.

Now I think, Mr. Speaker, that we're having a revision, the special committee, and what we should be doing is not coming in without full discussions — without full disclosure of the intention, without it being discussed, without looking at precedents across the country — to unilaterally bring before the House and to force through that particular revision by the majority on the opposite side, the government side. What they are doing, I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, is they are arrogant, they're being unfair to this House, and they're contradicting precisely what they set out in the throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you an example of what can happen. The Crown Corporations Committee is 20 members — 12 and eight. Under the present rule it says that you need one-third. That means, about seven, you can go ahead with the people's business. But they're saying no. I don't know why, but they want the provision that you have to have half to be a quorum. And so what it means is that if they get in a hot spot, ticklish situation, what they can do is to walk out of that committee and there is no quorum and the business of that committee discontinues.

That's the fact of the matter. And I ask — let us be fair, the rationale for it. And I'll tell you I can see no other rationale that what this government is starting to do. And throughout this here throne speech I'll tell you there are other instances demonstrating the arrogance, the heavy-handedness of this government and the approach that they're going to take. And you can look at constituency boundary legislation. But here is another intent to circumvent the very committee that they said they would establish.

And so what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, to you, is that what we're primarily concerned with is basically the unilateral

approach of the government. No discussion; came to the committee and said, I'm moving this here. And then they can put it before the legislature here. And they do have a majority, be it all much reduced — much reduced — but they do. And what they want to do is shove this through before it gets to the very committee that they said they're going to establish — the special committee to study the rules of the Legislative Assembly.

Now why, I say, would they want to do that? And I've given you the reason. It can be, in fact, the arrogance. Maybe no more than that. The heavy handedness. Maybe no more than that.

But I have a feeling that this government, this newly elected government, is running scared. And if they can't control it in the House with debate, then they say, let's legislate so we can control the opposition. And I say that's what is happening in this particular piece of legislation, or motion, to change the number of a quorum.

And so I say, Mr. Speaker, what I want to do here is to remove, seconded by my colleague the member from Regina Centre:

That the motion as submitted be amended by adding the following:

with the exception of the recommendation to change the quorum on committees to a majority.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have listened to my colleague and I have watched members opposite with growing annoyance. I don't know what it's going to take to wipe the smirk off the face of the member from Meadow Lake and other members who I'll name, but it's got to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I was one who believed that the 20<sup>th</sup> Legislature was one that we were, in a sense, well to end. I thought it was too noisy; the behaviour was too rowdy; it was too fractious. And I had hoped that the Premier meant when he said when he indicated in the throne speech that we were going to make a new start at a more productive legislature. I'll tell you, this is an awfully poor way to begin.

This morning, without any warning — and he had all kinds of opportunities to — my colleague from Quill Lakes called him yesterday, asked him for a discussion of what was going to be discussed. Never once did he mention changing a fundamental rule of the Assembly. This is not a trifling change; this is a fundamental rule of the Assembly affecting the way our committees work — and I'm going to get to that in a moment. Never once was there the slightest indication that he thought that was something that should be discussed. For good reason. A nominating committee is not where you make rule changes.

The member from Meadow Lake walks in this morning, proposes his motion. When we asked him why, his response was — with the same smirk on his face — because we think it's a good idea. And that was all we got out of him in three-quarters of an hour of discussion — I like it; we think it's a good idea.

To our comments, this was the wrong time and place to be discussing such a change in the rules, we got the same silly comment — we like it; we think it's a good idea.

I'll tell the member from Meadow Lake and the Premier that if this is your way of getting this legislature off to a new start, then it is a very, very strange way of doing it. I don't know what could be more designed to alarm the opposition, to annoy us, than to make a fundamental rule change with no warning and little opportunity for discussions. I don't know what you could do that would be more likely to get us upset than this. If this was a hare-brained scheme of the member from Meadow Lake — and those of us who have been here a while can believe it because we've seen him before — and I ask you to withdraw this report or hold it until tomorrow.

If this is some sort of grand design on your part to change the rules, if this is a precedent, then there is going to be quite a rumble over this because this is the wrong way to be doing it.

There is something called fair play that is fundamental to this Assembly. And one of the elements of fair play which has always been observed is that important rule changes are (a) discussed in advance; and (b) they are only adopted after there's a measure on consensus.

Fundamental rule changes are not adopted by the government using their majority. That's never been done. And if any of the members opposite who have been here a while can think of a precedent for that, I invite you to join the debate. I invite you to join the debate and give us the precedent for this — a fundamental rule change over our objection, with no discussion. There is no precedent for that; it's never been done.

I find it alarming, not only because of what's at issue here, but because of what we're going to be doing this spring. I understand from a question put to the member from Meadow Lake this morning that the Premier plans on having the House Leader introduce a resolution to set up a special committee on the rules, and that that will likely take place before we adjourn at Christmas, and that that committee will begin its work in January, February and March.

If that committee is going to operate with a simple majority — whatever the government wants, the government does, no matter what the opposition says — then that is going to be a very, very unfortunate change in the way this place is operated.

Once again, it's a question of fair play. With respect to rule changes, this House has always observed the ultimate in fair play. We've always had as much discussion as we think we need, and they've only been adopted with a large measure of consensus.

With respect to the particular change itself, I think it is most unfortunate. I'll give you a couple of instances. With public accounts in the last legislature, we got behind in our work. It was my hope, and the hope of the former member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, that we might find a government member or two who would be prepared to

put in a day's work between the end of May and the first of December. We wanted the committee to sit intersessionally.

Even with a quorum of three, we couldn't get that group together. How much harder is it going to be to meet and get our work done with a larger quorum, particularly when they control it? There are some members opposite who are crass enough to believe that it isn't in the best interests of the government that these committees meet and do their work effectively.

If that's the case, it's going to be pretty easy for the government members with a larger quorum to simply not show up. Get into a difficult issue, as we have on occasion, whether it be SGI or Pioneer Trust or whatever it might be, it's going to be pretty easy for the government members to simply decide that they're too busy to show up, the committee meeting fails, and so the issue gradually subsides over a week or so before the committee meets again.

We asked the member from Meadow Lake this morning what he had in mind — he was too arrogant to tell us. Once again we see in members opposite a disregard of the customs of this House. I remember standing here last in June last year when the member from Meadow Lake told us he would table the documents with Weyerhaeuser. There was a day, Mr. Speaker, when that meant something, when a minister gave an undertaking in this House, when that meant something. It was done. The member blatantly disregarded it and didn't do it.

We see the same attitude today, the same disregard for the rules of fair play, the same disregard for the customs of this Assembly which has served us well over the years, coming from the same member. I would suggest to the Premier and the members opposite, you ought to give some serious thought to all of this before you do it.

I was one of the people who were intrigued, shall we say, yesterday with the comment in the throne speech that you planned a new Act to deal with the electoral boundaries . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well it relates very directly because it goes to the way this legislature operates. It's the same attitude. You're not prepared to let this legislature operate in the fashion which it has; you want to change the rules so they favour you.

That, I suggest, is what you're going to do with the electoral boundaries commission. You're going to change the rules so they favour the government. And that's what you're doing here today. You're changing the rules so they favour you. That's something that governments in the past haven't done. However bad, however arrogant they may be, they have not changed the rules of this Assembly to suit themselves as they go along. That's what we see happening opposite. I, for one, find it alarming, and I hope the Premier and the members of the government caucus reconsider what I think was a very, very poor move this morning.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Speaker, I didn't intentionally want to get my maiden speech in the provincial legislature through this forum, but I do feel compelled to rise and give some comments in support of this amendment that's

been moved by member from Quill Lakes and seconded by the member from Regina Centre, because I think what we're having happen here today is that we're going back several hundred years. The parliamentary system that we operate under, of course, is modelled on the precedents the House of Commons and going back further to the British parliamentary system. And the reason that parliaments and legislatures came into being was to stop the monarch of the day from changing the rules whenever that monarch wanted to arbitrarily change rules because the person didn't necessarily like them. If it didn't suit their situation, they just changed the rules.

So parliament started to assemble, members were elected, there was authority delegated to the Canadian House of Commons and then on to the legislatures within the provinces, and now we're back to the situation where a government can come into the legislature and arbitrarily change the rules without going through some kind of a due process. And I think that that process has to be adhered to; it's very important.

I had the pleasure of serving in the House of Commons for a period of time, Mr. Speaker, and when rule changes were to come into effect there, and during the terms that I was there, there was an all-party committee that was set up to look very closely at the rules of the House of Commons, and I had hoped that when the throne speech came down yesterday — and I listened very closely to it — that the government believes, and I quote:

... Government believes that changes can be made to enable the Legislature to better meet the needs of the members and the people. Accordingly, it proposes to refer the matter of a revision of the Rules of this Legislative Assembly to a Special Committee of the Assembly.

And what do we find? As a new member I'm shocked that one day later, after making such a profound statement in the throne speech, that the government wants to come in and arbitrarily change the rules. And I'm not so concerned if the government wants to show disrespect for the members opposite, but it troubles me deeply when you show such deep disrespect for the Crown. And that's what's happening because the Crown, over the years, has allowed our system of parliament, our system of this legislature, the freedom of speech, the freedom of elections to develop right across our country.

And I'm proud to be from Saskatchewan; I'm proud to be a Canadian. I'm happy that we have the system that we do, Mr. Speaker, to express freely what our feelings are, what the feelings of our constituents are, through this Assembly. And when that starts to stop, we're moving so much closer to a dictatorial system.

And it's not only the monarch in days before parliament came about that could just change rules. It happens by people like Pinochet; it happened by people such as Hitler; it happened during the revolution in the Soviet Union. And I'm sure the hon. member from Rosthern constituency knows why his family left that country to seek a freer place in Canada, and to settle in Saskatchewan, and to have the freedom, and to be away

from the oppression of people who could just individually, arbitrarily change rules.

And that's what I see happening here today, Mr. Speaker. I think it presents us with a situation that we cannot allow to pass, and I think the hon. members opposite, especially some of the newer members — I would certainly hope that they were elected and came here to voice the concerns of their constituents and to keep that freedom of speech, and to give representation to their constituents regardless of whether those constituents are political supports or whether those constituents and political opponents — because it's important in terms of democracy and to have democracy preserved in this legislature, in our province, and in our country.

It's no good to have situations where whoever is in authority can just change rules on their own, Mr. Speaker. I'm, as I said earlier, a little bit shocked that, one day following the throne speech debate, we have the government making an amendment, a change to the rules.

Now the point is not so much of going from one—third as a quorum of a committee, to 50 per cent. That concerns me because of course the government who have the majority of members in all committees can stonewall, can stop progress that's in committee. In fact, they could do it to this House as well — to the Chamber. And it seems to me that once they start on one rule, where do they stop? Do you then go to another rule tomorrow? Do you then start trying to rewrite *Beauchesne's* and *Erskine May* which we fall back on for precedent and in your rulings, Mr. Speaker. The Clerks use that. We use that as a guide so that we have a truly ... a system where we have freedom of speech.

I think that we must in good conscience support the amendment — or to have the member who introduced the report this afternoon to have it withdrawn — so that we can get off to a good footing. I, as a junior member of the legislature — only my second day in the Assembly — want to start off on a good foot so that all members, whether they're on the opposition side or on the government's side, can be viewed with respect from the people, from the constituents of the province of Saskatchewan.

I think that when we start doing underhanded things like this ... it may be just an oversight on the government that was done in error. But I hope that the comments that we have brought before you today will encourage you to look at what's been said just one day ago in the throne speech, and that the throne speech set out there a system that would be good. If the government will bring that in, fine.

I think that there is always room for change in the rules in the way this Assembly operates; those rules have changed many, many times over the hundreds of years that our Assembly and the House of Commons, the parliamentary system has developed. And that's not saying that all of a sudden we'll have a perfect set of rules, but it's the way in which we change those rules, Mr. Speaker, which becomes very important in our society. I don't want Canada to become another country that people feel oppression; that they don't feel the freedom of

speech that they should be able to feel. And I think that the thing that's important is the procedure by how we change the rules.

I look forward to being able to possibly serve on the special committee to look at the rules of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. As I said, in my time as a member of the House of Commons, I did have some involvement in the committee that looked at the rules there. We have to be able to deal with each other on an even basis. When you can start changing rules arbitrarily, without going through a set procedure, then I think that we are all in danger of losing respect of people about this Assembly, and losing the freedom of speech in our society, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I would like to have a minute or two to introduce the Canadian football champion Regina Rams, and subsequent to that we can carry on this debate as long as we'd like, but I'm sure that they have some other things to do and they are going to be presented with some gifts and awards, and I would respectfully ask for leave to do that and we can carry on after that.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Speaker, speaking on the same request that the Premier has made, I think all members of the Assembly have guests here or quite a number of them, and we would welcome the opportunity to introduce any guests that have time strictures on their stay in the Chamber.

Leave granted.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, a number of very distinguished young men who have brought national attention to sport in the province of Saskatchewan. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery.

These young athletes are the essence of team work and dedication. Together they have won a Canadian championship and upheld a tradition of excellence which has earned nine championships in the past 20 years in the province of Saskatchewan: 1966, '70, '71, '73, '75, '76, 1980, 1981, and again in 1986.

The people of Saskatchewan are very proud of these young men and all they represent. Please welcome the Canadian champions of junior football, the winners of the Armadale Cup, the players and coaches of the now-famous Regina Rams. Ladies and gentlemen: The Regina Rams.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, if I might just say a word to the same welcome and add a couple of words to what the Premier has said.

I had the distinct honour 20 years ago to play on the first national championship Regina Ram team, and I would like to say to all of the players on that team, you are now

part of a very proud tradition. You've heard a good deal about that here in Regina, and indeed across this country in the last number of weeks.

Certainly that tradition began with some directors a good number of years ago and they're well known to you. And I would like to say a special word to the directors that are here as well today because the tradition that carries on is, in a good deal, the responsibility of those directors who maintain that. And I would say to all of you, 20 years from now and beyond that you will still consider yourselves a Regina Ram. Thank you very much and congratulations to all of you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I would want to add our words of welcome from the members of the opposition and words of congratulations to the members of the Regina Rams football team. We appreciate your presence here in the legislature. I assume that you can understand the debate that is happening here in terms of fairness and rule changes and so on, from your perspective, and hope that we do not remind you too much of the field that you left earlier.

Again, welcome to the legislature and our congratulations.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Blakeney:** — Mr. Speaker, I will very briefly add my words of congratulations. I think at least some member from Regina ought to speak when the Regina Rams are here, and the numbers are relatively few except on this side of the House.

So I do want to congratulate the Regina Rams. I've had tickets for many years. I confess I haven't been to many games, but I have a son who has used the tickets, has been at some of the games, and we all, whether or not we're able to get to all the games or not, appreciate the very fine manner of play and traditional sportsmanship that the Regina Rams have brought to football in Regina and in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

I had an opportunity on one occasion to watch another Regina Rams team win the Armadale Cup playing against the Burlington Braves in Hamilton some years ago, and that same fine tradition wherein the Rams have carried the banner for Regina and Saskatchewan is being continued by this team of Regina Rams, and I congratulate them heartily.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, 47 grade eight students from Centennial School, which is located on Dalgliesh Drive in north-west Regina. Accompanying the students in the opposition gallery are their teachers, Dave Nevill, Bill Forrest and Lori Godwin.

I'd like to also take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to express my appreciation for having been invited to their

school earlier to be subjected to a host of questions which I thought I answered adequately, but if they were on this side of the House questioning the government in the same tone and the same competency, I'm sure they would be very competent members of the House indeed. I would ask members to join with me in welcoming them and I look forward to seeing them shortly. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Goodale:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce to you and other members of the Assembly an old friend of this Assembly and a former MLA from the Glentworth district in Saskatchewan, who, at Agribition this week, is the proud owner of the grand champion female and the grand champion bull in the Piedmontese category. I'd ask you to welcome Roy Nelson.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Toth:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce, on behalf of the Deputy Premier, to you, and through you to this Assembly, a group of eight grade 12 students from the Whitebear Education Complex in Carlyle. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Mark Eggleston, and bus driver Kelvin McArthur.

The group of students are seated in the west gallery, and at 3 p.m. it will be my pleasure to join them for pictures on the front steps of the Legislative Assembly.

I would ask the members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming the grade 12 students, their teacher and bus driver from the White Bear Educational Complex, to the Legislative Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### Special Committee Appointed to Prepare Lists for Standing Committees (continued)

**Mr. Prebble:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Any may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker, in your election as Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are several points I'd like to make with respect to this proposed motion and specifically with respect to the proposed change in the rules.

The rule that is currently established, and the one that is particularly under debate at this time, was established in 1981 after full consultation with all members of the Assembly at that time and due consideration over several weeks. And what we have happening here this afternoon is that after a brief morning meeting, the purpose of which was simply to establish who the members of various committees of the legislature were going to be — and that was the only purpose held out for the meeting — with no notice to the opposition of any kind, Mr. Speaker, that meeting has been used as an opportunity by the government to change a very fundamental rule, a rule with respect to the quorum of

committees and how committees of this legislature shall operate. And that attempt has been made with no attempt to consult with the opposition caucus, with no attempt to consult with the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and with no notice for this topic was even going to be discussed at the meeting, Mr. Speaker.

It was enough in a morning to expect that members of the legislature would come together and choose what the membership of the 10 or 11 committees of this legislature were going to be, without also expecting at the same time that on the first full day of our activities that there would be a fundamental change in the rules of this Assembly proposed, Mr. Speaker. I really find that to be quite improper and bordering on being out of order.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the first point that I would like to make is that I see no urgency for this rule change. I see no reason why this rule change should be pushed through today, Mr. Speaker. These committees of the legislature are not even going to meeting until the spring. So my first question would be, to members opposite, what's the urgency? What's the problem?

I see no reason for urgency, unless, Mr. Speaker, unless we're to assume that this is an attempt to change the rules for the purpose of benefiting government members. Because, of course, under the proposed rule change that government members are asking us to accept, they could easily shut down any committee of the legislature whenever there's a topic of discussion that puts them in question, that puts their competence in question, Mr. Speaker; they could simply all walk out and shut down the activities of the committee. No further questions could be asked that day. That's the implication of the rule, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that that's the only reason that I could see why there's a need to change this rule so quickly. The rule's been working nicely; there is no need for an immediate change.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, that I'd like to make is that the fundamental issue here is not the specific change in the rule, in my mind; it's rather the precedent that is being set by changing the rules of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, without due notice, without consultation with other members, and without taking the matter to the rules committee.

There has been a tradition of this legislature and of legislatures across Canada and of the British parliament — and many other legislatures across the globe that practise democracy, Mr. Speaker — that the way to change rules is to go through a rules committee; that the way to change rules is to consult fully with the members of the House; that the way to change the rules is what, wherever possible, attempt to reach consensus among all members of the House on the proposed rule change. And that tradition, Mr. Speaker, has served assemblies across this country well.

And what the members opposite are proposing to do — what the government members, in my mind, are proposing to do, Mr. Speaker, at least what I fear — is that they're attempting to change that precedent, and that is what I see is the fundamental problem. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why I believe that members of the Assembly

should support the proposed amendment instead of the government motion that we have before us. So the activity that's being proposed, Mr. Speaker, the motion that's being proposed by the members opposite is, in my mind, inappropriate.

Now one of the things that I'd like to say is that I think that parliamentary tradition is important, and more important perhaps still in the minds of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, is that this Assembly be conducted in a co-operative manner.

I think, in my mind, Mr. Speaker, members of the public are basically feeling that often the activities of the Assembly have been conducted in an unparliamentary manner, that the activities of the Assembly have shown not enough respect for the Speaker and not enough respect for other members. And I've had many of my constituents raise concerns about that.

So I come into this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, wanting to conduct myself in as co-operative a way as possible for the mutual benefit of public business, and the first item that we find on the agenda is an attempt to change the rules in a completely unco-operative way, Mr. Speaker with no attempt to co-operate with other members of the Assembly at all. And I'm disappointed in that, and I find it inappropriate.

(1445)

**An. Hon. Member:** — Why would they do it?

**Mr. Prebble:** — Well I've already put forward my own suggestion, Mr. Speaker, on why it be done. Some members of the Assembly are saying, why are they doing it? I'm not sure why they're doing it, Mr. Speaker.

I guess what I would want to say to members opposite, to members of the government, is: there is no need to push through this rule change today. Why not, first of all, withdraw that part of your motion? Because then, all members of the Assembly on this side of the House will be happy to vote on the rest of the motion, other than the proposed change in the rules. Simply withdraw that part of your motion, and then take the proposal that you're making, with respect to a change in the rules, to the rules committee, and let the rules committee examine the matter.

I think, Mr. Speaker, there's a very good proposal that the government has made in the throne speech, to set up a new special committee on the rules. We saw that in the throne speech yesterday. Why not take that proposal to their proposed special committee on the rules and let that special committee on the rules, with due representation from all members of this Assembly, consider the proposed rule change and, if possible, reach a consensus on it and perhaps adopt it later? But not this afternoon — not on the second day of the Assembly's business.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen an example today of an attempt by the government this morning, without due notice to the opposition, to push through a proposed rule change at a meeting where the agenda of the meeting certainly made no provision for discussion of the rules whatsoever.

We saw in addition to that a situation, Mr. Speaker, where the opposition was given no notice of the proposed rule change.

In essence, we've seen, Mr. Speaker, this morning, and now this afternoon, an attempt to set a new precedent in this Assembly with respect to the changing of the rules. And we've seen, in my view, Mr. Speaker, an attempt by the members of the government to violate one of the fundamental traditions of this Assembly and of assemblies across the country, and that is that rules are to be made and to be changed after full consultation with all members of the Assembly and after going through the proper procedures. And therefore it's for those reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I would urge all members of the Assembly to defeat the government motion and to support the opposition amendment that's been put forward.

I thank you very much for your attentiveness.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — I wanted to take a few moments of this legislature's time, Mr. Speaker, to debate this very important issue. I was extremely surprised today to find out that this proposal was being put forward to the legislature. I was surprised, Mr. Speaker, for the simple reason that I was on the committee that reviewed the legislature rules last time. And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, you have acquainted yourself with this particular report which is before us.

I was in a second way surprised because I heard that the member for Meadow Lake is the one that moved the motion. And I thought to myself, of all the members on that committee — and they're listed in this report — who worked together harmoniously in this committee, it had a good effect on them. We came in with a very good report. And I took a look at who the members were on that committee.

**An. Hon. Member:** — Who were they?

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Well, one of the members on that committee was, according to the list here, Mr. McLeod, the member for Meadow Lake. I thought, well, that can't be true that the member for Meadow Lake was on that committee and didn't benefit from the harmonious relations in that committee and helped to bring in this unanimous report.

And I got checking a little further, Mr. Speaker, and I find that Mr. McLeod was substituted from the committee by Mrs. Duncan, and it was made retroactive to September 1, 1979. Now that is why the hon. Member from Meadow Lake didn't benefit from the effect of going through this committee on the rules.

And this is not the only time it was done, Mr. Speaker. If you go to the library as I did, you'll find many, many reports such as this over the years that have re-examined the rules of the legislature. And it's become a parliamentary practice in this legislature that major rule changes are examined by a bipartisan committee of the legislature with an opportunity to give cool, calm

consideration to any rule changes which are suggested.

And one of the rule changes that was suggested, Mr. Speaker, comes under standing committees, and it's that a quorum on all standing and select committees of the legislature shall be one-third of the members on the committee.

So in fact this committee did give deliberation to that rule change at that time. And if you check the rule book, Mr. Speaker, you will find it was a majority before. The committee considered it very carefully over a long period of time and came in with an unanimous recommendation that it be one-third, which we now find in the rules.

Now I would be surprised if the Premier knows about this or knew about this in advance. I am prepared to be charitable, Mr. Speaker, and say that the Premier didn't know about what his members on this committee were doing. I realize the member from Meadow Lake is between a rock and a hard place. He has some of the responsibility of running this House through as quickly as he can, with the least amount of damage to the government. He's faced with an increased opposition, a decreased number of members on the government side, and he's seeking a way in which he can put some controls on the committees.

Now I suggest that I'm prepared to be charitable, that the Premier didn't know about this change, because why would the Premier, whose major document was delivered yesterday in the throne speech, suggest that we're going to follow the time-honoured practice in this legislature of setting up a special committee on rules to consider changes in a cool, calm and detached manner, and not here in the Chamber. And I suspect that the committee that the Premier would set up would be a bipartisan committee of the House where all sides would be represented and we would thoroughly air any rule changes which would be suggested. And if, in fact, this rule which is under consideration now to be amended has been creating a problem, I'm sure all of those arguments would be brought out in the committee. And it's unfortunate that the member for Meadow Lake and the hon. member who moved the motion have neither one brought forward one reason why the rule should be changed.

In a committee, that would not happen, Mr. Speaker. The consideration would be given; the arguments pro and con to a rule change would be aired. But it's not being done here, Mr. Speaker, and that is wrong. That is not in the interest of fairness; that is not in the interest of parliamentary democracy; and that is not the practice that this Chamber has followed over many, many years — long before I was here — about rule changes.

And I think that the members of this House would be wise to support the amendment and defeat the motion — or alter the motion by supporting the amendment. I would urge all members to consider that seriously.

And in sitting down, Mr. Speaker, I want to say I want to hear the reasons, because if we're going to substitute this Chamber for the special select committee on rules, then

we want to know the reasons why the rule changes are being recommended. And I would suggest that those two members consider seriously.

And I would suggest to the Premier, who is not in his seat at this time, that . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, please. Hon. Members are not to draw attention to whether other hon. Members are in the House or not.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — I'm afraid I have to draw attention to the Premier because the Premier has put forward something that is of a higher order than what is suggested by the members opposite now — namely a rule change. He has said, we are prepared to set up a special select committee on the rules. Is the Premier being undercut by this small committee of five people who bring forward not a unanimous motion to this House?

I think — and being charitable towards the Premier again — I think that the Premier doesn't know about this. And it's unfortunate that the Premier doesn't rise and say something about this, Mr. Speaker, because I think he has an obligation to make this House function smoothly, as do the members on this side, and that is our intention. We want fairness in the rules of this House. We're not prepared to accept any less.

I know, Mr. Speaker, your job will be made much easier if the rules of the House or the rules pertaining to committees are decided in a special select bi-partisan committee of this House and not here in this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the member from Saskatoon University, may I extend first of all, on behalf of the constituents of the constituency of Regina Rosemont, my congratulations on your election to the Chair. And may I extend to all other members of this Assembly congratulations to the election to this Assembly and to this House, a House in which, I was told prior to coming to this place that the rule of democracy, that the rule of fairness, permeated the proceedings and would guide us in our work in representing the people of our constituency and in conducting the business of the government of Saskatchewan — which is why I raise this debate, Mr. Speaker, because I see here today, in the rules outlined by the member from Meadow Lake, an attempt to subvert what is an important part of the democratic process, a subversion of precedent, the precedent being that in this House, rules which govern our conduct so that we may work together in terms of doing the business of this province, a spirit of co-operation, a spirit of consultation, and a spirit which says to the people of Saskatchewan, who see us not only in the galleries, but now through the electronic and print media, a spirit which says: we are here to do the best job for you.

(1500)

This attempt to dictatorially impose the rule changes



upon this Assembly without consultation, without co-operation, and without following the democratic precedence followed, for example, in 1981 when the rules of this House were drawn up, that precedent of the democratic tradition is being subverted by the government of the members opposite.

So I want to speak, Mr. Speaker, primarily to the new members of this Assembly on both sides of the House. Both the new members from both sides of the House in the swearing-in process, Mr. Speaker, when we were sworn in to this Assembly, were cautioned by the Lieutenant Governor to do what was right and to put aside what may indeed be short-term political gain. It appears to me, Mr. Speaker, as a new member of this House, that the members opposite are running for short-term political gain and not what is right — not what is right in terms of consultation, not what is right in terms of co-operation in this House, and not what is right in terms of upholding the democratic principles by which we all swore to abide.

I'd like to speak on the question of consultation first of all, Mr. Speaker. In the Speech from the Throne given yesterday, the government made great to-do about the need for consultative process throughout the province. They said, for example:

My Government is aware that programmes to diversify the province's economy will require the support and co-operation of all sectors. It is therefore its intention to consult widely on the establishment of specific defined targets for economic development and to encourage all citizens to take part, and benefit.

Well I suggest, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest most strongly to the member from Meadow Lake and to the other members involved with the political operation on the other side of the House, that consultation begins here at home. Where is that consultation? You promised it. Are we going to get it? I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we've seen, in fact, in terms of dealing with the consultation of how this House operates, the reality belies the rhetoric.

We turn . . . Again on the question of consultation, the government said the tasks to which our educational system much respond cannot be achieved by the efforts of government alone. Continued consultations with students, parents, teachers, business leaders, administrators, will be required.

Mr. Speaker, the government says that its intention is to consult with those in the educational system, yet it will not consult here with the elected members of this Assembly. I say to the members opposite: gentlemen, consultation — and ladies — consultation begins at home. Where is that consultation? Once again, the rhetoric of the government belies the reality of its actions.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, there's the question of co-operation and continued co-operation in this House. It was evidenced in the last general election past, that the people of Saskatchewan wanted this Assembly to work. They wanted a new spirit to appear in this Assembly. They didn't want the same kind of fractious and rowdy debate to continue, the same kind of noise, the same kind of, let's

say, unprofessional decorum that appeared in the last House. And I will say, Mr. Speaker, that it appeared on both sides of the House. It appeared on both sides of the House.

The people of this province want this legislature to work. I truly believe that. And they want it to work because they realize that there are a number of significant problems facing them as citizens of Saskatchewan, whether they live in the city, whether they live in the country, whether they live in small towns. Whatever their station in life is, they want the problems of this province to be dealt with in a manner which is sane, which is rational, which is co-operative, and which can, in fact, deal with the urgent problems which press down upon them.

Mr. Speaker, the attempts to dictatorially impose the rule changes on this House openly break and defy the kind of spirit of co-operation that the people of Saskatchewan, all constituents of all constituencies, told us as elected representatives. They told us, Mr. Speaker, to co-operate, and what are we getting? No co-operation; no consultation. And so the people of this province obviously are not being listened to by the government of the members opposite.

But there is to me a greater danger in the imposition of these rules than the lack of consultation because we have seen, in the four previous years, a total lack of consultation with this opposition. We've seen in the past four years a total lack of co-operation in terms of dealing with the matters of the House. My colleagues who attended that former legislature can certainly attest to that much better than I can.

Mr. Speaker, there is a principle and there is a precedent being established here that shows that is a danger, and which I take objection to as a new member. When I was elected to this House, I was elected on the understanding that in dealing with the business of the provincial government each and every member was a private member ultimately, ultimately was responsible for the actions, not in a partisan manner, but was responsible for doing a job in order to be able to represent the constituents, the people of their constituency.

What this rule change does, Mr. Speaker, in my mind, subverts the rights of me as a member in order to be able to carry out that task. And I refer specifically to one of my assignments as a member, and that is my assignment as a member of the public accounts committee of this province. Now, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the public accounts committee of this province is the committee whereby the expenditures of the government are scrutinized and are open to scrutiny by members of all political parties acting on behalf of the public of this province.

And I look and I see what the government is attempting to do. Now they have a 10-member . . . a membership of 10 members on the public accounts committee, six from the government, four from the opposition. The rule changes being proposed by the government would say that the quorum on the public accounts committee would be a majority. What it means, Mr. Speaker, in reality, is that the government, the members opposite, would have to leave

two members at home and, through any unavoidable circumstance, if the members in the opposition were not able to provide more than two members, the work of the public accounts committee would be brought to a halt; that the examination of the issues which come before the public accounts would not be able to be dealt with. That, Mr. Speaker, any time a controversial subject was brought before the public accounts committee, or was dug up in the public accounts committee, any time the spending of the government that was brought to an examination that the government didn't like, all of a sudden two or three members from the government side would disappear.

The work of the public accounts committee would come to a halt and the right of the public to know the spending of the government would be frustrated. So it is not, Mr. Speaker, just a . . . this question is not just a quarrel among politicians. It, in fact, goes to the very heart of the right, of the public's right, to know.

And I may say, Mr. Speaker, on the subject of the public's right to know, this government for the last four or five years has promised to bring in freedom of information legislation — has promised to bring it in. It has not appeared in this legislature, and I have to ask why — and I have to ask why. Is this just another method of covering up the right of the public to know the conduct of the business of Saskatchewan?

So it is for three primary reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I rise in support of the amendment and that I urge the members opposite, particularly the new members, that your rights as members will be violated, or could be violated by the introduction of these rule changes. So I would urge you to support the amendment and we get on with the job in the spirit of co-operation, consultation, and for the maintenance of a democratic process here in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Van Mulligan:** — Mr. Speaker, I had not thought that I would have the opportunity so early to formally congratulate on your appointment as Speaker. I have had the opportunity informally, but I think, on behalf of the people of Regina Victoria, it's appropriate that you be congratulated.

Knowing you as I do, and I think that's in concert with other members, I think that we can have high expectations of the stewardship of this House. I think that we can expect from you a fair hand, indeed a compassionate hand.

Mr. Speaker, how quickly reality replaced the rhetoric. How quickly the true colours of the government show. It was only yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier talked about co-operation, and I assume that to mean co-operation between both sides of the House. And I assumed that to mean that as members of the House we would be working in concert to deal with the business of the people, to deal with the serious problems facing this province to find solutions to those problems. But I guess it just wasn't to be, even if I was under some illusion at some

point yesterday that maybe he was serious about all this and we're really going to work in a co-operative fashion.

I think my first statement, and as an MLA in my capacity as a critic, was to say that I would be prepared, and my caucus colleagues would be prepared, to co-operate with the government in dealing with a specific matter, and that was to do with some recommendations arising from the local government financing act. And we're prepared to co-operate. And yesterday I heard the Premier say the he was prepared to co-operate. But how soon those illusions are shattered, Mr. Speaker. How soon we deal with the reality, and how soon we deal with that sleazy bunch over there. What we have today, Mr. Speaker, is an unnecessarily disputatious move to insure that there will not be any co-operation in this House — unnecessarily disputatious.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Van Mulligan:** — And I say disputatious because surely that's what the motion is all about, picking a fight for no reason. To bring it in now without any prior consultation; to bring it in now even when these committees will not be sitting, in large part, until the spring; to bring it in now even while the government talks about setting up a rules committee, surely that is picking a fight, surely that is disputatious.

I have to ask myself, but why is the government acting this way, Mr. Speaker? Why are they moving in this manner? Why in one day would they be saying we want to co-operate, we want to set up a rules committee, we want to do all those kind or wonderful things? Then why the next day are they moving in this manner aside from it apparently staving off question period at this point in time?

I ask myself, is this to be the first of a series of procedural assaults designed to create a smoke-screen in which a new electoral boundaries act might be introduced and debated. Is that the reason? It certainly appears that way. You've created enough of a smoke-screen. Public perception being what it is, these politicians are just simply discussing procedures and rules, not important things — bring in a change to the electoral boundaries act or a new act. However repulsive those changes might be, it's lost in the smoke-screen that's beginning to be created here today.

(1515)

Well I for one am prepared to deal with that particular assault, Mr. Chairman. Now the public may not be enamoured with their elected representatives dealing at length with questions related to procedures while important public questions, public issues like jobs, like fair taxation, like the state of the farm economy, were seemingly overshadowed. The public will not be amused by this.

But I think the public also understands, Mr. Speaker, as you do and I think some members of this House seemingly do, that we have a democracy, and democratic institutions; and that whatever feelings there are in our democratic institutions, we love those institutions

because it exemplifies our society which is a democratic society. And we will make every effort to preserve those democratic institutions, and certainly that is part of your mandate and part of your responsibility.

I think the public also understands simple concepts such as fair play. The public doesn't like bullies. The public likes to see people have equal opportunity. And certainly that's in part what this rules debate is all about, Mr. Speaker. I think it's something that school children — and I'm sorry that they're gone now — learn every day in their school clubs. If we must work together to deal with the thing that we have before us we need some rules in which to do that, and it should be fair, and we should discuss how those rules are set and how those rules might be changed.

I think the public also every year on Remembrance Day gets some sense of what this debate and what this House and what our democratic institutions are all about when we think about those who sacrificed to ensure that democratic institutions would be maintained in this country. The government's strategy, Mr. Speaker, will not work. They can fool themselves that by creating this smoke-screen we're going to slip some things in, but they're not going to fool the public.

Mr. Speaker, we should be dealing with our rules in a manner which does credit to the trust and responsibility that's placed in us by the people of this province. We need to deal with questions of rules and changes to rules co-operatively, working together to give real meaning to that word. We should be dealing with changes to rules as a matter of consensus. There should be broad agreement on how we govern ourselves and how we conduct our behaviour in this House. Rules are not meant to be changed by simply a majority saying we want to change them regardless of what the minority might have to say. That's not how we govern ourselves, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm especially concerned that on your first day, Mr. Speaker, you should be faced with a majority that seemingly displays no respect for the rules that bind us in reasoned debate in dealing with people's business.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from The Battlefords talked about how another House in place far away also dealt with the question of rules. And he indicated — and that little I understand, I think that he's right — that that House, when they contemplate any changes in the rules, that again it's done in a consensual manner. That is to say, the government tries to get broad agreement from all the parties on the rules that are to be changed. Because after all, the House belongs to all the parties on behalf of all the people. And it's the rules that govern our behaviour, so therefore, whether or not one has a majority, it's important to have all members, to the extent that that is possible, agreed on any changes in the rules. Now that's how one particular House deals with changes to the rules.

Mr. Speaker, as one who has experience in a more junior democratic institution, I can tell you that the approach being fostered by the government is also alien to my experience. Even a junior democratic institution like the city council, Mr. Speaker, that is governed by procedural by-law, takes the approach that if we want to make

changes to those by-laws, to those rules, we need to do it in a co-operative fashion. And we need to sit down and really understand what changes it is that we're making, why we're making those changes, what kind of effect those changes will have in the long run. Because once the rules are set, those rules can work to our benefit. Those rules can also hamstring us.

So we need to be very careful about changes in those rules. The rules can help us; the rules can hinder us. So therefore rules or changes in rules are not made quickly. Those changes are made after some real thought has been put into all the implications of those changes — certainly not something that we're seeing here.

This unseemingly rush to make what seems to be an innocuous change, but may well be, upon further reflection, Mr. Speaker, may not be that innocuous at all. And what I'm saying is that we should have the opportunity to reflect on what the proposed changes mean. And certainly as a rookie member of the legislature, one who, I wouldn't say hardly understands but is only beginning to understand the rules of the House, I need some time, Mr. Speaker, to fully understand what it is that the amendment is all about. I want time to look at that and I want time to debate that with my colleagues. I want to debate it with government members. What does it mean and how will it help us? Will it make for a more effective House? Will it mean that the Assembly will be much more able to deal with the people's business? Those are the things that we need to know. But yet they say, let's disregard that; let's just deal with the rule of the majority here. That's the only rule that they seem interested in.

Mr. Speaker, even on Regina city council — I think maybe we went to extremes — it seems to me we spent five years revising our procedural by-law. And every rule was looked at; every minor change was reflected on; every minor amendment was debated, discussed. What does it mean? Will it make for a more effective council? Will it hamstring us in the future? How will it affect the public? Will it mean that the public's business can be better done if we put in this rule? It took us a long time to look at all those changes that we were making at that particular level. And again I ask: why are we making this change so suddenly, so quickly, without any consultation here at all?

You know, come to think of it, Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons approached things in a consensual fashion. Certainly Regina city council approaches things in a consensual fashion. I would venture to say, Mr. Speaker, almost any organization, almost any organized collective of people deals with things in a consensual fashion.

We have the Regina Rams here, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon. I don't think that the Prairie Junior Football League would let a simple majority without any consultation with the other members say, well, here's a new rule change; or that the new referee would say, well, welcome to the game but here a new rule today. I don't think they'd approach things in that fashion.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Van Mulligan:** — I know that the Canadian Football League deals with things in a manner which provides for notice and plenty of debate and discussions about how we're going to conduct ourselves on the field. And it seems to me that almost any organization, any institution, Mr. Speaker, provides for that kind of opportunity, provides for that kind of debate, provides for that kind of reasoning to ensure that the rules we have are good rules, to ensure that the rules we have work for the benefit of all of us, to make sure that the rules that we have work for the benefit of the people of the province, not just simply for a majority in the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't think that this was the way I was going to be getting my feet wet, to be making my maiden speech. I suppose in a way it's appropriate that the first time that you do speak that you deal with the core and the essence of our democratic institutions and how we govern ourselves. Perhaps it's appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I for one will be supporting the amendment. I think it would be an even wiser action yet if the members opposite would withdraw the motion that they have before this House, to take it back, to look for an opportunity to get it to a rules committee so that we can sit down in a co-operative fashion, so that we can work together to understand the implications of this rule change, to see how it's going to benefit the House, to see how it's going to benefit the people of this province, not just how it's going to benefit the government opposite. I think that would be a wiser course Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm just sadly disappointed that one day after a great deal of discussion, and especially words from the Premier about co-operation and about all the members working together to deal with the problems facing this province . . . And they're very serious problems. One only has to refer to the state of the farm economy. One only has to refer to the state of unemployment — especially in our urban centres. And we'll be hearing more about that tomorrow I would think. One only has to refer to the inequitable taxation system that we have in this province and across this country to understand that there is serious business facing this House and there are serious problems facing the people of this province, and that the sooner that we get on with dealing with those kinds of items, the better it would be for the people of this province. But we cannot do that if every time we want to do that the members opposite throw up a rule log-jam which prevents us from getting on with the people's business.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the government would have the good sense to withdraw the motion, to come back with a more reasonable motion, one that can be supported by the House. If they're not prepared to do that then I would hope that perhaps some would have good sense enough to vote for the amendment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by congratulating you on your appointment. You and I

have not known each other in the past but your press clippings are good. The members who have known you speak well of you and I look forward to working with you throughout the life of this legislature.

I am very proud to be here, to have been elected to come to this House by the people of Saskatoon Fairview. I particularly look forward to working with the hon. members of this House, members on both sides of the House, who have been my friends for many, many years and with whom I expect to be able to work in a spirit of co-operation for the good of all of the people of Saskatchewan.

I come to this House with some concern because of the rather raucous and noisy nature of the last legislature, Mr. Speaker. I would look in from time to time on the public channel in my home in Saskatoon and see what was going on and ask myself: do I want to go there and take part in that particular show? Would I be able to make the contribution that I want to make in that particular environment? And I came here and I must say that I'm pleased with the way in which members on both sides of the House have conducted themselves in the first few hours of the life of this legislature. And I sincerely hope that nothing happens to upset this attitude and the mutual respect that I see so far in this House.

(1530)

One of the things that I had expected, Mr. Speaker, was to hear some debates and to participate in debates. But the problem that I'm having today is that this is not a debate. Mr. Speaker, member after member on the opposition side of the House have stood up and have in one way or another made the same points. The points are simple but I will review them briefly to give some context to my remarks.

The government this morning introduced, in the nomination committee, a new idea which would involve a change in the rules governing quorums at the various committees. They offered no explanation to the opposition members at that committee. They come to the House and through the chairman, the minister from Yorkton, make a motion to this House that a quorum from now on be 50 per cent of the members, and no explanation is given to this House as to why that change should take place.

Now we have been debating this question for some hour and a half today in this session. Speaker after speaker on the opposition side of the House have stood up and asked: what's happening; why is this necessary; what's going on? And there's not a sound from the other side of the House. I means there is just a total silence over there. The odd smile, the odd grimace, the odd wave, but not a word of explanation as to why we're in the predicament we're in.

Now what's going on, Mr. Speaker? Why can't we have a debate on this matter? If something which was unanimously agreed to as a change in the existing rules back in 19 — when was it? — 1979 . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — '81.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — If that was unanimously agreed to at the time, then why is it necessary to change it today? Will someone over there, Mr. Speaker, please stand up and tell us.

As long as they don't . . . They sit there just dumb, quiet; the cat's got their tongue; no word of explanation coming forward. And what are we to think and what are the people of the province to think? Is it now simply arrogance to sit there quiet in these circumstances and rely upon your majority to change the rules of the game? And is it not also contemptuous of this House to take that approach?

So I want to conclude my remarks because I want to give someone over there, the minister from Yorkton or the government House Leader, the opportunity to get up and to explain to this House why this change is necessary, why it has to go now, why it has to be done in this unusual way. Why can't the idea be simply referred to this rules committee that we're going to set up to be considered along with a lot of other proposals respecting rule changes? And as I say, would someone over there stand up and give this House the courtesy of an explanation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Mr. Speaker, it is certainly my pleasure to join my other fellow colleagues in wishing you well as having been chosen the Speaker of this House. But I want to also indicate to you that a week or so ago I was asked by some people in the city of Saskatoon as to why we were having a fall session, since the Premier, through the media, had not indicated that any significant things were going to happen in the fall session. And we can only speculate as to what the government had in mind.

Yesterday, when I listened to the throne speech, I was not convinced until the very end as to why this session had been called, because really there was nothing in the throne speech that indicated any urgency, except until you came to the very end where we had one sentence where it said that they were going to establish a new election boundaries commission, or a new Act would be presented. And, Mr. Speaker, even then I was not too concerned, because I know a number of the members on the opposite side, in the government side. But today my fears have been borne out.

I was a member of the Crown corporation. In fact I was the chairman of the Crown corporation for a few years back in the early '70s, and if my memory serves me well — and the member from Lumsden will bear me out in this — I believe there was a time when he was a member of that Crown corporation when I was the chairman, but he represented at that time a different political party. But there were times, Mr. Speaker, as chairman it would have been very nice to have a majority as your quorum. But in a democracy, Mr. Speaker, we cannot always do that which pleases us the best at that particular time.

What the member from Yorkton is presenting today, and what the member from Meadow Lake is seconding — and I'm surprised at the member from Meadow Lake, that he

would do that — you are hitting at the heart of democracy today. There would not be a legislature here today in this form if there was no opposition. And what are you doing by this motion, you are stifling the opposition. You are saying to the people of Saskatoon South, who saw fit to re-elect me, that we don't want him to speak for us. We will not give him the opportunity. If he embarrasses to any extent, we will use our majority and we will shut down those committees.

Ladies and gentlemen of the government, you are hitting at the very heart of democracy, and democracy cannot work I you do not give the opposition the opportunity present their views in this legislature to the people of Saskatchewan. And by this motion that you have presented, you are saying to us: we are going to reduce or annihilate your role as an opposition.

You do not have that right in a democracy. You were given by the people of this province a mandate to govern, but to govern in a legislature where there is an effective opposition. And you may not like it, but the people of the province said that there would be an effective opposition.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Rolfes:** — And it is incumbent upon us here today to fight with everything that we have to make sure that democracy can function in this Assembly. And I ask the members opposite to please come to your senses; know what your role is as a government. In the last four and a half years I have dealt with a number of high school students, and one of the things that was always embarrassing me was that I at one time had been a member of this House and had to explain as to why we act as we do in this House from time to time, which is not keeping with the wishes of the people of this province. But I tell you I am not afraid to go back and tell the people of this province that my first words in this House were on a motion that I found fundamentally opposed to the principles of democracy. And I'll go back and tell the people what you were attempting to do.

You have a majority, and on most committees you have a majority. Why do you want to change this rule? And I think the reason you want to change this rule is so that you can stifle us, so you can muzzle us in committees, and if it gets too hot for you, you can simply walk out and let things cool down. But that's not democracy; that is not your function. Your function is to legislate, to govern, and listen to the people through the opposition. You may not like it, but that is your function; that is your duty.

This change that is made today is not a trifling change. It is a significant change. It is a significant change. And as I said before, I think you are changing the role of the opposition, which you do not have the right to do.

In the 11 years that I was a member of this House — and it has been stated by my colleagues a number of times — we worked to consensus. I didn't agree with all the changes that were made, but because we knew there had to be co-operation, because we knew there had to be consensus in consultation if we wanted this House to work, all of us gave a little bit of what we didn't really believe in. And we came up with rules that we could all

accept to make this House function. And you cannot unilaterally come in and without any explanation — without any explanation — change the rules of this House.

I would ask the member from Meadow Lake, who I know, to please stand up in his seat and explain to the members of this House and to the people of Saskatchewan why you need this change. You may have some logical explanation, but please stand up and tell us; tell the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry for what's happening today. I am truly sorry for democracy; I'm sorry for the government. I can't believe that the architect of the throne speech yesterday is the same architect of the motion today. If it is, then that person has a very serious problem because he is nothing but a schizophrenic. He can't ride in both directions. He can't on the one hand say, I will support the principles of democracy by consultation, by co-operation, and then the very next day stifle the opposition, which is a fundamental part of democracy, by bringing in unilaterally, without any explanation, a rule change which means that the whole role of each member — not only in the opposition, but the back benches there — your role is going to fundamentally change. And I'm saying to you now, please stand up.

It had been my sincere hope that I could come back to this House with a spirit of co-operation and work with you people so that the people in Saskatchewan and our high school students would be proud of the way we act in this House and the way we function.

(1545)

But you must give us that opportunity to be an effective opposition, and in that way we safeguard the principles of democracy that people for hundred of years have fought for. And the people out there will respect you for that decision; they'll respect you for it. And what I'm asking you to do today, to please let's not start this session of the legislature in such a manner that you force us to fundamentally change our role. I want to be an effective member. All my colleagues want to be an effective member, and it's incumbent upon you to see to it that we can function in that role. And I urge again the member from Yorkton and the member from Meadow Lake to withdraw this motion and to tell the people of this province that we are going to protect and fight for the fundamental principles of democracy; and not only that, but we will make certain that you and the members in the opposition can play your role and carry out your duties for which you have been elected.

I ask you, please, remove this motion, but at least get up and give us an explanation. Tell us why you need this change.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I can at least talk to the member from Meadow Lake. He's a former principal, a former teacher of a high school, and I know that he has talked to his children in his history classes about what democracy is all about. And I'm certain that he went through the principles of democracy, that there has to be an opposition — an effective opposition — and that the

opposition have a role to play. And I'm sure that he would not want his former students to think that he has forgotten about those principles. So I ask him to please stand up and explain to us and to this House and to the people of Saskatchewan why this motion is necessary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you on my behalf and as well on behalf of the people of Regina Lakeview. I look forward to working with you in this Assembly, and with the other members. And as a new member of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, who strongly believes in democracy and our democratic traditions, I am surprised at what is happening in this Assembly today. I am surprised and appalled at the unparliamentary and unfair manner in which the government members are seeking to change a fundamental rule of this Assembly.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Simard:** — A rule that was fashioned some time ago by a special committee, and a rule which was, I understand, agreed to unanimously by that committee.

I am surprised that the government members have not stood up and debated this issue today, Mr. Speaker. There hasn't been a sound from the other side. They have refused to enter the debate. And that reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of a situation in a criminal court of law. When a criminal is guilty, his lawyer will tell him not to say anything.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have to ask myself whether this is a calculated move on the part of the government to railroad the opposition and this Assembly, and to avoid the demands and requirements of a true democracy. I have to ask myself, Mr. Speaker, whether this is a calculated move on the part of the government to avoid the business of the committees, and thereby accountability to the people of the province.

Out of common courtesy, Mr. Speaker, simple common courtesy, important rule changes should not be made or dealt with in this manner but in the traditional manner. If government members think they can silence the members of this side of the House by unilaterally changing rules of the Assembly so they can preclude debate in committees and avoid the business of the committees, they have another thought coming. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disappointed that such Machiavellian disregard for our customs and traditions is recurring in this Assembly today. And I am deeply disappointed that this Assembly has got off to this start, particularly in light of the comments from the throne speech, and referred to earlier in this debate.

We are here, Mr. Speaker, to conduct the business of this province, and the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, wanted and elected a strong opposition. It appears to me, however — and I hope I am wrong — but it appears to me that the government is attempting to overcome the will of the people to have a balanced House, and the will of the people to have a House that works together to solve the many problems that we are now faced with. It appears to me that the government is attempting to overcome the

will of the people by using its majority of seats to unilaterally change the rules and attempt to gain dictatorial control of this Assembly.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this Assembly will see that the only fair thing to do is not to amend the rules in this manner but to refer the matter to a rules committee where proper discussion and consultation can take place in a manner that does justice to our democratic traditions, and I therefore urge this Assembly to adopt the amendment put forward by the member from Quill Lakes. Thank you.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank you for recognizing me and I, too, congratulate you on your recent election and selection as Speaker of this honourable House. I regret, Mr. Speaker, the occasion, the reason for my joining in this debate today. It is indeed unfortunate, Mr. Speaker.

I note with some interest we are being heaped with volumes of Weyerhaeuser material which the opposition has requested for nearly a year now.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order, please. I don't believe that has anything to do with the motion.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, historically the fact of the matter is, historically rule changes in this legislature have been made by a special committee of the Assembly. This is not what is happening right now. Mr. Speaker, a consensus means that there is no substantial disagreement, in fact no disagreement whatsoever. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that even the members opposite must recognize by now that there is no consensus. If there is consensus, it is a consensus that the rule change is ill-conceived, ill-planned, or it is ill-willed. I wonder which?

The fundamental issue here today that we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, is that of fairness. This province is governed by a few people who say one thing and then they do the opposite. They said in their throne speech, and I quote:

My government intends to implement its programme in a spirit of co-operation and participation.

It goes on and the quote continues:

My Ministers will continue this consultation process as new options are proposed and evaluated.

Mr. Speaker, they said it, but it is not happening, and as a new member of this legislature, I object. Fairness and consultation has indeed not taken place. That should be fundamentally clear to everyone in the legislature at this time.

The question is not is one-third or one-half fair. But the question is how do we go about changing the rules? Now, Mr. Speaker, if I can refer to the throne speech, and I again quote:

My government believes that changes can be

made to enable the Legislature to better meet the needs of the members and the people. Accordingly, it proposes to refer the matter of a revision to the Rules of this Legislative Assembly to a special committee of this Assembly.

Why then, do we have this proposal before us today? I understand why we have the amendment, but why do we have the original proposal? It should be referred to this special committee. Mr. Speaker, is it simply a matter of majority rules on everything? Is that what we're coming to? Is it a question of might is right?

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I lived in a country in South American where the Leader of the Opposition was under arrest, and the Leader of the Opposition happened to be Dr. Cheddi Jagan, and others who had been in his cabinet were also under arrest and held in the interior of the country away from telephones, and their mail was gone through. They were indeed muzzled.

Mr. Speaker, we are being muzzled here by the proposal put in front of us. I plead with every individual member to ask yourself if the change proposed is a part of a democracy that you want to be a part of. Of course, it is not. That's the only answer that we can come to. Protection of democracy, Mr. Speaker, is not always served best by force. Today we as members have the privilege of upholding democracy by voting for this amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I have noted at various times in this debate the members opposite giggling and having generally a good time as though this is not a serious matter. And I don't know how we members of the opposition can get it across to the members opposite; we are serious about this. This is a serious matter. It is not something to be taken lightly.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan a serious movement away from free speech. Public employees have been hampered in the recent election unfairly and now, Mr. Speaker, we are being hampered in a similar way the same calculated, callous disregard by the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, again I urge every fair-minded member and, indeed, I still have some faith and some hope that there are fair-minded members opposite. I urge that all fair-minded members support this amendment that is before us now. It is a matter of utmost importance.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to address just a few remarks just to the magnitude that the members opposite are placing on this debate. What we have before us is a simple motion which suggest nothing more or nothing less than whether or not a majority of the members of any committee, regardless of what committee we're taking about, a majority of the members of the committee should be in attendance for the committee to conduct the public business. That's the simple fact of what this motion is about. And we have members going across the waterfront here everywhere from going back in parliamentary tradition. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that we're going back in parliamentary tradition as far as 1981, not as far as a

couple of centuries ago. In 1981 the rules were changed, and rule no. 90 (1) states the following:

One third of the number of Members of a select, special or standing committee shall be a quorum unless the Assembly has otherwise ordered.

Now there's nothing unilateral about what we're going here. What we're doing here is coming to the Assembly, which is what we're doing now, and asking the members of the Assembly on all sides of the House to vote on the very simple matter that I've just started.

Now people have made suggestions — members opposite have made suggestions — that it would be harder to get the work done. I ask any fair-minded person in Saskatchewan or any member in this House how can it be harder to get the work done if you're an elected member of the legislature and you're assigned to a committee, appointed to a committee — why should we not expect that 50 per cent of the members should be in attendance at the committee when it's conducting public business regardless of what committee is in operation? I've heard that it somehow favours the government, the proposal that's here. How can it somehow favour the government to have half of the members of the committee in attendance when the committee is conducting public business? I fail to see the arguments raised by the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Quill Lakes, in moving his amendment, saw fit to re-visit the committee meeting this morning, and I want to do a little of the same, because what we have, and the reason we're debating it now, is because it's the first opportunity in this new legislature, the 21<sup>st</sup> Legislature, this is the first opportunity to address this issue, or any other, as a matter of fact. This is the first opportunity to address it.

And, Mr. Speaker, this morning at the very meeting that was referred to by the member for Quill Lakes, as it should have, the subject of the membership of the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg on committees — he's obviously not a member of the nominating committee — but the subject of his membership on the committees in the House was raised by myself as a member of the government.

In this spirit, Mr. Speaker, with the idea that a new legislature, the rules and whatever happens here should accommodate the make-up of the new legislature, well it happens that the make-up of this legislature has a member, one lone member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, who is not a member of the nominating committee. And the two members from the official opposition came to that meeting with the express purpose of freezing the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg from the committees of the House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of the co-operation to which I refer, the government side of the House — and I refer now to the Crown Corporations Committee because the discussion became: should the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg be on one of the major committees? And I think all members will agree the major

committees are considered to be the Crown Corporation Committee and the Public Accounts Committee, which most often meet concurrently. And the suggestion made by myself at that committee meeting was that the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg should perhaps be on one of those. The members opposite suggested that he would not have one of the positions which is allocated to the opposition, which the member of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is a member of the opposition. And so, in the spirit of the kind of co-operation that this house should operate on — not only now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Legislature but in legislatures to come — we, the government, who have an allocation of 12 members, said one of those 12 members will be the member from the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. That, Mr. Speaker, is the spirit of co-operation to which I refer and to which the Premier has referred in the past and to which the throne speech referred yesterday.

(1600)

So, Mr. Speaker, the matter before us is a very simple one. A very simple matter of a simple majority. Should members of this House — from whatever party they represent — should they be expected to attend at the meetings of the committees to which they are appointed? I say yes, they should. And I say the public business is better served if at least 50 per cent of those members are in attendance, and I would ask all members of the house on that very simple question to vote against the amendment and to vote for the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Speaker, will the member from Meadow Lake permit a question before he resumes his seat?

**Mr. Speaker:** — The member has requested . . . asked if the member from Meadow Lake will permit a question. Apparently he will not permit a question.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to speak for this amendment. But before I speak to the amendment, let me first congratulate you as being chosen the Speaker of this legislature on behalf of myself and of the good people of Prince Albert-Duck Lake, who I am fortunate enough to represent.

I didn't expect, Mr. Speaker, to have my first speech in this House one defending the basic principles of democracy and fairness. Rather, I expected to be debating the throne speech. I was amazed this morning when my colleagues came back from their committee meeting and reported to us that the members opposite are determined to undermine the very principles of democracy in this province, the very principles of why we're here in this legislature. I was amazed; I was shocked, and I was disappointed. I fully expected, Mr. Speaker, that the direction that the members opposite would take would be that of fairness and of co-operation. I am also amazed, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Meadow Lake didn't see fit to explain what this proposed change means.



I wish, Mr. Speaker, to give you an example of what they are about and what they're trying to do, and why the members on this side of the house are opposing them. The education committee, as an example, has nine members on the government side; it has six members on the opposition side. Surely the member from Meadow Lake must understand that if his party, his government, was in a difficult situation and didn't want that committee to meet, that if the nine members from the government side didn't attend, there wouldn't be a quorum.

That's what we're talking about here. We're talking about democracy; we're talking about a commitment from every legislator in this body, and we're talking about a lack of commitment from the opposite side — a lack of commitment to democracy and to fair representation to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, he speaks of large numbers of members being at committee meetings so that we can best serve our people, and the members on this side agree with him. We agree fully. That's why we're adamant that the one-third rule stay, because we're afraid if it's changed, that there won't be committee meetings when the government doesn't want them. They're trying to muzzle the opposition. But what they'll find is it's a little different than it was last term because we have a few more of us on this side who are willing to speak against your kind of government, your kind of unfairness, and your kind of misrepresentation of the things that the people of this province want. And you want to know that we're not going to be sitting back. We're going to be speaking on behalf of democracy and the people of this province. That's why we're here. And you want to count on it — we're going to do it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — I rather smelled a rat the other day in terms of fairness when I saw included in the throne speech the idea to change the electoral boundaries act. Mr. Speaker, I refer to fairness. I refer to a one-to-one representation in fair, honest government from the legislators in this body, and I'm afraid, Mr. Speaker, this government is on the wrong course.

I would have thought that the member from Kinistino and other new members would have come to this body realizing the mistakes of the past administration, coming here with the idea of changing it, of telling the old members that you're wrong, you've got to stop it, we've made errors but we're here to correct them. But I didn't see it.

I see them sit there quietly as these guys try to pull the basic fundamental principles of which this House is designed for, under the feet of everyone sitting here. And I'm urging them to get up and support this amendment. I'm urging them to get up. Take a little courage. Never mind worrying about whether you're going to be in cabinet down the road or whether you're not. Do what's right — do what's right for your people. Do what's right for the people of Kinistino.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, this wasn't a speech that I

expected to, or wanted to have to make. We've got a new generation out there and some of them were in this gallery today. And what they're expecting from us is decent, fair government. We've got a problem. We've got a major problem. And the members opposite are the ones that should be correcting it — the new members as well as the old. The old ones should know better, and the new ones shouldn't let them do it because they don't apparently know any better.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand the government's fear, the government's fear of what's about to happen in this term of government. I can, because I don't think they're strong enough to defend themselves against the kind of opposition that the New Democratic Party and the members of this opposition are going to mount. You're not used to what we're going to be giving you. You're used to a little of it, but you're going to get an awful lot more.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — It's our responsibility to keep you on track, and when you're undermining the basic principles of what this legislature is about, I'll give a commitment to the people of Prince Albert-Duck Lake, as well as to the rest of the people of this province, that we're going to be here fighting on their behalf to make sure that this government operates fairly, effectively and soundly.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, there's urgency. There's a feeling of urgency on this side of the House, and it's because of the types of things that the members opposite appear to want to do.

Why don't you do the right thing? Stand on your principles. Do the right thing if you have any principles. Do the right thing. Why don't all of you support our amendment to the motion? That's what your job should be. Do what's right. I ask the member from Meadow Lake to stand up, and stand up on the side of right, not on the side of trying to set it up so you can win the next election through misrepresenting the people and through changing the rules that this House stands for.

The people of this province expected a fair government. They returned you to office with some expectations, not with the kind of a majority that you might have liked, but they've still got some expectations that you're going to turn things around from where you've been and do the right thing. It appears that their faith in you has been misplaced.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to this House that I will be supporting the amendment. And Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to this House that I am against the motion. I am against any action by members of this government that would undermine the future of our children and their children.

Democracy is a sacred thing, and it's our job to protect it, and you can bet that the members on this side of the House are going to work awfully hard to see that those principles and those rights are protected. Thank you, Mr.

Speaker.

(1615)

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, there will be a whole lot of folks in Moose Jaw who will attest to the fact that I did not seek representation in the public office because of a burning desire and an innate passion to debate rules of the House. And I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that they would be correct in attesting to that. And I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that I had anticipated that with the first opportunity to stand address this Assembly, that it would be on a topic that is a little more exciting, a little more meaningful in the lives of Saskatchewan people than this motion appears to be. However, it would be all too easy to assume that because we are talking about rules that it is unimportant, and that is simply not the case.

Mr. Speaker, during the recent election campaign I had the privilege of speaking with a large number of high schools in my riding, and high school students who were shocked, Mr. Speaker, to learn that in this world of ours those of us who enjoy the freedoms and the privileges that come with the democratic system are in the minority; and that, as was pointed out last evening, about only one-quarter of the countries in this world enjoy the privileges of democracy. Students who were shocked to learn that in many parts of the country — many parts of the world, I should say — that rules are made by those who have the greatest amount of power, without consideration and respect for the voice and the feelings and the concerns and the dreams of the minorities. And I was impressed with the commitment of those young people, many of whom sat in the gallery here today, believing that it is only right that the voice of the minority should be heard and should be respected when the democratic decisions are made. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that is a basic principle upon which all of us have committed ourselves in arriving at this Assembly yesterday and taking our seats in this honoured House.

I talked to a good number of people, Mr. Speaker, over the last number of months, who have expressed concern about the conduct and the decorum of this House and its members, and who have said that they want to see in this House people conduct themselves with the objective of fairness and putting the interests of Saskatchewan people, first and foremost, ahead of partisan political concerns. And I listened very carefully, Mr. Speaker, on that momentous day for many of us, on both sides of the House, when we were sworn in. And the Lieutenant Governor, in his address to us, when His Honour asked us to keep uppermost in our minds when we serve the people of Saskatchewan, to serve the people of Saskatchewan, not our partisan political interests.

And I listened with a great deal of respect to yourself, Mr. Speaker, yesterday when you asked us again to consider conducting ourselves in that same manner, putting first and foremost the interests of the people of Saskatchewan, not our partisan political interests. And I listened with pleasure last evening when our Premier spoke and again asked all the members of the Assembly to put first and foremost the interests of the people of Saskatchewan and not our partisan political interests.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the message that was imparted to us by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, by yourself, Mr. Speaker, and by the Premier and by the people of Saskatchewan, are messages that are important for all of us to consider as being our careers — for those of us who are beginning — and as we extend our careers for those who are extending, to serve the people of Saskatchewan from this honoured Legislative Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as a new member I don't pretend to have an intimate working knowledge of all the committees of this Assembly, but I do know that they deal with matters of importance to the people of this province. Let me just refer, for those who may not be familiar to the committees and what they are, and listen as to whether they are the kinds of things that you see as being important for the people in the Assembly to consider. And there are 10 committees that we're talking about. The function of 10 committees is to do their business outside of these halls so that when we gather here we can work with efficiency, as was referred to as a highlight of yesterday's throne address, Mr. Speaker. The committees we're referring to are: agriculture, communications of the Assembly, Crown corporations, education, the estimates of this Assembly, municipal law, non-controversial Bills, private members' Bills, privileges and election, and public accounts.

Mr. Speaker, I think it would be in error to treat those topic areas as being insignificant to the members of this Assembly and as insignificant to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I do know, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the committees and how they are made up, that there is a formula which allows that the government, which has the majority of members sitting in this Assembly, makes up the majority of members of each committee. And I do not debate that principle, Mr. Speaker. I think that is correct and I support that principle that the government should have the majority of the members on each of these committees.

But then we come to the critical question, Mr. Speaker, and that is: what happens when any one of these 10 important committees is dealing with a topic that is sensitive to the government of the day, that does not fit the political agenda of the government of the day? It may fit the political agenda of the people of Saskatchewan but it doesn't happen to fit the partisan political priorities of the government of the day. And so let me answer the question that was raised by the member from Meadow Lake.

What happens of course is that when you have a majority of the members of each committee being members of the government and you're dealing with the topic that the government does not wish to address, with the proposed rule change, what happens? The government members all stay home, the all find other things to occupy themselves, and the committee cannot speak. Somehow there is a proposal here that if it is in the best interests of the government, the political priorities of the

government, not necessarily the political priorities of the people of Saskatchewan, they can simply stay home and somehow by staying home they are serving the people of Saskatchewan by not speaking, by not dealing with these issues together.

Mr. Speaker, I don't pretend to have an intimate knowledge of the workings of this Assembly but somehow that seems to smack, to me, to be somewhat contradictory for the reasons that we all stood for election to this Assembly and that we came committed to serve. And I don't believe that that is what the people of Saskatchewan want when they say that they want us to conduct ourselves in a manner that is fair to the people of Saskatchewan and putting fairness ahead of our partisan political concerns.

And so I ask again, the member from Meadow Lake or any member from the other side, to say why it is that the rules as they exist now are not working. The rules as they exist now will enforce that when there are important topics to be discussed and the members from opposition show up to discuss them that the government members must also be there. The proposal is that if the government members do not wish to discuss the important topics of the committee agenda they merely stay home and the topic gets dropped; there is no discussion.

And so I ask again: what is it about the rules as they exist now that does not serve the people of Saskatchewan the best, Mr. Speaker? And I ask the government members then to tell us why, why is it that the government members see this change in conduct of the rules as in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan. Because I must admit, Mr. Speaker, it is not obvious to me. I believe it is also not terribly obvious to the people of Saskatchewan who may be paying attention to this debate and wondering why in the world are we starting the beginning of the Legislative Assembly with a procedural debate.

And let me conclude, Mr. Speaker, by addressing my comments to the members opposite and, in particular, to the newly elected members opposite. I believe that the members opposite, and in particular the newly elected members opposite, stood for the election to public office for many of the same personal reasons as the members on this side. I believe that you stood for election to this Assembly because you came wanting to serve the people of Saskatchewan and the people of your constituency the best you could. I realize we have differences in philosophy but surely we all have that same basic commitment to the people of Saskatchewan that motivates us in being here.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hagel:** — For the new members elected opposite, I ask you not to fall into the trap of engaging in partisan political conduct. Put first the interests of your constituents and the people of Saskatchewan, and please do not make the first time that you stand to vote in this Assembly to be doing that for purposes of partisan political advantage as opposed to the interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that members from both sides, not just

the members from this side but the members from both sides, seriously consider the implications of this rule, a proposal that has been made. I invite, Mr. Speaker, for members from both sides to support this amendment, and in carrying the amendment to carry the resolution in its amended form.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity. I certainly wish that it was on a topic that was closer to the hearts of Saskatchewan people, as they feel them. I believe that in dealing with this rule, indirectly we are addressing that issue, and I look forward to many more opportunities, Mr. Speaker, with your consent, to address this Assembly and to do that in the interests of my constituents and the people of Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too congratulate you on your appointment. I think with the co-operation of this body you have a good chance to do a tremendous job.

And I've looked forward to this — looked forward to representing the people of Humboldt. I had great expectations, but on the first day I sit in here, instead of getting on with what I perceived would be important business to the people of this province, we are being caught up in a whim, reasons for which have not been explained. We have a strong point in our parliament and our democracy and in our official opposition. We use this system because the people of the province ask for it. And at one time second best was a long way behind us. But do I hear footsteps of second best to democracy? An effective way to stop the democratic process is to implement random changes just like we're seeing here today — the people's right to effective representation being stymied, changing the rules, changing the precedent. Then what? Rule by decree?

I would like to make a quote from Hansard, December 3, 1986, page 1, part of the throne speech from yesterday:

My Government is not intimidated by the conditions it faces because it knows that the people of the province are not only accustomed to change, but have also consistently been able to find new opportunities as their circumstances altered.

Is what we're seeing in this proposal an interpretation of not being intimidated by conditions this government faces? No wonder. No worries mate, if we don't like it we'll change it. And the people's circumstances will certainly be altered if this practice of setting dangerous precedents like this continue. The precedent is set and we must assume it will continue. And I'm very disappointed because if I lose my confidence in the people, the members opposite, at this early point in time, it's a terrible way to start, Mr. Speaker — terrible for us, terrible for the people of Saskatchewan.

The member opposite said it's a simple motion. I tremble to think of a serious motion or a major motion. Where is the consultation that was preached yesterday? No consultation, even when the process has been

established. Where's the government's responsibility with respect for this Assembly and ultimately respect for the people of this province?

And, Mr. Speaker, what about those young people that were looking down on us a few minutes ago? If we show no respect for the traditions of this Assembly, what are they to expect when explained what is going on here? They are born with an innocence that is trained to adhere by all the rules, by all the laws. If this Assembly does not respect those rules and traditions, what are we breeding? We're breeding a generation coming up that will have less respect if they follow this.

The young people must not lose their respect, because we will degenerate. This democratic system should not be allowed to degenerate with motions such as members opposite have presented.

Respect is earned and respect is lost. We start at zero, I like to think. And this applies for every seat in this House, including that of Mr. Speaker. Earned or lost. This Assembly must earn the respect of the people of the province by showing good direction, by adhering to laws and principles and rules, by not taking the majority rules and bullying its way through the system as we know it. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to extend my congratulations to you — my warm congratulations — and those of the people of Saskatoon Sutherland. It was a pleasure to meet you for the first time last night, and I look forward to working with you in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on a point of principle against the improper ordering of public business reflected in the proposed change to the rules of this Assembly. Although new to this Assembly, and its debate, I'm not new to the concerns of the public, their concern that their business be conducted properly, and their public business, their public accounts, can be scrutinized and the government held accountable.

Now to alter the existing rules of this House with respect to the quorums is not only to foil the democratic process, as has been mentioned many times previous today, but I believe is to stymie or to tie in a knot the prescribed processes that this Assembly has previously adopted to deal with the public business. And I think that the public then can only wonder why these changes are being proposed.

The people of Sutherland, and indeed the people of the province, want to know that their concerns about agriculture, about municipal law, Crown corporations, public accounts, can and will be reviewed and addressed by committees, committees that in fact meet unimpeded by absence due to illness, absence due to forgetfulness perhaps, or perhaps due to political manipulation to partisan purposes. They want to know that their business can and will be reviewed, that they can be represented, that their business can be dealt with adequately. And the existing rules concerning the quorum facilitate precisely

this process. And it was the wisdom, I believe, of this Assembly to have adopted the rules which presently exist to facilitate this process, rules which work and don't need to be changed.

(1630)

Mr. Speaker, I therefore believe that to change the rule on quorum is an insult to the public; it's an insult to the democratic process and to the people we represent. It ignores the right of the public to see that their public business is adequately and judiciously addressed by committee as expeditiously as possible without delay. And so I say a point of principle is involved, that public business is ill served by the proposed change, and that the public itself will readily recognize this very fact. So I come to this Legislative Assembly for the first time prepared to do public business. I think that the people of Saskatoon Sutherland want to see that I do that, that other members do precisely that. They don't want to see partisan political purposes interfere with the conduct of their business. They're entitled to that, and I intend to support the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Smart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon Centre and myself to congratulate you on your election to the position of Speaker of the House, a new position for you. And I, too, am here at the legislature taking on a new job, honoured and privileged to represent the constituents of Saskatoon Centre.

Over the past month since the election, I and the many other new members on this side of the House have been fortunate to have some meetings with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and his staff who have informed us in some detail about the rules and regulations conducting debate and the procedures of this House. And I found those rules and regulations very interesting and have been impressed by the discussion of what it means to have democratic and open discussion in the legislature on issues of very great importance to the people of Saskatchewan.

I assume that the new members opposite also took the time to meet with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and his staff and to have the same instructions. And I assume the member for Meadow Lake at some point also went through the same procedure — a procedure which took the time of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and cost the taxpayers some money in the process — money that I would like to think would be well spent in encouraging us and educating us as to how to conduct ourselves in this Assembly.

I found what the Clerk had to tell us about the history of democracy quite interesting, and in some ways deeply moving, because it is a long tradition. And while the member from Meadow Lake may say it's a simple question that we're debating today, I wonder where he has gone to school that he doesn't understand that a simple questions can have fairly profound implications,

and that these decisions must not be made lightly.

I found it interesting to hear in the throne speech yesterday that the government proposes to refer the matter of a revision of the rules of this Legislative Assembly to a special committee of the Assembly — presumably something that is going to be done in the future. And yet when we go to a meeting this afternoon we find out that suddenly a change in a rule has been proposed, one that we have not had time to discuss or been warned about ahead of time. And I suggest that's a very serious change and one that we must oppose by supporting this amendment.

There has been no notice of motion of this change, and it has not been taken to a rules committee. The idea of a rules committee where it can be considered makes a lot of sense to me, and I think it would make sense to the constituents of Saskatoon Centre that we have time to consider the changes that are being proposed to us.

I understand that the rules that were written in this red book, which we've gone through in great detail with the Clerk of the Assembly, were drawn up in 1981 by a committee representing members from all parties, and that they were agreed to in a consensus. I like that idea when it involves agreement on the rules that we are going to use here in the legislature when we are speaking. I think that's very important.

I know that the constituents in Saskatoon Centre, as I have gone door to door meeting with them during the election campaign, told me very often that they wish that there could be more co-operation among people here in the legislature; that it was crucial that we have some consensus, and that we have a spirit of consensus and of willingness to co-operate; that consultation is important and can't be over-emphasized.

I would urge that the members withdraw the motion, that someone speak to withdraw this motion and take it back to a rules committee. That would be the very best things that could happen to it. I would urge the new members opposite to get to their feet and speak on this issue and, no other action coming forward, I would like to also speak then in support of the amendment and say that I think that we must get on with the business of this House in a spirit of co-operation, realizing that these simple questions have profound implications which we must consider so that we can proceed with a spirit of democracy that's so important to the history of this legislature.

Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Goulet:** — I rise to speak, Mr. Speaker, in support of the amendment.

I think first of all, Mr. Speaker, this procedure and the process that we are going through appears to be quite unfair. I think that the way that they have proposed this new procedure today will be the way the committees will start operating in the future.

When a simple majority governs, there is no real opportunity for true debate to take place because the simple majority may just sit there and not pay attention, Mr. Speaker, because they know they have the automatic majority.

So, Mr. Speaker, I deem this procedure to be highly unfair. I think that debate has to be combined with consensus and a consensual process. In that way people can have the input in regards to the important decision making that we have to go through in this legislation.

I feel that by allowing it to go through like this, we will have a more or less unilateral decision-making process. I think it has impact, Mr. Speaker, in regards not only through the procedures that we are going through, but also the content of the procedures.

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with extremely important issues in this committee, such as education, such as agriculture, such as public accounts. And, Mr. Speaker, we are even dealing with issues such as communication. This new procedure will not provide the required and co-operative communications system that was said about and mentioned on yesterday's throne speech. I firmly believe that if this legislature will support this new motion, it goes against the essence of our democratic system when minority and small groups and small nationalities in this province could have the right to a voice.

Mr. Speaker, as a person, as a Cree-Métis in this province, and well recognizing the impact that simple majorities have on our people it gives me great determination to stand up here and fight against that procedure that was introduced.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Goulet:** — I think, Mr. Speaker, that this process is not meant to demean. It is not meant to belittle. This is a true democratic process we are going through and that amendment that we are putting forth makes sure that inputs of minority people can be brought forth and properly dealt with, whether it is in education or in communication or elsewhere.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, I stand here and ask the legislature to give us this chance for debate and consensus decision-making at the same time. That we would like to co-operate and make the legislature something that not only our school students and not only the elders of this province can say we are proud of the process that is gone through this legislature.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Goulet:** — So, Mr. Speaker, I stand here in strong support of the amendment and I hope that the initial resolution will be dropped.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Atkinson:** — I too, Mr. Speaker, would like to add my voice of congratulations on your recent election as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. I

hope that I can honour the rules of this legislature and abide by your rulings.

I echo my colleague's concerns, particularly my colleague from North Battleford, when he said that instead of speaking to the contents of the throne speech, we find ourselves today speaking to a rule change put forward by the government. Instead of a spirit of co-operation which was referred to yesterday by the Government of Saskatchewan, and which the people in Saskatoon Nutana really genuinely wish to see, we have what appears to be an attempt to railroad through this Legislative Assembly a rule change which appears to do nothing other than to protect the government's own partisan interests.

And what, Mr. Speaker, could those interests be? What could they possibly be? As I understand it, the change would in essence mean that a quorum of committee of the legislature would be changed from the present one-third to a simple majority. This change could mean that every time we get close to an issue in the committee, all of a sudden we could see the members opposite walk out and leave us with a lack of a quorum.

(1645)

The members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, have chairpeople that have been appointed to those committees. Every time one of the chairpeople called a committee meeting, the members opposite could fail to show up. How, Mr. Speaker, would this deal with the crisis in agriculture? How, Mr. Speaker, would this deal with education and health — important issues to the people of Saskatchewan. How does this stymieing of the committee process help farm families who are facing social and economic crisis in their communities? How does this help?

I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, how it helps. The committee wouldn't be able to meet. The work of the committee wouldn't be able to occur. And I really wonder whether we would have true committee representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the constituents of Saskatoon Nutana have said to me over and over again that they want both sides of this legislature to co-operate. They want us to come together to grapple with real problems, serious problems, economic and social problems, and yes, Mr. Speaker, partisan political problems.

I think it is fair to say that we do have philosophical differences in this Chamber. I think the one area that we can agree on is our commitment to democracy. We can agree that we cherish the electoral process which we've all just been through. The right of the people to go to the polls on a regular basis to elect their government is something we cherish. Many citizens of the world right now are fighting for that right. Many of them, Mr. Speaker, are dying for that right. Many of our own citizens, members of our own family, have fought and died for our right to sit here today. I want to remind the members of the government that we on this side of the House were given a mandate to protect the interests of Saskatchewan people. How, Mr. Speaker, will the change to the rule

protect the rights of the people to effective representation? How, Mr. Speaker, will this change protect the people's right to know? I, Mr. Speaker, will be supporting the amendment put forward by my colleagues from the Quill Lakes and Regina Centre.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in this Assembly this afternoon to support the amendment put forward by the member of Quill Lakes. But before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to preface my remark by saying that on behalf of the constituency of Regina North West, on behalf of the women and men and the children of the constituency, please accept our congratulations on your selection of Speaker. I know it's going to be a very formidable job to chair the Assembly over the next four years, but I look forward to the next four years with having you in the Chair, because I believe that you have the ability to be fair.

Earlier in the afternoon we had some students here, students from my constituency. They were 47 in number from the Centennial School. And I was quite concerned about what they had witnessed in the Chamber this afternoon, concerned because two weeks ago they invited me to their school to talk about parliament; to talk about the history of parliament; to explain to them how the traditions of parliament were set up and what important traditions had been set throughout the centuries and decades previous. They wanted to know how the legislature works, and how the Speaker fits into the role, and how committees were set up, and how the cabinet operated.

Today when I went to meet with them to get my picture taken — to meet with them to answer questions that they had been trying to ask me after they had seen the question period which didn't arise — they were very perplexed, very puzzled. They were puzzled because they couldn't understand, after I talked to them for a few minutes, why an Assembly of hon. members such as this would try and change rules in the middle of a game without having to follow the traditions and the history of parliament and the legislature of the past. They were quite concerned because the arbitrary move this afternoon on behalf of the government showed to them that perhaps they shouldn't be living by the rules of life either; that perhaps rules they don't like — rather than raising their hand in school to interrupt the teacher to express a question or to express a comment — perhaps they can change the rules in the middle of their class. I think when that happens we see chaos not only in schools but in our lifestyles as well.

When I came out of that discussion I felt truly embarrassed for this government; I felt truly embarrassed for the Conservative Party and the cabinet members in the Government of Saskatchewan. You have an awesome responsibility to lead by example, and I think that this afternoon you have provided a very bad example, not only to the 47 grade 8 students from Centennial School but to all the people in this province.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, the issue this afternoon is

not just democracy, but fairness. The government doesn't seem to know what fairness is even though they talk about it a great deal in their Speech from the Throne. They talked about it a great deal when they were issuing press releases through their cabinet positions.

But what is fair? What does being fair mean? What is fair in my view, and in think in most people's judgement, is following the rules established by precedent. What is fair is amending rules which were originally written by consensus, to be amended by consensus through a rules committee.

What is unfair is the autocratic move of this government to amend the rules without notice, and I think we have had ample discussion on that. What is unfair, as well, is that the proposed rule change has not been out forward by the consensus of a rules committee of this Assembly which has been established by the past precedent and tradition of parliament.

What we are witnessing in our province and in our democracy today is exactly what has been witnessed in other countries where there are no democracies. What we are witnessing today is what has been witnessed in countries which are run by autocrats — the countries the member from Regina North referred to earlier in his remarks — run by those who are afraid of democracy, run by autocrats who are afraid of participatory democracy. What we are witnessing today as well is a major fundamental mistake in judgement of the government opposite. And I believe this government, if it does not reconsider its position, will live a very short life to regret it's autocratic, unfair decision.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Solomon** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks by saying that I will support the amendments put forward by the member of Quill Lakes and seconded by the member from Regina Centre. And I ask members opposite — those of you who are not in cabinet, those of you who are not going to be in cabinet unless you get up and put forward your viewpoints in public to your constituents — put forward your viewpoints, not only in this Assembly on this issue which I think is a fundamental issue of our Assembly, not only today, but I think for many years to come.

So please take some advice — and it's worth every penny because it's free: don't sit back and follow this cabinet which I think is making a fundamental error in where they are leading you.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Andrew:** — Mr. Speaker, a few words before I move an adjournment. I've been in this Assembly for eight years, and to my knowledge in that eight-year period I have never yet seen a committee that the members walked out of and there was no committee meeting. It doesn't happen that way, Mr. Speaker. In all the time that I have been here, the only time that we see people vacating a particular committee or the House, and

it's been done several times, is when the members walk out and ring the bells and the bells on and on for sometimes days at a time. I'm not sure that is a position that the public generally supports.

As the member from Meadow Lake, the House Leader, says, we're really asking everybody to take some time and attend the committees. At least 50 per cent of the people that are put on committees should be attending those committees. I don't think that's an unreasonable request for people that elected their members to come down here and sit in the committees. And what is exactly wrong with that?

Mr. Speaker, I would have more to say with regards to this particular thing and the rules of the House in general. There was an agreement, however, between I believe the House Leader and the whip, being that tonight is Saskatchewan day at Agribition, a very proud show for us, a very proud agricultural show for all of Saskatchewan, that there was an agreement that the House would not sit this evening so that members would be able to attend that. And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I would now move that this House do now stand adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:57 p.m.