

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Mr. Rolfes:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present some more petitions to the legislature. The residents who signed this petition have asked me to present it on their behalf to the government in their opposition to the privatization of SaskPower. They are concerned about the privatization and have asked the government to reverse its decision and leave SaskPower in the hands of the people of Saskatchewan.

These petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from Saskatoon, Dinsmore, Macrorie, Rosetown, Regina, Martensville, Warman, Hague, Christopher Lake, Riverhurst, Elbow, and Indian Head. On behalf of those people, Mr. Speaker, I present these petitions.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, I too rise pursuant to rule 11. I want to join with my colleague in presenting a number of hundreds of names of people from a lot of different towns who are opposed to privatizing of SaskPower.

These people are telling us is that they are well aware that SaskEnergy is part of SaskPower, and they don't want it privatized. And they're from a large number of towns: Eastend, Swift Current, Gainsborough, North Battleford, Maple Creek, Kenosee Lake, Alameda, Pierceland, Fillmore, Mossbank, Robsart, Stewart Valley, Weyburn, Carlyle, Radville, Gull Lake, Maidstone, Shaunavon, Loon Lake, Mayfair, Arborfield, Eston, St. Louis, Bruno, and Swift Current.

I would like to table these names on the petition as opposition to the privatization of SaskEnergy and SaskPower.

**Mr. Koskie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise pursuant to rule 11 to present to the Assembly some 600 petitions from the residents of Saskatchewan who are urging the government not to privatize SaskPower but to keep this as a major public utility in the service of the people of this province.

The petitions are from a variety of communities across Saskatchewan, including Saskatoon, Kelliher, Maple Creek, Hafford, Meath Park, Cut Knife, St. Front, Outlook, Turnor Lake, Eston, Prince Albert, and Shaunavon. I'd like to present these petitions, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present 600 names of Saskatchewan residents who are opposed to the privatization of SaskPower. These petitioners are from such places as Dillon, Turnor Lake, St. George's Hill, Canoe Narrows, Big River, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Preeceville, Kamsack, Cabri, Frontier, Carrot River, Vawn, Jackfish, Dore Lake, La Loche, Beauval, Patuanak, Wilkie, and Meota. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule no. 11 to table approximately 600 petitions from Saskatchewan citizens who have signed this petition opposed to the privatization of SaskPower, not being in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, these people came from such varied places in Saskatchewan as Melville, Neudorf, Ituna, Tisdale, Sylvania, Regina, Melfort, St. Walburg, Eston, Maple Creek, Kindersley, Shaunavon, Hagen, Springside, and my own city of Saskatoon. By and large these people are from rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And at this point in the tabling of petitions I have personally tabled 3,700 names of people that are opposed to privatization of SaskPower.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to lay on the table about 600 petitions, Mr. Speaker, from people from a variety of different communities in Saskatchewan, from a variety of different areas: Maidstone, Chaplin, Wakaw, Pennant, Success, Kinistino, Balcarres, North Battleford, Raymore, Nipawin, Rose Valley, Melfort, Rush Lake, Herbert, Glenavon, Preeceville, Marquis, Wadena, Fox Valley, and others.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour to rise pursuant to rule 11 to present some 600 petitions on behalf of citizens of Saskatchewan who are opposed to the government's plans to privatize SaskPower, and who are asking that that decision be changed and that this major public utility be kept in the service of all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners are from communities such as Moosomin, Assiniboia, Lafleche, Ponteix, Indian Head, Gravelbourg, my home city of Moose Jaw, and others.

**Mr. Goulet:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition on behalf of approximately 600 people. And these petitioners are urging the government not to privatize SaskPower but to keep this public utility in the service of all Saskatchewan people.

The residents are from Marsden, Springside, Kindersley, Sturgis, North Battleford, Spring Valley, Mervin, Leader, Oungre, Melfort, Nipawin, Saskatoon, and Regina. So I present this petition, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present to this House a petition signed by approximately 600 residents of the province of Saskatchewan, and their intent in signing the petition has been to ask this government to listen to their concerns and to stop the sale of SaskPower. They're concerned about losing the gas utility to private sector interests, and since the gas utility has served this province very well for a number of years, they have concern.

The residents come from the communities of Swift Current, Success, Hodgeville, North Battleford, Raymore, Herschel, Edam, Foam Lake, Cando, Maymont, Bulyea, Mont Nebo, Leask, Shellbrook, Prince Albert, Meadow Lake, Maple Creek, Gull Lake, Admiral, Moosomin,

Hazlet, Thompkins, Grenfell, Battleford, Saskatoon, Canoe Narrows, Canoe Lake, Maidstone, Glaslyn, Hepburn, Climax, Frontier, Robsart, Golden Prairie, Tisdale, Neville, Sturgis, Debden, Green Lake, Big River, Asquith, Buffalo Narrows, Beauval, Alsask, Hudson Bay, Carnduff, and Birch Hills. And I present these to the House today, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, I also rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly of several hundred Saskatchewan residents who are urging the provincial government not to proceed with its privatization plans for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, the natural gas utility.

These petitioners are from a number of communities, including Sturgis, Outlook, Churchbridge, Saltcoats, Choceland, Fillmore, Tisdale, Rama, Garrick, Elrose, Canora, Davidson, Mankota, Yorkton, Neudorf, Canora, Carlyle, Lloydminster, La Ronge, Eston, Kamsack, and Hudson Bay.

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd too rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to this Assembly for several hundred petitioners in the province of Saskatchewan. They have signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, opposing the government's initiatives in selling off SaskPower and SaskEnergy. They are not happy campers when it comes to this government's policy in regard to that issue.

They represent a number of communities, Mr. Speaker, including Bellevue, Demaine, Beechy, Rosetown, Loon Lake, Wawota, Wilkie, Leipzig, Wild Rose, Prince Albert, Shellbrook, Regina, Swift Current, Saskatoon, Neudorf, and Lemberg.

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to rule 11, Mr. Speaker, to present petitions signed by some 600 people who are using this means of exercising this democratic right of having their views known on the issue of privatization of SaskPower.

These people come from Leroy, Assiniboia, Arcola, Lampman, Estevan, Strasbourg, Watson, Abbey, Sedley, Englefeld, Willow Bunch, Lestock, Watson, Whitewood, and Carnduff. I hereby present this petition.

**Ms. Simard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise too, pursuant to rule 11, to table with the Legislative Assembly petitions with approximately 600 signatures of Saskatchewan residents protesting the privatization of SaskPower, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the communities represented in these petitions are Wynyard, Nipawin, Prince Albert, Regina, Wadena, Esterhazy, Weyburn, Central Butte, Melville, Herbert, Naicam, and Outlook. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Upshall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise pursuant to rule 11 to present to this legislature on behalf of approximately 600 people who are voicing their opposition to this government's plan to sell off, privatize SaskPower. These people are from places such as Lanigan, Hudson Bay, Humboldt, Buffalo Narrows, Craven, Lumsden, and Halbrite.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, I too rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition on behalf of hundreds of Saskatchewan citizens who are opposed to this government's intentions to privatize SaskPower. These people come from Hudson Bay, Shipman, Candle Lake, Meath Park, Spruce Home, Glenbain, Vanguard, Saskatoon, Regina, McLean, Kennedy, Yorkton, Endeavour, Love, and Wawota.

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues proudly in presenting in this case, 600 petitions pursuant to rule 11. These petitioners are urging the government not to privatize, not to sell SaskPower. They're urging some reconsideration on the part of the members opposite.

These petitioners are from places like Assiniboia, Benson, Weyburn, Moose Jaw, Central Butte, Melville, Riverhurst, Fife Lake, Kelliher, Regina, Nokomis, Swift Current, Outlook, Chaplin, Semans, and Indian Head.

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to rule 11 to present a petition to the Assembly for several hundred residents of Saskatchewan. These petitioners are urging the government not to privatize SaskPower but to keep this major public utility in the service of all Saskatchewan people.

These petitioners are from a number of communities, including Rose Valley, Tisdale, Regina, Qu'Appelle, McLean, Indian Head, Radville, Maple Creek, Minton, Lumsden, and Balcarres.

**Mr. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise pursuant to rule no. 11 to present a petition on behalf of 600 Saskatchewan residents asking the government not to privatize SaskPower. These individuals represent communities such as Spy Hill and Sinaluta.

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise pursuant to rule 11 to present about 3,600 petitions of people who've signed these petitions opposing the privatization of the Saskatchewan Power Corporation because it constitutes, in their mind, a sell-off of a major public utility which serves all of Saskatchewan people.

The people continue to sign this petition every day, Mr. Speaker. They urge the provincial government opposite to stop the privatization of SaskPower. I can report to you, Mr. Speaker, that today's petition includes a total of about 15,000 names, which now brings the total to over 80,000, the number of concerned citizens who have had their petitions presented in this legislature.

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

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that that's a very powerful expression of the sentiment of Saskatchewan people on this particular issue.

The petitions I present here today come from all over Saskatchewan, including communities like Wakaw and Hudson Bay and St. Louis and Fort Qu'Appelle, Yorkton, Preeceville, Assiniboia, Nokomis, and it goes on and on and on. And the petitions include the signatures of people from every community in Saskatchewan.

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

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills

**Acting Clerk:** — Mr. Petersen, chairman of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills, presents the sixth report of the said committee, which is as follows:

Your committee has considered the following Bill and agreed to report the same without amendment:

Bill No. 01 — An Act to amend an Act to incorporate St. Margaret's Hospital (Grey Nuns) of Biggar

Your committee recommends, under the provision of rule 58, that fees be remitted, less the cost of printing with respect to Bill No. 01.

**Mr. Petersen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now move:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills now be concurred in.

Moved by myself, seconded by the member for Wilkie.

Motion agreed to.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with considerable pleasure that I introduce to you, and through you to the Speaker, 13 students who are sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. These are members of the urban native pre-employment program in Regina, a course of study which seeks to upgrade skills in order to suit people for employment. It has, I think, in the past been a recently successful course. Some would be from Regina and some would be visitors to this fair city.

I'm going to have a brief opportunity to meet with them after question period, I hope. We'll take some pictures. I know that members opposite will want to join with me in welcoming these students to this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Martens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce a couple of neighbours of mine, Mr. John Marsch, who's been a R.M. councillor in my division. He's been serving 25 years in the Canadian navy, and he spent many years on council. I, together with him, did a lot of work there. He's served as the barn boss at agribition. He's a Polled Hereford breeder. And with him is Dr. Doug Mann who's a veterinarian, and they're up in the west gallery. And I'd like to have all the legislative members here welcome them here to the Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Gerich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

through you and through the members of the Legislative Assembly, I would like to introduce 38 students from Borden and Radisson schools. They're situated in the west gallery. They're accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Sharon Assman, Mrs. Jackie Meister, and Mrs. Miriam Buswell.

The chaperons that are accompanying the group are Mrs. Myra Reinheimer, Mrs. Eugenia Prystupa, Mrs. Lynn Emmel, Mrs. Colleen Nesbitt, Mrs. Linda Yuskiv, and Mrs. Myrtle Amsom. I hope that they find this afternoon entertaining and educational, and I ask the members to please make welcome my guests.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you and the members of the Assembly, three visitors from Nanaimo, B.C. They are: Dr. Roy and Mrs. MacMillan, and Mrs. Lillian Muirhead. They are seated in your gallery, accompanied by my wife, Helen. They have been visiting in Saskatchewan for the last two or three weeks.

Mrs. Muirhead and her late husband, Roy, lived for approximately 50 years in the Weyburn area before retiring to B.C. in 1960.

Mr. Speaker, the main reason for this introduction is that the late Roy Muirhead, who was my uncle, was well known in Saskatchewan for his poetry. There were a number of poems of his published. He would write on any topic but was famous for his poems pertaining to his love of his native province, Saskatchewan. At 90 years of age he was still writing poetry, and one of these was published in the Regina *Leader-Post*.

Mr. Speaker, it was his earnest request that he would be buried in his beloved province of Saskatchewan. This happened in his 95th year, January 1989.

He served his country in the First World War from 1914 to 1918, and as far as is known, he was the last living member of his regiment.

I ask all members to join with me in welcoming my guests.

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce 29 grade 4 students from Grenfell that are present in your gallery today. They're accompanied by their teachers Gordon Warman and Carol Piller, chaperon Jean Peter, and bus driver Gary Cole.

I want to at this time congratulate Gordon and Carol for bringing yet another group of students to the legislature. I think they are giving the young people of Grenfell an opportunity that probably many of us in this Chamber never had when we were in elementary school, and I congratulate you and I welcome you here. I look forward to meeting with you, answering your questions, having some refreshments, and I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these fine students from Grenfell.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Grant to Game Farm

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, yesterday you gave this House your undertaking that you would look into the possibility of any conflict of interest involving the actions of members of your government in the operation of the Northern Lights game farm.

Have you investigated those circumstances, sir, and are you satisfied that nobody connected with this transaction operated in a situation which is or could be perceived as a conflict of interest?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I took notice yesterday, and I've asked my officials to gather all pertinent information. And when I have it together, which should be within a day or so, I would certainly report back, as I have taken notice.

I don't have anything further to add today except I believe that everything was fine and without conflict. But I'll check it, and if the hon. member has anything additional that he wants to provide me, I'll certainly take it under consideration.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — A new question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, yesterday the minister of privatization said, and I'll quote from *Hansard*:

There is no potential for conflict. The Premier was aware of the operations that Northern Lights were looking at from the beginning.

Mr. Premier, if you were aware from the beginning, then you will know the facts. And I'm asking you again: are you satisfied that no one connected with this transaction operated in a situation which is or could be perceived as a conflict of interest?

**The Speaker:** — Order. It sounds very, very much to me like a question which the Premier has already taken notice of.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. The minister of privatization was quoted in *Hansard* yesterday as saying that you were "aware of the operations that Northern Lights were looking at from the beginning." And I ask you again: have you . . . Is this factual? Is that statement factual?

**The Speaker:** — Order. Essentially the same question as the member. . . The Premier indicated he will take notice and bring back the answer.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. And I quote from *Hansard*:

There is no potential for conflict. The Premier was aware of the operations that Northern Lights were looking at from the beginning.

Are you aware of this statement, Mr. Premier, and would you care to comment?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I've taken notice, and the hon. member raised it, and I said that I would examine all the information. To date I am satisfied that there's no conflict, and I will review it, and I will report back to the hon. member when I've had my officials bring the information together.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I confess that I'm surprised that you take this so lightly, this situation which involves hundreds of thousands of dollars of public money and in which the minister, a minister of the Crown, and his family is so deeply involved.

I ask you, Mr. Premier: are you saying that the situation is not serious and does not merit the attention of yourself, who is ultimately responsible for any action taken by those who report to you, namely your cabinet ministers?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure how often the member can ask me to review this. I said I will look at it, and I will review it because the hon. member asked me to. And one of the other members asked me to review it, and I will do that. At the outset, without the review, I will say that I don't believe that there's any conflict, and I will review it to find out if there's any reason that there should be. But I don't believe that there is, and I'll report back to the House when I've had the opportunity to review the material.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, I draw your attention to a statement made by the minister of privatization to the press yesterday, in which he admits that he made a phone call to WDI (Western Diversification Initiative) minister Bill McKnight to arrange a meeting between Mr. McKnight and one of the partners in his son's game farm to discuss a WDI grant. This happened before the grant was issued.

Mr. Premier, if that is not influence peddling, would you tell this House what would qualify under your definition?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, again I'll say that I will review it. But I think it's also fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that when we sit at the caucus table and the cabinet table in dealing with municipal affairs, rural affairs, agriculture, Mr. Speaker, all of us mostly are, as you are, elected and have lived in rural and urban ridings, Mr. Speaker.

And if you're saying that you cannot discuss items at cabinet that have to do with agriculture, that have to do with municipal affairs or rural affairs, western diversification or other things that affect thousands of people, I mean, I don't know how you'd operate, say, agriculture policy, or if each of us don't have relatives in agriculture, Mr. Speaker, that you have to review it. So we do, Mr. Speaker.

And in this case, I said if there is any conflict, I will review it. I don't believe that there is. And I will certainly review it and find out and report to the hon. members here.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question to the Premier. Mr.

Premier, you weren't on the topic that I was asking. I was asking in terms of a comment by the minister of privatization. But since you have moved to who was at the cabinet table and who wasn't when the decision to change the regulations, let me deal with that.

The minister explained his presence at the cabinet meeting where those regulations were changed to allow for game farming of the type operated by his son, saying that other members of the cabinet don't absent themselves when programs, farm programs, which might benefit their families are discussed, and he's probably right in terms of that. But you've got a different situation. You've got a different situation in this case, Mr. Premier.

Such programs benefit a wide range of people. This is a very specific case. Now I ask you, since it appears that the minister's son, his company, was the first to benefit from these regulation changes, would you not agree that it was inappropriate for that minister to participate in that cabinet meeting?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, I said I will review it, and I will, and examine the details. I don't believe there's a conflict. And I will review it to find out if I feel any differently, and I will report back to the legislature. If in fact the hon. member wants to tarnish anybody by innuendo, if he's got facts he wants to lay before us here, please do so. To be fair to the House, lay them out so that I can review it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I said I'll review what I have, and if he's got something else, well then lay it out there. Rather than innuendo, let's see what there is.

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, prior to the 1986 election your government was studying the new conflict of interest guide-lines, and in fact a report was presented in November of that year, a report that your government hasn't yet adopted.

I have the report in my hand. It's entitled: A white paper on a proposed code of ethics for Saskatchewan public office holders, March 1986. The second page is signed by yourself, sir. And on the first page, under article 4, and I'm going to quote if I might, Mr. Speaker, it says:

Public office holders shall not step out of their official roles to assist private entities or persons in their dealings with the Government of Saskatchewan where this would result in treatment which would not be available to others under similar circumstances.

Now I ask you, Mr. Premier, does your minister of privatization, as a matter of course, set up all meetings between companies such as Northern Lights game farm and the minister responsible for WDI spending in this province?

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, cabinet ministers talk to western diversification offices and they talk to other offices all the time. And cabinet ministers are no different than other MLAs in this legislature, and they have in some cases scores, and in some cases, I think it's fair to say, hundreds of relatives in all kinds of different operations

across the province.

If the hon. member has something that is more than innuendo with respect to this particular accusation that he's bringing forward, I would like to see it because I said I will take notice and review it, because I don't believe there's been a conflict. And I will report back to the legislature.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is a difference between cabinet and MLAs in that cabinets can change regulations and MLAs can't. I think perhaps that we might move this along a bit. I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Public Participation.

Mr. Minister, between the date July 20, 1987, when the numbered company, 583867 Saskatchewan was formed, and eight days later when the government made amendments to the regulations of The Animal Protection Act, opening the way for game farming in the province, did you have any conversations with your son Robert, or his two partners from British Columbia, about his interest in game farming and this regulation? And did you have any discussions with your cabinet colleagues regarding the change to the regulations of The Animal Protection Act, sir?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Well, I can tell you I probably talked to Robert many days as most fathers do with their sons. I can't say whether I talked about game regulating those days or not. But if you want to know, do I talk to Robert, yes I do, like most good fathers do with their sons.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. New question, Mr. Minister. When did you first become aware of your son's interest in the game farm and/or the numbered company 583867 Saskatchewan, which later became the Northern Lights game farm? When did you first become aware of your son's interest?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — I could tell you that if you'd check *Hansard* — it might be interesting for you to do that — if you check I would say about 1979 — and the member for Regina East should remember that — that I spoke in this House, when I sat on the other side in opposition, in support of game farming in Saskatchewan. It's well documented in *Hansard*. I spoke in support of it. I spoke in support of it as a way of helping native people to diversify and to become part of the agricultural sector in this province. And I still stand by that.

If you ask when my son's interest first started, I will tell you that my son's interest in game farming first started when he visited New Zealand and worked on game farms and sheep farms, as he has on two occasions, and I think that was his second year out of high school.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, new question to you. Mr. Minister, on September 4, 1987, land belonging to one Doug Lyke was foreclosed after an unsuccessful appeal to the Farm Debt Review Board, of which your wife was a member. On October 15, 1987, your son Robert became a director of the numbered company 583867 Saskatchewan, which acquired the same land that was foreclosed on, on November 20, 1987.

Did you or your wife have any conversations with your son regarding this company's interest in . . . in regarding this company and his interest in acquiring that land; and is this the reason why she absented herself from the Farm Debt Review Board hearing when this matter was discussed; and did you have conversations with your wife about her absenting herself from the Farm Debt Review Board?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Well, personally, I talk to my wife each night too, as I talk to my son, which I think is rather normal, and I will continue to do so because we have some very good conversations.

I think the members would do well, would do well to source and check their source of information, because what the member is saying in the House today is not true.

**Mr. Anguish:** — New question, same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sinclair Stevens also said that he spoke to his wife every evening, and you're aware of that situation.

Mr. Minister . . . Now throughout the time, up until January 15, 1988, you served as the minister of SEDCO. During that time, during that time, Mr. Minister, did you have any conversations with your son regarding a SEDCO mortgage that he negotiated for and received on April 11, 1988, in the amount of \$120,000? And did you have conversations with members of your board of directors at SEDCO about the loan, with the same board, in which the loan was actually approved?

We're asking for facts here, Mr. Minister, to determine whether or not there is a conflict of interest. We're asking questions directed at you. You should be providing information to the Premier about what could be a very serious situation. What conversations did you have with SEDCO about your son's loan, Mr. Minister?

**The Speaker:** — Order. Before the hon. member answers, I would just like to bring to the attention of hon. members that we should avoid using unparliamentary language from our seats as well as when we're speaking.

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Sometimes you have to voice the truth. Let me indicate to you that I believe at the time — and the Premier will be reporting this in his report — of a loan to Northern Lights game farm, I was not the minister of SEDCO. Questions directed regarding SEDCO at that time should be directed to the minister of SEDCO, but I was not the minister.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, I didn't ask you if you were the minister of SEDCO at the time the loan was approved. I'm glad to know that you're aware at least of that point. I was asking whether or not you had conversations with your son about the loan, or members at SEDCO, or employees of SEDCO prior to the approval of the loan, Mr. Minister. While you were the chairman, did you have those conversations?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — If I recall the question you asked just previously, you said, with your SEDCO board. I didn't have a SEDCO board because I was not the member.

Getting back to, do I talk to my son — I talk to my son about many things, every night, every day. And certainly we've talked about everything from the Roughriders to breaking horses to sowing crops to farming deer to doing everything. And I will continue to do that, and I see nothing wrong with that.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, supplementary. Can you confirm whether or not you ever discussed with your son Robert, a loan with SEDCO to either the numbered company or the Northern Lights game farm? Did you ever have a discussion about that with your son, the staff or the board, whether or not you were the minister at the time?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Well I don't know what all I discussed with my son. I've discussed a number of things with my son. I discussed with my son about Christmas. I discussed with him about birthdays. I discuss about everyday activities. I phoned him this morning. He's putting in some fences; we talked about it. We're building different corrals. I'm building some at my place. We talked about those things, as is normal in a farming operation.

Regarding the SEDCO loan, as I say, I had nothing to do with that. I wasn't the minister at the time. I had no discussions with the SEDCO board, so I don't know what the member is wanting to finding out. The minister of SEDCO is in the House now, and I'm sure she's prepared to answer any questions regarding the loan.

**Mr. Anguish:** — New question, same minister, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, on August 9 the federal western diversification office approved a grant of approximately \$466,000 to your son's operation. You're quoted in this morning's *Leader-Post*, and I quote:

As for the diversification grant, Taylor said he made a phone call to Bill McKnight, federal minister responsible for the diversification fund at the time, to inform him a Northern Lights official in Vancouver wanted a hearing.

What you failed to mention, sir, is that this Vancouver individual was a partner of one Robert Taylor, who is your son. Do you not see a potential of a conflict of interest in this type of influence peddling?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — I don't see that as influence peddling at all. I've made phone calls, and I've talked to Mr. McKnight on various other aspects within my constituency. Agtech Processors, Indian Head, you can talk to them. They got WDI money. I've talked to Mr. McKnight about that. I happened to see him and said that Mr. Norton of Northern Lights wanted to talk to him at some point in time. I see nothing wrong with an MLA indicating that there are groups or companies within your constituency that would like to talk to the WDI. I'm sure everybody in this Chamber has done exactly the same thing.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that farm families in Saskatchewan would be very interested in seeing if you would intervene in every case where they need funding. It doesn't happen. Your actions, sir, are unusual.

Mr. Minister, your government makes changes to rules for game farms, with the apparent beneficiary being your son. The Farm Debt Review Board makes a ruling, with an apparent beneficiary being your son; over \$500,000 of public funds from the western diversification fund and from SEDCO, with the apparent beneficiary being your son.

And were you unaware of any of this happening? Is that what you're telling us, sir? And is that what you want the people of Saskatchewan to believe?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — Well certainly, as I've said to you on many occasions in today's question period, that I certainly have discussed with my son; I will continue; I support my son, and certainly I feel there's been no reason for the allegations, the aspersions that you're trying to cast. You seem very attuned to doing this, not only against members of my family but other families in this legislature and other people in this province. If that's your *modus operandi*, so be it.

The Premier has indicated to you that he'll give a full report, and that will be forthcoming.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Mr. Minister, will you give us your undertaking here today that you will give full disclosure of the facts surrounding this issue to the Premier of this province, so when he's looking into it he has full knowledge of your activities concerning the numbered company and the Norther Lights game farm?

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — I think the Premier has already answered that question.

(1445)

#### Fertilizer Plant at Belle Plaine

**Mr. Solomon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier, and it deals with your announcement of a fertilizer plant near Belle Plaine.

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

**Mr. Solomon:** — First off I want to say, Premier, that we don't have any problems with large projects of this nature coming to Saskatchewan, providing jobs and opportunities. But I have to ask: considering that Cargill is the largest U.S.-based multinational company, with 140 affiliates or subsidiaries in 36 countries, with its executives based in a 63-room replica French château on Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, and that Cargill has millions of dollars of profit each year, can you tell us why they need a contribution of \$175 million from this government in order to build this plant?

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

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, as the hon. members know, we hosted a distinguished Chinese politician here in the last couple of days, and in China the people are opening up to multinational, international investors. And

in fact, Mr. Speaker, you can buy a Big Mac in Beijing; you can line up for Kentucky Fried Chicken. We see Flexi-Coil operating information agencies in Moscow. You see *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the two major communist countries, Mr. Speaker.

And the NDP opposite are saying, do you know what? You can't have a multinational in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; you can't have somebody that's been here since 1928 in the province of Saskatchewan, has 200 employees, 150 dealerships and agents, 62 elevators, and a regional office, and a processing plant. And they stand up and say, but it's a multinational.

Mr. Speaker, they are even left wing of the communist Chinese and we've seen . . . let alone the Soviet Union, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — They are so far out to lunch when it comes to modern global economics, it's surprising, Mr. Speaker, that they would stand in their place and say: well, my gosh, a \$350 million operation for the first time in Saskatchewan's history to make our own nitrogen fertilizer with Saskatchewan natural gas for Saskatchewan people — 1,250 jobs. And Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan plans to have no money in it at all, and they're against it, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Solomon:** — Mr. Speaker, a new question to the Premier. Premier, let me reiterate: New Democrats don't object to joint ventures if the ventures benefit the people of this province. And there are many examples of profitable joint ventures, as initiated by the NDP government through SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Developing Corporation) in the '70s. But you have shown through your privatization efforts and give-aways that your government is opposed to government intervention in the economy.

You have said that if you free enterprise, enterprise will build. How have you explained, Premier, this change of heart to the operators of the plant in Rosetown, which is privately built without taxpayers' dollars and will now be in direct competition to the provincial treasury, or has the Cargill deal killed the Rosetown plant?

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

**Hon. Mr. Devine:** — Mr. Speaker, the opposition is now trying to pretend that they're in favour of another private sector one because they didn't get this one done. They're against business, right? They're anti-business, anti-privatization, anti-free enterprise, anti-trade, anti-American, anti-Chinese.

Mr. Speaker, the world today is saying that we should trade internationally, that we should build here in joint ventures. The Japanese are now in Saskatchewan making turbines. For the first time in our history we're going to make our own gasoline and diesel fuel in the city of Regina, in an upgrader that we joint-ventured, using our energy, Mr. Speaker. Another one in the Lloydminster

area, with government and with Husky Oil, a private company, and now we're setting up our own fertilizer plant in southern Saskatchewan to provide, Mr. Speaker, for natural gas and nitrogen ammonia, anhydrous ammonia in this province, Mr. Speaker, and they're against that as well.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. I think it's reasonable to request that members finally come to their . . . anyway, just be quiet.

## TABLETING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I wish to lay on the table the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* for the province of Saskatchewan.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### MOTIONS

#### *Amendments to Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly*

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Andrew.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to speak to this government motion today, this very serious government motion. What we have seen by this government over the past few days is a continuation of their absolute and total arrogance and insincerity, I might add, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Justice, a minister of this Crown, the Minister of Highways, expressed their concern about the erosion of trust and respect and co-operation in this Legislative Assembly on Friday. The Minister of Justice said that he has never seen the situation, the bitterness so bad in this Assembly. The Minister of Highways indicated, or left the implication that this is the fault or the responsibility of the official opposition.

The Minister of Justice indicated that it is incumbent on all of us to turn this negative situation around, to which the Leader of the Opposition agreed and supported, and I do that today as well.

The Minister of Justice offered the so-called olive branch, Mr. Speaker, and asked the opposition to join with the government to discuss this motion rationally and in good faith, in a co-operative manner so that we can arrive at some consensus, and this would be an exercise in building co-operation and trust back into this Assembly. The minister pleaded with us to help restore a sense of democracy in the legislature.

As I indicated, the Leader of the Opposition agreed with this in his comments, and in the spirit of accommodation and co-operation, asked for a few days to think about this proposal by the Minister of Justice. The Leader of the

Opposition very eloquently detailed how this government is in fact . . . how it's this government that is responsible for the erosion of democracy in Saskatchewan, and he outlined many, many excellent examples of that which many people in the province agree with.

Now since last Friday our deputy leader and our House Leader have had three meetings with the Minister of Justice to discuss this motion and other possible and important reforms in the Assembly. We are all aware that the Leader of the Opposition appointed me critic of democratic reform some time ago, which indicates that he had a sincere interest and desire to bring in needed reforms, and we still do.

Well I hope that the Minister of Health enters this debate rather than chirping from his chair, because it's many of the actions of him and his front-bench colleagues that in my view are responsible for the situation we find ourselves in today.

In the spirit, again, of improved trust and co-operation and legislative reform, as was promoted by the Minister of Justice, we suggested other ideas, Mr. Speaker, that we thought should be looked at by this all-party committee at the same time, not just the bell-ringing motion. Why would you have an all-party committee just to look at one proposal? It doesn't make any sense when everyone knows that's here, and the public knows that there are other important considerations if we are going to open this Assembly up and make it more democratic and responsive to the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. Why would you only look at one reform? It doesn't make any sense.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that in 1987 we produced a report which called for a number of important proposals for reform to this Assembly. We put forward many proposals that we thought were responsible and sincere and fit into certain principles that seemed to us to be very important.

The first principle was that the work of the legislature should be made more accessible to the public, and we had a number of ideas around how that could in fact be made to happen.

Another important principle, we felt, was that the work of the Assembly would be made more accountable to the public, again with several suggested reforms related to that.

A third principle that was important to us is that the Legislative Assembly should become more efficient and effective in the debate of public issues and in the performance of the public's business.

And fourthly, the fourth principle that seemed to us to be important was that the role of private members in this Assembly should be enhanced. And we put forward some ideas that we thought would in fact enhance the role of all private members.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where three meetings occurred since last Friday. The Minister of



Justice presented the government's position and tentative view on what would be the government's proposal to have this committee consider. And the suggestion was that the bell-ringing issue should be resolved by June 30.

We were very open to this consideration and discussed it in our caucus on a number of occasions, and we placed before the minister a number of our reform ideas. We placed those on the agenda because we assume that in the spirit of making this Assembly more democratic and improving the co-operation and the trust and the respect, that other changes are important if that is going to occur.

(1500)

These are ideas that are long overdue, and ones that we thought were reasonable and sincere. All of these, in our view, would have contributed to the objectives, as I indicated earlier, of more accessibility to the public of this Assembly, more accountability to the public, more efficiency and effectiveness in terms of conducting our business, and in promoting the objective of enhancing the role of private members. To us, those seem like important objectives and important principles.

So those were some of the ideas we put forward in addition to the bell-ringing motion, the bell-ringing proposal. Some of these, we looked at the possibility . . . again we were looking at discussing these. These weren't our bottom lines or anything like that. We were looking at discussing these: the possible extension of question period to 45 minutes; the regular tabling of documents such as *Public Accounts* and annual reports.

I mean, talk about hiding information from this Assembly and the public. If there's been any way that that's been done, it's been by not tabling *Public Accounts* and annual reports in reasonable notice over the last two or three years.

They also made the suggestion, or tried to put on the agenda, that we should get some indication of government business — and should the public — on a weekly basis.

One of the things that has amazed me since becoming a new member here, Mr. Speaker, is that by noon on any given day we're not even sure what the business is going to be for that day. So we have a situation where we simply don't know from . . . we don't know in the morning what the business is going to be for the day. We often don't even know by noon what the business is going to be of the day.

And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that contributes to tremendous inefficiency in this Assembly. And I'm not going to attribute any motives to that, but it just seems to me that it doesn't make any sense that the government can't tell us on a Friday what the business is going to be for the following week, or can't tell us in the morning what the business is going to be for the rest of the day. I think that's a reasonable kind of request. So I think that's a fairly sincere kind of proposal that we wanted to discuss.

We also wanted to put on the agenda, again which we think is reasonable, the idea of timely responses to orders

for return in oral questions. I mean, surely that's a reasonable thing to discuss when, in fact, we haven't been getting answers to those questions. So we had many other proposals, but those were some of the ones that we felt we could add to the bell-ringing proposal of the Minister of Justice.

And we wanted to look at the hours of sitting. Again, we didn't have any firm and fast positions or bottom lines, but thought that was a reasonable thing to look at.

We wanted to look at the possibility of expanded T.V. and radio coverage. My goodness, many people in this province don't even have access to seeing what goes on in the legislature, and certainly don't have radio coverage, which was removed, in terms of the throne speech and the budget speech, under this administration.

We also were interested in the possibility of an internship program for young people, and were led to believe that the minister was also interested in some of these reforms.

And it was our view that since the committee was going to meet anyway, why not look, if it was a sincere initiative as the Minister of Justice led us to believe on Friday, why not look at a number of other relevant areas that would contribute to the kind of place he said he wanted this to be.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it has now become clear that this Minister of Justice, that this government, that this Premier, is not interested in improving the trust in this Assembly; is not interested in improving co-operation in the Assembly; is not interested in promoting the spirit of good relations in the Assembly. The government is only interested in effecting changes which will allow them to ram through their agenda, their Bills, their legislation, despite what the Minister of Justice and the Premier might say to the contrary.

I can't believe, as I talk to those back-benchers every day, I can't believe that many of those people would agree with the Minister of Justice that only one rule change should be looked at in this Assembly, because I know that they're also frustrated about the sense of bitterness in this Assembly and are interested in doing something about it.

The public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — by the government's denial to look at other potential reforms by this all-party committee — the public of Saskatchewan will see through the hidden agenda of this government. They will see through the rhetoric that if the government was really sincere it would be willing to look at other general reforms to make this Assembly run more smoothly.

In my first year here as a new member, Mr. Speaker, it has become clear to me just who has obstructed democracy and the spirit of good will in this Assembly. And I say that with all seriousness and sincerity. As a new member, as I said earlier, I see the business changing — not only daily — but changing throughout the day. How on earth are we supposed to conduct . . . You know, when you go into a board meeting, you don't change the agenda during the course of the board meeting. You simply couldn't function that way . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hope

you participate in this debate. There's a lot of good comments coming out of the government benches from their seats.

But another thing I've seen that's disturbed me as a new member is that the government simply doesn't answer questions. And the Minister of Justice is one that is partly responsible for that. I wrote him a letter two months ago, eight weeks ago, when it became clear that the chief commissioner was going to be resigning from the Human Rights Commission. I wrote him a letter. He didn't even have the courtesy to acknowledge. Now to me, that says something about respect for the opposition, respect for fellow colleagues, and says something to me about the spirit of co-operation. He didn't even respond to my letter. I hope that's not too much to ask . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I hope that you participate as well, the member from Weyburn, the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster.

Not tabling *Public Accounts*. I spent a week in Crown corporations, and again in committee the ministers do not answer questions. They view themselves as not being accountable to this Assembly, to opposition members, to the public of Saskatchewan. They delay annual reports. The Minister of Health said last year that, well I thought it had been distributed and it was in a corner of my office, or in a store-room or something. So he gave us the report for his department the evening we started Health estimates.

So that's the kind of thing that I've seen occurring. On the one hand we see the government not co-operating and changing the rules and then not answering questions, not responding to letters, and then accusing us of being undemocratic and contributing to the erosion of trust and sincerity in this Assembly.

I think what we see in this motion, Mr. Speaker, is the hidden agenda of this government, their continued deception of the Assembly and the people of the province, and their incredible arrogance.

We took up the government's offer to sit down and to look at an all-party committee to review the bell-ringing motion, plus some other motions. And because the government couldn't have its way in only dealing with that one motion, it backs out of the deal, and when they had an opportunity to make some real legitimate reforms with the co-operation of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, one can only question the government's legitimate desire for positive reform in the first place, and I think this is how the citizens of the province will view this about-face that has been made today.

We thought that the Minister of Justice, even as early as this morning, had accepted a tentative idea of the broader agenda. Obviously something happened in caucus. I suppose the Premier got his way again and, because of his desire to ram through SaskEnergy, wouldn't go along with any other considerations. When we were looking at a June 30 deadline, Mr. Speaker, obviously we underestimated this government's lack of integrity.

Let's be clear about one thing, too, Mr. Speaker. We used a legitimate mechanism of this Assembly when we

walked out. We used a legitimate tool that was available to us. Members opposite seem to forget that they have walked out as well. They seem to forget that their federal counterparts walked out in Ottawa, in 1984 I believe it was. They seem to have forgotten that their counterparts in Manitoba walked out in 1985. So there are two sets of rules.

We said we were going to go out because this government had gone beyond its mandate; it had gone too far. The people of Saskatchewan wanted an opportunity to express that concern. We said we would be back when we listened to the people of Saskatchewan. And as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we presented over 80,000 petitions from all across Saskatchewan, many from the city of Weyburn where — the minister is nodding, he accepts that — where he got a rough . . . I think in the phone show he was on, of 12 callers, 10 were upset with him that his government had gone too far on this issue.

We came back when we had listened to the people of Saskatchewan — which we said was our intention — and so let's not make any mistake about it. We did not break or violate any rules of this Assembly. We used a legitimate vehicle that's available to us, to the opposition. Seventy per cent of the people of the province agreed with us that this government had gone too far.

While the Premier of this province, while the members of this Assembly were afraid to leave here, they were afraid to go home. We never saw the Premier for the first week that we walked out. He was afraid to go out; he was afraid to talk to the media.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with this motion that we're debating today, the government opposite is proposing a rule change. And that this change is undoubtedly the most important issue in this debate, the motive for this change is the most important issue in this debate — their motive for doing this.

This motive is worthy of close examination because it says a great deal about the arrogance of this government opposite. This rule change is a means of ensuring the success of future SaskPower and other unpopular privatization legislation by this government.

It is obvious, in the light of the remarkable recent events, that the government needs this rule change to privatize SaskPower against the clearly expressed wishes of the people of Saskatchewan, which has now become very clear. It's a sad day indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for our province when vindictive rule changes have become necessary for the PCs to ram through their extreme right-wing ideological agenda.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it must not be forgotten, as I said earlier, that 70 per cent of Saskatchewan residents, almost 70 per cent — 67 per cent surveyed by Angus Reid — opposed the Saskatchewan government's plans to privatize SaskEnergy. The people of the province clearly rejected and clearly reject the PC vision of Saskatchewan for the future. Their blatant privatization, which is dismantling everything which Saskatchewan people have built up over many years, and give this away to . . .

and the benefits to foreign investors and a few wealthy friends.

The people of Saskatchewan have rejected the privatization of SaskPower and the breakup of this major public utility. They have resoundingly rejected a return to the 1940s when private utility companies gouged the people of this province. Let's not forget that history, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they refused to provide adequate service to the people of this province back in the 1940s. The people of Saskatchewan have rejected a return to the 1940s.

This government, however, clearly intends to ignore the public wishes not to proceed with the sale of SaskEnergy. The minister of privatization has publicly stated that when the Bills . . . that the Bills will be reintroduced when the review panel has completed its work.

The media ads are running. The senior officials of SaskEnergy are going around the province — some 80 communities they're planning to go so far. I think the most they ever had at a meeting were about 13 people, but they're still proceeding with this strategy.

(1515)

And the ads, I don't know how many millions of dollars we're going to spend. Again, money directly into the coffers of big corporate friends, advertising friends of this government.

These tours, this media campaign, this panel, is simply a whitewash and a farce, and the people of Saskatchewan will reject it as they have indicated they will do.

This rule change, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very instrumental to the government in ramming its unpopular privatization plans down the throats of Saskatchewan people.

I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the proposed rule change will go a long way towards perhaps putting in the hands of the government the power to steamroll over the wishes and the will of not only the opposition but the people of Saskatchewan with respect to the privatization of SaskPower, and make no mistake about it, other publicly-owned assets will be next, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The members opposite will try to justify this heavy-handed unilateral change of the rules of the House by claiming that the opposition would use the tactic of the bells on any issue in the future and could, in fact, paralyse the government. I would suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government has been paralysed for the last two years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to you that this government that condemns our walking out, our use of a legitimate means of this Assembly, this government fails to understand why the situation occurred in the first place. It did not happen because the opposition was prepared to take that sort of unwarranted action. It obviously . . . as the Leader of the Opposition said on Friday, this was a very, very serious step — a very serious and a very necessary step — so it is not something that we did lightly.

But it happened because something in the order of 70 per cent of the people of the province — and we knew this — were opposed to the government's intention to privatize SaskPower, and because the people have understood that this issue will determine what future direction this province will take for generations to come.

This government does not yet understand the magnitude of grass roots, public opposition to their privatization madness. If they did, they wouldn't be proceeding in the manner in which they are.

However, I think the Finance minister . . . for once they didn't listen to the Finance minister. The Finance minister did recognize this, and he's not like the Premier; he didn't blame the pollsters. The Finance minister . . . I have an article . . . a quote here from the *Leader-Post*. On May 4 he says, and I quote:

The government made a mistake by not consulting the public before moving to privatizing SaskEnergy, Finance Minister Gary Lane conceded at an Investment Dealers Association reception on Wednesday.

Lane's admission comes one day after the Angus Reid poll shows that the majority of Saskatchewan residents don't want the Progressive Conservative government to sell off SaskEnergy.

So obviously the Minister of Finance admitted that the government had gone too far.

The public of Saskatchewan would never have tolerated the actions that we took, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if it were not for the fact that they had felt that this government had gone too far, had crossed the line, and that the government was totally wrong-headed in its approach. It would not have accepted our actions. If the public had not viewed that this government was on a course of action that was so inappropriate for the needs of Saskatchewan at this time and place in our history, they simply wouldn't have tolerated what we did.

However, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the vast majority of 70 per cent of the people agreed with our position on the issue, and a majority of people agreed with the strategy and the tactic that we used — that is, the bell-ringing — to give us an opportunity to talk to people across the province. The majority of people agreed with the tactic that we used, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I've alluded to, it has become clear to the people of the province.

They were given the opportunity to express their will through the petitions; through letter writing to letters to the editor — there have been many of those around the province; in public meetings — as we had several thousand to public meetings, just four public meetings — and many thousand people there who came out from all political persuasions because they were concerned about the need to keep under public control important utility Crowns.

And clearly, many Conservatives were concerned that

this government had broken a promise that it made, not only in the 1986 election but a promise that this Premier had made as late as last September; his Deputy Premier made in June of last year. It is very clear to the people of the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I was responsible for getting several hundred signatures. It's very clear that the people of the province felt offended. They simply felt offended that a government could be so arrogant to think that they could be fooled by splitting off SaskEnergy and then saying it wasn't SaskPower — calling it something else. People took exception to that. People in Saskatchewan are much more sophisticated than that.

People in your community of Moosomin, we got many signatures from Moosomin because people resent that kind of deception and dishonesty. So people have spoken very clearly. It appears as though this government is not going to respect that because they're saying the people didn't understand what they were signing. And we're going to have 80-some meetings to tell them what the real story is. We're going to have this touring panel at great public expense. And we've already spent several million dollars in advertising and have had several public participation meetings around the province.

And of course, the Minister of Public Participation, or privatization, obviously has not delivered public sentiment on behalf of the government, and is a total failure in this particular posting that he's in . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hope the Minister of Education and the member from Weyburn will give me an opportunity to finish my comments, and then I would invite him to feel free to stand up, and if you think that you've got something more enlightening to say, I would encourage you to share that with the people of the province.

**An Hon. Member:** — I challenge you to say to them what you said to the public . . .

**Mr. Pringle:** — Well when you stand up, you make your comments, and I'll make mine for now, Mr. Minister.

As I indicated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, some 80,000 so far and more to come, were given the opportunity to express their will through petitions. That's what we said we would do, go out and see what the people would say in terms of what we were doing by walking out. If we did not have public support, we would get right back in.

Well, in two short weeks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had tens of thousands of signatures and the public saying to us, don't go back until that government backs down and gets away from its privatization madness. And so we got 80,000 signatures to this date. We've had many, many letters in the paper from irate citizens around the province. We've had a number of editorials taking our position and wondering why the government was headed on this wrong-headed course.

And I repeat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the use of the bells was acceptable to most people of this province because they want the government stopped — they want this government stopped — because it's proceeding on an

ill-considered course without having first found out what the public believes and what the public wants to see happen in this province.

I want to share with you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Speaker Jeanne Sauvé's expressed opinion regarding the use of bell-ringing by the Conservatives in the House of Commons in 1982. And she says, and I quote:

I may point out that obstructive tactics are allowed by the rules. However, their use must be regulated so as to safeguard the government's right to have the House consider its order of business and, equally important, right of the opposition to criticize, oppose, and even obstruct a government measure.

That's a quote from March 18, 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker, recognizing the legitimate right of the opposition to oppose a government measure as well.

The government may not have liked the message which the people of the province have sent to it on the privatization of SaskEnergy, but it ignores the message — it ignores that message and proceeds with unilateral changes at its peril. The residents of Saskatchewan do not appreciate being lied to by this Premier and by this Deputy Premier, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the action taken by the government in proposing this unilateral change, because — let's remember they've now reneged on their proposal to us to sit down and discuss this in an all-party committee — the action taken by this government to propose and attempt to enact this unilateral rule of change, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is totally — and, I repeat, it is totally unprecedented in this legislature, as the Leader of the Opposition said the other day.

And this government knows this. The Minister of Justice and the Deputy Premier outside of this House have acknowledged this. The Minister of Justice has admitted publicly that this is the first time that he is aware of the rule committee being passed by, and he makes no apologies for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I repeat, he makes no apologies for violating the tradition and convention of this Assembly in this situation.

And I might add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government has broken many traditions and many conventions in this Assembly, many established patterns. And one of the strengths of the British parliamentary system is its respect for tradition, its respect for its heritage, its respect for convention. And this government has broken many of those conventions, not just in this case, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

A week ago yesterday, on Monday, when the opposition returned to this House, the Premier stated publicly that the government would talk to the New Democrats about possible changes in bell-ringing rules.

Obviously the Premier's initial reaction was the correct one in terms of the parliamentary traditions of this House. However, shortly afterwards, on the same day, the government served notice it was going to introduce the

rule change without consultation with the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, until now, as I indicated, this Assembly has not made these kinds of changes without all-party input and consent on any rule change. As I say, this has been a strength of our system. It has protected the majority from ramming through procedures without minority input and approval. And this is an important . . . the importance of this tradition cannot be underestimated, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This has got to be preserved as an important tradition.

Throughout the history of the Assembly, substantial consultation on rule changes has taken place through the mechanism of all-party committees which are given a mandate by this Assembly. Rule changes have, for the most part, been accomplished through consensus and without division. And there are many examples from 1985, 1981, and 1986, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

These all-party committees have undertaken in the past, comprehensive review of rules, not just one change at a time, but comprehensive reviews of the rules, and have brought forward legitimate changes, legitimate proposal changes for reform. And as I indicated at the outset of my remarks, there are many current important changes that need to be considered along with the bell-ringing proposal.

(1530)

But as I also indicated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government proposes a single rule change which has come about because of its extreme difficulties over its own privatization program. It's run into a bit of a snag. It's got to remove the obstacle so it can get on with the business of privatizing the Saskatchewan resource assets. This can only be seen as the action of a cynical and undemocratic government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly the tradition of this House has been not to unilaterally tinker with the very important rule changes and procedures of the Assembly. As an institution, this House has withstood major and extremely polarized debates in the past. This is not the first time on different visions of how the economy should run. It's withstood major and extremely polarized debates, debates with very high stakes. And governments of the past have not unilaterally altered the rules to suit their immediate purposes, like we see this government doing with this motion. Governments of the past, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have had more integrity and more respect for the democratic process, more respect for this Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to place on the record and emphasize that in the past consensus has always been sought for rules changes — consensus has always been sought for rules changes. We thought that the Minister of Justice was sincere in his attempt to reach consensus on this matter as well. That appears not to be the case.

In the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one would hope that consensus would always be sought, but this government is setting a precedent, this PC government. For the first time in the history of Saskatchewan, this PC government is setting a precedent, a precedent that we are not

unmindful of, that says that if the rules are not in accordance with the wishes and the desires of the government, you go ahead and change them for your own purpose.

And we don't believe on this side of the House that this is healthy, nor do we believe that it is democratic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it is not keeping within the traditions of this Assembly. Nor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will the people of Saskatchewan see this as a healthy or democratic rule change and proposal.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this motion is yet another in a wide range of anti-democratic actions by this government. I would like to review just a few of these because they paint a scary trend leading toward the potential for tyranny. Now tyranny is a pretty strong word, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I use it very consciously and very deliberately.

To begin with, it was fundamentally undemocratic of this government to introduce the SaskPower privatization Bills; to propose such a major change without a mandate from the people of the province and with no prior consultation to sell off the publicly owned utility. As I indicated earlier, the Minister of Finance has admitted the absence of public consultation by the government on this crucial issue. In a stand of unbelievable arrogance and defiance of democracy, this government still plans to forge ahead with the privatization plans.

I see the member from Weyburn, he's still chirping, but he's chirping from a different seat. He's sort of moving around from seat to seat and continues to chirp. And I sincerely hope that in all of his wisdom he has the forthrightness to in fact get up and make some comments and put them on public record so that he can show the folks back in Weyburn what he has to offer by way of democracy and this particular proposal, and why he wouldn't be supporting other legislative changes that would help create the kind of co-operation and trust that even he says is necessary in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Well I don't . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The Minister of Education challenges me. I hope he's speaking next, and I would like to challenge him, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to challenge the Minister of Education to get up and make some comments himself and contribute some comments and some light to this debate rather than all the heat that he's contributing.

As I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a stand of unbelievable arrogance and defiance of democracy, this PC government still plans to forge ahead with their privatization plans. They say that the only problem is that they have to do a bigger and better sell job to the people of Saskatchewan. Not enough people have been conned yet into believing their lines.

Mr. Speaker, the government's commitment to parliamentary tradition and respect for the democratic process is highly circumspect. The list of undemocratic actions and practices by this government, by this PC government, is unparalleled and staggering, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll list a few of these.

The latest reworking of Saskatchewan's electoral constituencies which, if the Bill is passed, will apply to the next election, represents an unacceptable deviation from the democratic principle: one person, one vote. This is most evident by comparing the ridings of Morse and Humboldt, both rural constituencies. In the Morse riding there are 7,757 voters, compared to 11,734 in Humboldt. It is blatantly unfair to allow variations of up to 4,000 voters between some ridings — blatantly unfair — up to 4,000 difference, rural riding to rural riding.

Another example of this undemocratic actions, there are substantial discrepancies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, between urban and rural riding populations. Again the difference between Morse, 7,757 voters and Saskatoon Greystone, with 12,567 voters. In other words, this gives rural votes more weight than urban ones, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

With a population shift from farms to the cities, the variation in eligible voters between rural and urban ridings will only grow. Mr. Deputy Speaker, rural people believe in fairness too, and accept this delicate balance of representation and democracy.

Finally it must be remembered that the present government, this PC government, changed the boundary rules before the boundaries were redrawn. This served to ensure the present electoral boundary outcome as they had planned it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

For instance, they changed the 15 per cent variation in population between large and small ridings to 25 per cent deviation. As well, the government said the number of rural ridings must remain the same and there would only be one new seat each for Regina and Saskatoon, irrespective of the population considerations.

In effect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what this PC government did is it tied the commission's hands before the commission even began its work — another blatant, partisan move by a desperate and unpopular government. In 1971 Ross Thatcher found out that the people of Saskatchewan believe in fairness, and the Premier's government will not get away with this gerrymander either.

Last year the provincial government pushed through legislation that significantly altered the manner in which municipal elections in our major urban centres are carried out. This was done despite the fact that a large number of people were in favour of retaining the ward system. Again, consultation was not part of the process leading up to this unilateral decision by this PC government. In fact, plebiscites conducted in Saskatoon and Regina in the late 1970s resoundingly endorsed the ward system.

Again, in the municipal elections of last fall, urban voters endorsed the ward system concept and asked for its reinstatement. The Urban Affairs minister continues to maintain that he, and he alone, is right about this issue, another example by this government of its arrogance, another example that this government does not have to be accountable to the people of the province.

One of the most significant undemocratic acts, in my

view, Mr. Speaker, of this provincial government was their failure to disclose to the people of Saskatchewan the actual deficit figures of 1986. Instead, after the provincial election campaign, the Minister of Finance presented a budget which revealed that his deficit forecasting had been miscalculated by some \$800 million. Whether one attributes this situation to deliberate deception of the public or gross incompetence, the end result is the same, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan have been betrayed and abused by a government that is supposed to be responsible and accountable to them.

Another example, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member from Wascana says, at least we're not dishonest. Well that's not how the people in Saskatchewan have conveyed their perceptions to me about you.

Another example, Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of years, the people Saskatchewan have become aware of the several trends in the direction in which this provincial government is taking health care. However, one of the strategies most evident has been the way in which cut-backs and changes to our health care system have been made . . . the serious ones were made and implemented and announced. Significantly, spending-cut decisions were made without input from health care professionals or the general public, and were based on perceived savings today, rather than long-term implications.

And this is not just the New Democrats saying this. The Saskatchewan health care commission in its 1987 report indicated that the one thing that would have to occur over the next year is that the government would have to communicate with health care professionals and those directly involved in the provision of health care in order to in fact make decisions that were in the best interests of health care and the people of the province's well-being.

So the Saskatchewan Health Care Association in its annual report of 1987 makes the point that this government has got to stop making unilateral decisions and has got to put people first and health care priorities at the forefront, in consultation with people throughout the province. So other people are saying this as well.

Despite promises to the contrary, this administration, this PC administration has initiated measures that have impacted negatively on universal . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd respectfully request that I raise a point of order with you. Mr. Speaker, I don't know the exact page number or the exact quotation out of the rule book, but I do know in general terms, Mr. Speaker, the rules of this Assembly would say that a speaker, when he's speaking on a motion such as we are talking about here today, which I remind you is the bell-ringing motion, that the speaker's comments should be relevant to the issue.

I'm having a great deal of difficulty finding the relevance, Mr. Speaker, between the health card, which is popular in Saskatchewan, and bell-ringing, which is not popular in

Saskatchewan.

(1545)

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I was listening to what the member was saying in referring to the undemocratic nature of this government and always referring back to the motion on the order paper that we're speaking to.

And it was quite obvious to me that what he was saying related very clearly to the undemocratic process that we're involved in here today where you have a rule change that has no consultation with the opposition. And I would just say that I find the opinion of the member not to be in order and would ask you to rule that way.

**The Speaker:** — I have listened to the hon. member's point of order and the hon. member from Elphinstone's remarks. And I've been also listening to the hon. member's remarks from Saskatoon Eastview. And I must rule that the point of order is well taken for this reason.

In speaking to a motion, I realize that hon. members wish to make some examples to buttress their arguments, and of course that's reasonable. However, in making an example, I don't believe that they should feel they can speak on and on and on about an issue indefinitely. I think they should make the example and then confine it to their motion. But I believe the hon. member understands what I'm saying.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think I understand your ruling and I'll try and respect that. Just for clarification, I did not mention anything about health cards, Mr. Speaker. So I think *Hansard* will show that I did not mention health cards, so . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Yes you did.

**Mr. Pringle:** — No, I didn't mention health cards. But I will respect your ruling and stick . . . I'm concerned about this . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order, order, order. Oh I guess, you know, I think just a little point of clarification. The essential issue was that perhaps the hon. member was straying from the motion. I believe that was the essential motion, and I've dealt with that.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Speaker, in 1986 I would submit that the people of the province . . . and I'm trying to list some examples of undemocratic actions, and I would suggest that the people of the province were given no reason to expect that this PC government was going to eliminate the school-based dental program. They were given no reason to suspect that. They were given no reason to suspect that the prescription drug program changes would be rammed through and creating hardship for many people of the province. That was not mentioned. I view that as an undemocratic action.

They were not led to believe in 1986 that there would be extreme shortages of health care professionals; that the cuts would be so acute as to seriously compromise the level of health care provided in the province; and that in

1986 the people of the province were not led to believe, and given no reason to believe, that waiting lists in hospitals in Saskatoon would climb to some 12,000.

And my point is that, similar to the bell-ringing incident and the fact that this government was not willing to consider other important reforms that should occur, in the case of health care there was a lack of consultation exhibited by this government. And it used a unilateral approach on these health care issues as well, and continues to do so on the business before us today.

Now despite appointing a commission on the future directions in health care to study the future of health care in the province, this government announces another undemocratic move and announces that the three hospitals in Saskatoon will be integrated before the commission even prepares and reports. And in fact the city council of Saskatoon, which is one of the stakeholders, did not even know that this decision was coming about. And I view that as undemocratic. I view that as a lack of consultation and a lack of seeking input and a decision that this government rams through its agenda, not unlike with this motion before us today, Mr. Speaker.

That's the point I was trying to make to members on the opposite side. And again, it's not in keeping with the tradition of this province, which is to work together in co-operation, in consultation for the well-being, the collective well-being, of all people of the province.

So in health care the Minister of Health says one thing and he did another. We saw the Minister of Justice propose one option on Friday, over three meetings give some indication that he was interested in looking at broader reforms, and when the chips are down, he really isn't. So he says one thing and he does another, which again it's the strategy of confrontation by this government, rather than co-operation and working together and communicating in goodwill.

But there's another example that many of us in the province review as an undemocratic action. In 1987, through Bills regarding regional colleges and technical institutes, this government legislated changes that fundamentally altered the structure of regional and community colleges in Saskatchewan. These changes were done arbitrarily, without any semblance of consultation with the people affected.

This is serious, Mr. Speaker, because this is the approach of this government. In one fell swoop all the very good, locally controlled community colleges were scooped up and put under the direction of a centralized government-controlled corporation. Now the local communities have absolutely no control over how the colleges are run in their areas. In my view, that's an undemocratic action, similar to the one that we're seeing today in this Assembly.

Decisions are foisted upon the community college system from the central control board, centralizing power. The minister in charge has been given complete control over decisions. Where local boards were once elected, they are now appointed by the Minister of Education. The

people appointed are required through legislation to follow the dictates of the minister exactly. This is why educators boo this minister at education conferences. It's his arrogance and deception which is fundamentally offensive to educators in the province of Saskatchewan.

The community college situation is one more example of where this government has used its majority, Mr. Speaker, to trample the rights of Saskatchewan people. This incredible grab to have total power and control serves no one's interests. It was a highly regressive step that has put the concept of community colleges back several decades.

This government continues to hammer and push legislation through that is harmful and destructive to this province. They care only about achieving their own narrow-minded, selfish objectives, regardless of who gets hurt. Their arbitrary actions are an abuse of power, Mr. Speaker; they are killing this province. And then they have the audacity to call it progress.

Another example of an undemocratic action, it is fundamentally right for the public to know where their money is being spent, has always been regarded as the public's right to know. This government is directly interfering with that basic right in a couple of ways. In the past, their release of *Public Accounts* documents has been delayed past any reasonable time period. And we wanted to put that on the agenda to consider standard dates or time periods by when those accounts should be presented, not just by this government but by future governments; that there must be a reasonable time period that we can negotiate as to when *Public Accounts* had to be tabled. Again, that seems like a reasonable request and seemed like a reasonable proposal to put on the agenda.

In February of 1989, the Public Accounts Committee only began their review of the fiscal year ending March 1987. This is a two-year delay, Mr. Speaker, and I submit this is very serious. This is a two-year delay before the people of the province have any idea how the government is spending their money, particularly when the people are concerned right now about how their money is being spent.

Another way in which this government is directly interfering with the basic right of people to know where their money is being spent is that *Public Accounts* documents for the year ending March 1988 have now been tabled, and even this represents a 12- to 18-month delay after the money has been spent.

During the Blakeney administration, *Public Accounts* were tabled within a few months of year end. That government took the responsibility of fiscal management seriously, Mr. Speaker, and respected the right of the public to be informed in an accurate and timely manner. The Blakeney government saw *Public Accounts* as an opportunity to demonstrate that it was running an accountable and an efficient and an effective government in the spending of the taxpayers' money.

This PC government used *Public Accounts* as a way to hide, sabotaging the process as they did back in the summer when the Public Accounts Committee met, sabotaging the process so that the people of the province

couldn't see the money that was spent during the election year, 1986-87.

Another example, the absence of a standard provincial budget day. The people of this province have the right to be given timely and accurate information regarding the finances of the government. In 1987 the government delayed calling this legislature and announced some of the most harmful budget cuts in Saskatchewan's history, outside of this House — not here, but outside of the House. They didn't have the courage to call the House. They didn't even have the courage to be asked questions about these harmful decisions and be accountable for them.

Another example, the formation of the property management corporation was ultimately done for one purpose, Mr. Speaker — as a mechanism to withhold expenditure information from the public. There's no question about that. For instance, this government uses payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation as a way to claim that they have increased funding and services to government departments and, in my view, another way in which they're attempting to deceive the public of Saskatchewan.

While payments to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation have increased departmental budgets, these increases have not been for programs and services. They have not improved the quality or the quantity of services. Despite what the Premier says about all the new money into health care, that is not new money for programs and services. It's been a shifting of money spent, from one department to another. I know in Social Services, where I spent 10 years, this government played the same games of shifting around money so that you couldn't keep track of where . . . from one year to the next of where the public's money was being spent.

By trying to privatize SaskPower, the current government, I suggest, has broken its promise never to privatize a public utility and has betrayed the people of Saskatchewan. Following the last provincial election, our Premier guaranteed that SaskEnergy's public utilities would be exempt from his privatization push. He specifically mentioned SaskPower, SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), and SaskTel. As I indicated earlier, the Deputy Premier has denied, later denied in this Assembly that the government was planning to privatize SaskPower. The record clearly shows that he said the answer is no, pure and simple, Mr. Speaker.

The PC government's betrayal has outraged Saskatchewan people, as we've seen by the petitions. All across the province people are saying that this privatization scheme has gone too far. Over 80,000 petitions are presented so far in this Assembly, with several thousand more to be presented in the coming days.

However, despite the polls, despite the some 80,000 petitions, this government wants to introduce legislation that will allow them to ram through their privatization Bills through this legislature. It is the ultimate undemocratic act, Mr. Speaker.



The list of undemocratic acts . . . I've mentioned eight or ten of them. I could go on and mention several more, Mr. Speaker. I could talk about the appointment, for example, of the Ombudsman, that again this government broke the tradition that had been established in this province. I won't do that, but that's another example, and there are many others that one could point to.

(1600)

I guess another tone of dishonesty or deception that I would like to just talk about for a minute was one that bothers me very much, and I want to indicate this because the Premier, as he did in 1986, and continued to last week at a meeting, he continues to compare himself to the late T.C. Douglas. And he says if T.C. Douglas were alive today he would support the initiatives that this government is engaging in and he would promote and endorse what we're doing today. In fact he calls him a . . . the Premier calls T.C. Douglas a personal friend. And, Mr. Speaker, you may recall in 1986 when the Premier was running around the province trying to hang on Tommy Douglas' coat-tails, Mrs. Douglas, a senior citizen, took great exception to the Premier doing that and wrote a letter to the papers very publicly saying that her husband spent all his life fighting for principles that were contrary to what the Premier was promoting — contrary to what the Premier was . . .

**Mr. Petersen:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd once again like to bring up the same point of order that was raised earlier by the Minister of Highways. I believe that the speaker has been admonished to stick to the topic, and I have been listening very carefully, Mr. Speaker, and have heard him wander all over the place and not refer with any kind of accuracy at all to the substance of this Bill before us. I ask for your ruling once again.

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I just want to say that in talking about democracy here, the member from Saskatoon I think is laying out very clearly some problems that we see. And to be continually interrupted by members of the government side only proves the point that he's trying to make.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, you have been sitting, listening very carefully. I'm sure if there were any rules being broken you would have rose to your feet and indicated that. But I just say that the reason that they're getting up, over and over again, is to break the continuity of the argument and do exactly what the member from Saskatoon is saying; that is, defeat democracy and the whole principle of it in giving his speech here today.

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. First of all, I'd just like to point out that all members have a right to raise points of order, whether accurate or not, but they do have that right.

And, secondly, I have spoken to the previous member's point of order, and I have addressed myself to the hon. member who was speaking. And I respect the hon. member and I believe that what he's saying is going to relate to the topic under discussion, and I'm waiting for him to do that; I'm waiting for him to do that.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to give another example of deception and a sense of a lack of democracy, respect for democracy, when I say that this Premier says that the late T.C. Douglas would support what he's doing today; that T.C. Douglas was a personal friend of his. And I would ask that the Premier not promote that any more, not show disregard for Mrs. Douglas, who has said that her . . . and not disrespect Mrs. Douglas, who's an elderly woman now, who says that her husband spent his whole life, committed his whole life to fighting against the very likes of this Premier and what he stands for.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — She finds that offensive, and I would ask the Premier to respect the memory of her husband and to respect the many friends of the late Tommy Douglas and not promote that kind of dishonesty any more.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this government talks about restoring trust; it talks about co-operation. The actions of this government do not demonstrate that. And I've tried — if the members would have listened — I've tried to outline in my speech the many, many examples of where in fact this government is eroding the democratic traditions, not only in this House but throughout the province.

This is exactly why electorally and in the polls this Premier is on a free fall in the province of Saskatchewan. This government is only interested in their reform on bell-ringing — that's the only one they're interested in — because they want to ram through the SaskEnergy legislation. We will not have any part of that. We will not allow that, and we will simply fight for the people of Saskatchewan to make sure that that doesn't happen.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — They're only interested in that one reform, Mr. Speaker. They're not interested in other reforms that would go a long way, in fact would go further to restore the spirit of co-operation and trust and respect in this legislature.

The bell-ringing motion did not contribute to the situation we find ourselves in; that was an action that was just done for a period of two weeks. It's the other reforms that would have the effect of promoting the kind of spirit of co-operation that they say they want. They're not sincere about that proposal at all.

The public will see that this motion is only designed to ram through the SaskEnergy Bills. It won't work. The people of Saskatchewan are on our side — we're on the side of democracy — and this motion simply will not be accepted in the province.

This government is going to continue to hold public meetings. The senior officials from SaskEnergy are going to continue to go around the community. They're going to . . . The panel is going to continue its parade at over

\$1,100 per day just for the panelists. Who knows what the lawyer is going to get paid! We're going to spend multimillion dollars . . . millions of dollars on advertising to promote something that the people of the province have already indicated that they don't want. And it simply isn't going to work.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, if this government is sincere, if this Minister of Justice is sincere, we will consider this motion in relation to other motions that are needed for reform in this Assembly. Let's make that very clear. We will consider this motion, we will consider this motion in relation to other important reforms that have got to be considered.

If the government is willing to expand the mandate of this all-party committee, then we can be back meeting about this tomorrow. And our door is open; we have shown since Friday that we're ready to participate in an all-party committee. The ball is clearly in the court of the government, and they will be held accountable if they don't take up the challenge and the opportunity to meet with us in an all-party fashion in order to improve the working relationships in this House.

But we cannot accept this one isolated motion which is only designed to ram through this unpopular legislation. This motive is totally dishonest and we simply will not accept it.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to enter into debate on this motion. And I think probably one of the most cynical statements that could be made about the willingness of this government to participate in democratic debate in the Legislative Assembly is faking . . . even faking the opportunity to speak. You know, I guess it's indicative of what this is all about, what this is all about, that one of the members on the government side . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — The member from Assiniboia.

**Mr. Hagel:** — . . . the member from Assiniboia, the one with the greatest amount of legislative experience in this Assembly — maybe he's least tainted by goofiness, Mr. Speaker — places a lecturn on his desk to . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order, order. Order. I believe the hon. member will agree that somehow that's not actually on the motion.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, I am addressing the motion precisely. This motion is about rules in this House. The motion is about democratic function of this legislature, and that side is engaged in unadulterated goofiness, Mr. Speaker. They won't even enter debate on their own motion.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — They won't even enter debate about the function of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, and how typical — how typical!

Their motion, they come before this Legislative Assembly intending to ram through a motion that will somehow facilitate, they believe, their highly unpopular SaskPower legislation, and then they won't even stand to defend it. They won't even stand to defend it.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, somehow this is all so symbolic about what this debate is all about. Because you see, Mr. Speaker, the debate on this particular motion before us, the debate on this motion from the eyes through the minds, through the clouded minds of the government members opposite, is not about democracy.

When the Minister of Justice brought this motion forth to this Legislative Assembly, he was no more interested in promoting democratic rights of the people of Saskatchewan than he was in plucking teeth out of chickens. What he was interested in was doing only one thing — exercising his right to engage in political knee-jerk reactions that this government is becoming famous for, and bringing forth to this Assembly another exercise in smoke and mirrors to try and divert the attention of the people of Saskatchewan about their failed plans to engage in privatization at the disadvantage of the people of Saskatchewan. That's what it's about. That's what it's about; it's exactly what it's about.

Mr. Speaker, when I express that opinion about this motion before us today, I'm not alone. I see the member from Kelvington-Wadena. The member from Kelvington-Wadena is a great expert on legislative debate. We've seen his insightful entries into debate here today. And you've got a lot to say, sir; you had your opportunity. I sat here giving every member on that side the opportunity — full opportunity to enter into debate. You sat on your tongues and you refused to defend your government's intervention into the rules of the Assembly.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — Now we've got another legislative expert standing on his feet . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Mr. Speaker, the member that is speaking, engaged in the debate here in the House, is suggesting that this government had not allowed the democratic way in this House take place. This government is demonstrating that, Mr. Speaker, by allowing the member opposite to speak. And again, I say to you . . .

**The Speaker:** — Would you just state your point.

**Mr. Hopfner:** — And I'm just suggesting to you, Mr. Speaker, that while the member makes those accusations, they're not correct because we are giving him all the opportunity, the government is allowing the member all the opportunity in the world to debate this particular motion.

**The Speaker:** — The hon. member has raised an issue which is a dispute between members and not a point of

order.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, it wasn't even necessary to respond to that intervention by the member opposite. And I want to make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, when I stand in this Assembly to express my point of view, I do not stand in this Assembly as a privilege given to me by the Government of Saskatchewan; it is a privilege given to me by the people of Saskatchewan and by the rules of this Assembly, and that's what this debate is all about.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — What an expression of arrogance! What an expression of arrogance that somehow you give me the right to speak in this Assembly. That is totally erroneous, and you will have your opportunity, sir, you and the rest on that side. If you could ever get off your tongues, if you can quit sitting on your tongues, you will have the chance to enter into this debate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when I express this point of view, I want to put on public record the fact that this is not an opinion that is shared solely by myself and my colleague from Saskatoon Eastview, who gave what I considered to be a very reasoned and considered intervention in debate in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

(1615)

And I'd like to refer the members of the government, the members of the Chamber here today, Mr. Speaker, to an editorial. And let me quote from the editorial from the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* of May 11. What does this editorial have to say in reference to the initiative taken by the Minister of Justice to introduce this goofy motion before us today? And the editorial reads, and I quote:

Saskatchewan Tories may end up shooting themselves in the foot by trying to limit legislative bell-ringing to one hour. If the government changed (and there are many of the opinion that this is a prediction that's going to come true), they would likely be the first to bear the full punitive brunt of the new measure. Why would they want to rob themselves of a tactic which can obviously be used to the opposition's strategic advantage?

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite want to be giving some serious consideration to the rules of the Legislative Assembly, they should start paying a little more attention to the rules and their impact on the opposition, because they'll be looking at them from that point of view very shortly.

I conclude my quote, Mr. Speaker, by saying this, and I quote again from the editorial:

The move also makes the Tories look thirsty for revenge.

Let me repeat and underline that, Mr. Speaker:

The move also makes the Tories look thirsty for revenge.

And is there any clearer way of interpreting the actions of the government related to this motion than that, Mr. Speaker?

We have a government that is hurting, that is now coming forth with political, knee-jerk reaction; a government that thinks that the problem is that the opposition has delayed their plans. And in fact the reality is that the public thinks that the problem was that the government proposed this plan in the first place. That's the real problem. We're debating this motion, not because it interfered with the government's plans but because the government is hurting. And it's hurting over the public response more than anything else.

And when we consider these kinds of motions having to do with the conduct of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we have to put them into their context as to how they serve the democratic process, and most importantly, the people of Saskatchewan.

If there's anything that I know about rules of the game, Mr. Speaker, there's a very clear rule, and that's this: you don't change the rules in the middle of the game. Nobody would ever suggest that it's appropriate to change the rules in the middle of the game.

Let's take an analogy. Let's consider, let's consider, Mr. Speaker . . . we're into the ball season, and the Toronto Blue Jays were playing ball here in Saskatchewan last week. And let's just say . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Rosthern suggested the Premier got hit with a pitch in the head. I'm not sure if that's true or not. I'm not sure if that's true; the member from Rosthern can confirm that himself.

But how ridiculous it would be in the middle of that ball game, Mr. Speaker, if someone slid into second base, somebody slid into second base and there was a close call, and the Blue Jays came running out on the field and said that because the umpire had called their slider out — their runner going into second base out — came running out on the field and said, well you made the right call, but we don't like the rule. And all of the Blue Jays stood up and down and jumped up and down and wailed and gnashed their teeth and cried copious tears on the pitcher's mound and said, we're not going to continue this game until you change the rule. You called it right; you called it according to the rules, but we don't like the rule. Wouldn't that be absolutely ridiculous.

Wouldn't that be absolutely ridiculous . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Wascana, he wants to intervene in this debate too. Somehow he missed the calling when he had his chance to enter into debate. We'll be waiting for yours.

**An Hon. Member:** — Sit down. I'll stand up.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Yes, you had your chance, and you will get your chance. Yes, you speak well from your seat, and we'll see how you speak from your feet, whether it's as effective as it is from your seat.

You see, Mr. Speaker, that would be an absolutely . . . we think about that and we say that would be an absolutely

ridiculous thing to have happen, because it is, number one, inappropriate to change the rules of the game in the middle of the game. But, number two, you never change the rules in the heat of battle. Rules are made to be fair; they should be made to be fair. And when rules are changed, they should be changed in an aura of objectivity, considering the rights and the responsibilities of all parties who are affected by them.

Is there any professional sporting league in the world that changes, even changes its rules in the middle of a season, let alone in the middle of a game? No they don't. Obviously what they do is at the end of the season, they review their rules, and those who are affected by the rules will sit down and look at how the sport has developed and will consider what would make it more effective to accomplish our objectives.

And that's the exact parallel, Mr. Speaker, to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. In fact, it's the exact parallel to every Legislative Assembly and House of Commons in this nation. The rules for functioning by which the Chambers of elected members conduct themselves are never — are never changed in the heat of exchange and the emotion of political cut and thrust that we all engage in. They change when reasoned men and women have an opportunity to sit down and reflect and consider our collective responsibilities and try to decide what the rules will be to allow this Chamber to better serve the people of Saskatchewan. That's the way it should be done; that's the way it has been done; that's not the way this motion proposes dealing with this particular rule.

For that reason alone, although I have many other considerations that I want to bring to the attention of the Assembly, for that reason alone, Mr. Speaker, it would be inappropriate to carry this motion because it violates a simple principle of clear and objective thinking, leading to a determination of the rules by which all of us in this Chamber conduct ourselves in the interests of those people who are most important in this province — in the interest of serving, through the democratic process, the people of Saskatchewan.

It's really in that context that we have to review not just bell-ringing, bell-ringing and the use of bells to call members to come to this Assembly and exercise their most important right — to vote, to express through the democratic exercise of this Chamber what they believe, what each of us believes to be in the best interests of our constituents and all the people of Saskatchewan.

Bell-ringing has its purpose. I guess what's open for debate is whether the rule that exists in Saskatchewan today, whether it serves its purpose best the way it is or whether it serves its purpose best in some other form.

But surely, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Justice presents his proposal for a change of a specific rule, and then at the conclusion of his remarks offers to do the right thing, to consult — odd that he didn't do that before; it's an odd time. But maybe under the heat of the motion and maybe coming under pressure from the very influential member from Lloydminster, he was pressed into not being able to consult.

But he offered. He made an offer to consult the government and the opposition side of the Legislative Assembly. And that process was going on. It was going on; I put that on public record. Everyone in this Chamber knows it; the people of Saskatchewan might as well know it too.

And then today, just before the House is ready to deal with business, the government advises the House that any sense of orderly consultation and negotiation and attempt to come to consensus in a co-operative kind of manner is off, and we've got a Bill, we've got a motion before us, and here we are.

And it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that when we're engaging in this review of the conduct of this place, that it's most appropriate to do it looking at everything, not just focusing on a government's knee-jerk political reaction when it's hurting politically because of the response of the people of Saskatchewan.

And it seems to me that there are a lot of other items that need to be considered as we, all of us in this Assembly, review the conduct of this House. And, Mr. Speaker, there's probably no one in this Assembly who takes a greater amount of interest or concern than you, because ultimately you're charged with the responsibility of applying those rules in the interest of fair play and the exercise of the democratic rights of the members of this Chamber.

And I'd just like to put on record that I think there are a number of other areas that should, at the very least, be considered; should, at the very least, be discussed by all members when attending to the rules of the Assembly.

And we're prepared to talk about the application of the rules regarding ringing the bells and to call members for votes, but at the same time, why not consider looking at things like a timetable or a calendar related to the presentation of *Public Accounts* and annual reports, the tabling of *Public Accounts* and annual reports by the Government of Saskatchewan, tabled to be available to the people of Saskatchewan.

It doesn't strike me, Mr. Speaker, as being unreasonable that when the government has a responsibility to be accountable to the people, that part of being accountable means presenting the information in a time that makes sense in terms of being able to hold the government accountable. And we all know that *Public Accounts* and annual reports have been significantly delayed under the term of the government of the day.

So it seems to me to make sense to say, well let's take a look at that rule too and make it fair to everyone; most importantly, fair to the people. Why not consider a calendar or a schedule that's predetermined and by law requires the Government of Saskatchewan to provide the information available to the people of Saskatchewan to account for its conduct of its affairs and the spending of its money.

Mr. Speaker, many of us, and probably again no one more than yourself, have experienced the frustration of the

exchanges by members in this Assembly of the asking and answering of questions. And I know we go through that every day and at times it's extremely difficult to monitor it and apply it fairly. Perhaps it's time that we had clearer rules, not only for the submission of written questions, but submission of oral questions, and for the answering of those written and oral questions.

Clearer guide-lines regarding the specificity that's required with both questions and answers, so that the people of Saskatchewan are put in a better position to make their own informed decisions, and less emphasis on rhetoric on both sides — I admit, rhetoric on both sides which sometimes can get a little . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Lloydminster, I look forward, I look forward, sir, to your intervention.

There's probably no one who pays more attention to interruptions in debate in this Assembly than you, sir, and I look forward to hearing what you have to say to improve the function of the Legislative Assembly, and just how you feel that this and this alone is all that needs attending to to improve the functions of this Chamber in the interests of the people of Saskatchewan. That will be highly insightful. And I would suggest, sir, you may want to give notice so that the people across the province of Saskatchewan can turn on their TVs and tune in for this very entertaining presentation that I'm sure that you'll make.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there's room for improvement in both the asking and the answering of questions, oral and written form. And that should be considered as well, in order to help make this Assembly function in the better interests of an informed public of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, what about the budget? Surely we could consider the same — a calendar or a schedule for the presentation of the spending plan of the government of the day. Surely that should be considered as part of a rule that requires a government to function in the best interests of the people. And that's not inappropriate to be considering it as well.

Or how about the calling of sessions and the timing of calling of sessions? You know, in recent years it strikes me, when I look at the timing of calling of sessions, that all too frequently it seems that sessions are called to conflict with the interest or the attention of the people of Saskatchewan. And so it seems to have become a bit of a pattern that you call the Legislative Assembly to session when people are least likely to be paying attention. And perhaps that's something, just in the very parameters that require us to come together and conduct the people's business. Why can't we look at that?

(1630)

How about, Mr. Speaker, the provision of notice by the government of the day, a week in advance so that all the members of the Chamber and Assembly can come prepared to do the government's business.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I've been listening to the hon. member, and I'm afraid I must point out to him that he's discussing, from what I can gather, rules in general,

of the House. And I appreciate what he's saying.

However, the debate is actually about rule 33, and we have to be careful that we don't get into a general discussion, because we're completely off the topic, and what we'll have here is a general discussion of all the rules in *Beauchesne's* or whichever book you wish to use. And I really don't believe that's the purpose of this debate. So I'd just like to point that out to the hon. member.

**Mr. Hagel:** — I appreciate what you're saying, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I'm not being specific in the proposals that I'm making for the kinds of things that I believe need to be attended to, because that would be debate on other rules. And I respect what you're saying.

I simply repeat the point that when this motion is before us . . . and I understand it's only on one specific rule, and that's precisely my point. If we're dealing in this Chamber with rule change, it should not be only on this precise rule, but that there are a large number of other very valid considerations that all of us in this Chamber should be considering and bringing forth a series of proposals which in total will help this Chamber function more effectively, with the criteria being the way that we serve the people of Saskatchewan through the democratic process.

So I respect what you're saying, sir. And that's why I'm not suggesting a schedule, but simply saying that there are other items that would be appropriate for us to be considering and that this very motion, by focusing on one specific item only, is a violation of the tradition of review of rules and contradicts the history that I think we should be continuing. And I simply make that point.

The suggestion has been made, as I said, that notice of business that this House entertains each week, surely any government that has got its act together is able to provide information to all members on its side and the opposite side so as to be able to prepare. And that's something that could be considered to help us function here.

The suggestion is made by some that perhaps the possibility of an election of Speaker, similar to the House of Commons, is something that should be given some discussion, and either be accepted and acted on or rejected, and with some confidence that the process that we use here is good and valid and it is the best.

And so I simply toss these out, Mr. Speaker, to make that point, that I believe it is totally inappropriate as we entertain consideration of a rule before this House, that that's all that we're dealing with.

Well let me then turn specifically to the rule, specifically to the rule and deal with that, deal with the whole question of bell-ringing. I don't think that there is one of us in this House who is not of the opinion that bell-ringing is a very risky, legitimate, legitimate — yes the rules of the Assembly permit it — but is a very risky legislative exercise to use. And why do I say it is risky?

**An Hon. Member:** — What about 17 days?

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well the member from Weyburn says, what about 17 days. And I'm sure that the member from

Weyburn will intervene in this debate too, because he has had a great deal to say from his seat, and we will marvel at the wonders that will utter forth from his mouth as he speaks from his feet instead of his seat.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the member from Weyburn makes precisely my point. Normally, normally — maybe at any other time in the history of Saskatchewan perhaps; I don't want to overstate the case — the ringing of the bells for 17 days would have tolled a death knell for an opposition because we all come here charged with the responsibility of representing our constituents and the people of Saskatchewan. And surely any party, political party, that comes to this Chamber intentionally abusing the rules for their own self-serving interests would be recognized by the public of Saskatchewan as doing that and would be sent a message in the clearest way when the public have an opportunity to send a message, and that's an election.

And I guess I find myself feeling that there's really nothing wrong with the rule that we have here. I'm open to considering some change.

But the rule that exists today doesn't, in my mind, Mr. Speaker, have a great deal wrong with it, because, you see, the check and balance. If you want to look in terms of checks and balances, in terms of the ringing of the bells to summons the members for an extended . . . allowed to happen for a longer period of time, has got the ultimate check and balance. And the ultimate check and balance is the opinion of the people.

You see, if any political party on either side of the Assembly were to walk out of this Assembly and use the ringing of the bells as a signal of protest for what was going on, immediately two things happen: number one, the attention of the public of Saskatchewan is drawn to the event. Number one, that happens. And that's not . . . I find myself saying a rule of the Assembly or a legislative technique in the Assembly that draws public attention to an event doesn't automatically strike me as being a bad one to have.

Surely, in terms of the cut and thrust of political and legislative exchange of debate in this Assembly, that is part of all of our objective.

Now we know — and it's unfortunate that many of the members of the media aren't sitting in listening on this debate, as all too often is the case — we have freedom of the press and freedom of the media, and some of the members of the media are here, and I'm glad to see them here. And all too often we rely, I think, on the media as being the vehicle by which to communicate our political positions. I will have some comments to make later about exposing the debate of the Assembly more broadly, which I think would be good.

But the media don't have people who are assigned full time to sit in on legislative debates and report through weekly newspapers and daily newspapers in the province. So the ringing of the bells provides for a political party the opportunity to express in a very clear kind of way — largely because it's a technique that's used so very rarely — in a very clear kind of way that there is something happening in these chambers which we

believe to be extremely important. So number one, the ringing of the bells signals that to the public of Saskatchewan.

And then, number two, what comes into question is a criticism, a potential criticism that we are all subject to, potentially if not in fact, in this Legislative chambers, the criticism that I'm sure we've all heard. And we hear it particularly when knocking on doors to meet our constituents in an election — the expression of opinion by people, by our constituents, that we need to take legislative debate more seriously, to be less rhetorical, to be less politically biased in the conduct in the Assembly.

And as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, when the public sees politicians potentially playing political games, it's not a sentiment that takes a whole lot of time for the public to draw a conclusion to say, hey, you've gone over the border; you've gone out of bounds; you've gone too far.

And so it is the people of Saskatchewan who provide the built-in check and balance for the ringing of the bells. Because very clearly, if we signal to the people of Saskatchewan what's going on here as important, number one; and number two, if the people of Saskatchewan say, well that may be true in your opinion, but it's not in mine; you guys are out of touch with reality; quit playing stupid political games, and don't count on my support at the next election — which is precisely the risk that is taken by any party that chooses to use that vehicle or technique, extremely risky.

Because unfortunately the people of Saskatchewan don't tend to hold politicians at the top of their list in terms of trustworthiness and esteem — unfortunately. And so we have to recognize that reality, and that means that for all of us to choose to ring the bells becomes risky because the people of Saskatchewan can draw that conclusion.

And on the other side of the coin, Mr. Speaker — and that's why I think we have the rule here — is that if, number one, the ringing of the bells draws attention to the issue of the day, and when people reflect on the issue of the day; number two, say, you're not playing political games; you're not engaging in political one-upmanship; what you are doing is drawing attention to an issue about which we care deeply and about we care passionately, and we are with you — then you have, Mr. Speaker, the use of the rules of the Legislative Assembly to help to focus the public attention and the public debate on the issues of consideration before this Legislative Assembly.

Well you know, I see the member from Swift Current, I think it is. Is it? Who's whining . . . which was whining over there? Oh she says it was the member from Elbow that was whining. Cut Knife-Lloyd was whining. Well you know, Mr. Speaker, you know the members opposite keep helping to make my point. And here's another insightful intervention, I'm sure.

**Hon. Mr. Schmidt:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite has anything to say, he has ample opportunity to say it. However, the point of order is that the member opposite is not to refer to members on this side of the House, the member from Swift Current, who is quietly minding her own business, doing her work in the

Assembly to avoid the boredom that has carried on this afternoon. The member for Melville was sitting here reading a scholarly work by a member of the Department of Education and was not involved in this debate whatsoever.

The point of order is that the member is to stay on the topic of the order before the House and not refer to members on government side in any manner, and particularly in an inaccurate manner, which I will politely describe as inaccurate. The point of order is that the member should stick to the topic and not falsely refer to the activity of the members of the government side.

**The Speaker:** — Order. The point of order raised is an issue, a dispute once again, and from that point of view, I don't accept it as a point of order. However, having said that, I believe that when members — and we have heard this before in the House; it isn't the first time — but when hon. members are heckled from both sides of the House, sometimes the individual speaking refers to another member, unfortunately perhaps, sometimes inaccurately. And I suppose the long and short of it is that members on both sides of the House should refrain from interrupting the speaker.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to direct my comments if the whiner would please stand and be recognized . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. I should also like to bring to the hon. member's attention that provocative and inflammatory language is not necessary but only adds to the problem. So I'd just like him to get back on the topic of which he is capable.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be very happy to do that.

I just pause, Mr. Speaker, to try and understand the intervention of the member from Swift Current, but I await her entry into debate as well, as I'm sure all the government members, contrary to their long-standing tradition, will enter into debate on this Assembly.

(1645)

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, and I simply summarize in direct comment, Mr. Speaker, in direct comment to the specific of the Bill before us, that it seems to me that the biggest check and balance of all, in terms of the sensible application of the rule permitting the ringing of bells to call members to vote, is the response of the people of Saskatchewan.

And it's for that very reason that we have it before us here today, because in making the decision to use the ringing of the bells to bring attention to the privatization of SaskPower it became apparent, as time elapsed, that the people of Saskatchewan appreciated the actions of the opposition in bringing this issue to their attention and made it very clear what their opinion was.

And I understand it's uncomfortable for members of the government to have to go through the pain and the grief and the agony of encountering their constituents who are

telling them that they're out of touch with reality. But it seems to me that the response that would be most appropriate would be for those members to come back to their caucus meeting and tell their front-benchers that they are out of touch with reality. It's time to get off the privatization mania and get onto the agenda of the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — That would be the appropriate response. But instead we engage in legislative goofiness by having the motion before us to change the rule, and as an expression of legislative knee-jerk reaction. The people of Saskatchewan will ultimately decide in the end, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — They'll ultimately decide in the end whether it was an application of the rule of this House that they saw in their best interest or not.

And I find it kind of interesting — let me be kind and say interesting, Mr. Speaker — when I listened to words of the Minister of Justice when he introduced this motion and talked about the importance of defending the principles of democracy. And I'd like to respond to that portion of the minister's remarks for a moment, if I may, because it seems to me, in the two and a half years that I have had the privilege of being a member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, that there have been a number, not one or two, but a goodly number of examples of the denial of the democratic rights and processes as exhibited by the Government of Saskatchewan.

And if there is anyone, if there is anyone who is justified to be self-righteous about the applications of the principles of democracy, it's not this group of the elected members that have that right, Mr. Speaker.

And let's just take a quick look, let's just take a quick look at the democratic record of the Government of Saskatchewan which comes before us now all full of pomp and pretentiousness — defending the principles of democracy, they say.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected in October of 1986, the first session of the Legislative Assembly was called for December of that year for two weeks, and what did we deal with? What was the main item that this Assembly dealt with as the new legislative agenda of the new PC government of Saskatchewan?

And we will all recall debating Bill No. 5 — Bill No. 5 — that gave the legislative right for the Government of Saskatchewan to no longer be required to come before this Assembly when changing the mandates and the structures of its government departments. A Bill which said that the very creation or elimination or change of government departments no longer has to be defended in the people's chambers. It can be done behind closed cabinet doors without a single minister having to wiggle his big toe in the people's Legislative Chamber to defend the change in departmental structure and the operations of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Bill No. 5, in the first two weeks . . . and by the way, interestingly enough in a session called two weeks before Christmas when this government knew that the people of Saskatchewan were involved in other kinds of personal and family kinds of priorities and wouldn't be paying a whole lot of attention to the legislative chambers, and so they rammed through a Bill, rammed through a Bill which allows them to engage in government reorganization behind closed cabinet doors; contrary to the traditions of this House that had been in existence since 1905.

The great defenders of democracy, bringing forth a Bill that gives their ministers the authority to make sweeping changes in government departments without even having to utter a single word or respond to an inquiry within the people's chambers. Isn't that a lovely defence of the principles of democracy in the interests of the people of Saskatchewan?

Well isn't this kind of interesting, Mr. Speaker! In the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* that you tabled earlier in the Assembly today, what does the Provincial Auditor have to say about the great defence of democratic principle by the PC Government of Saskatchewan today? What does the auditor have to say?

On page 9, I quote, Mr. Speaker, he says . . . and this is the Provincial Auditor speaking. He says:

The Provincial Auditor can no longer effectively serve the Assembly because:

Interesting, Mr. Speaker. Let's put on the record that it was said by one of the members from government side that he's biased. Mr. Speaker, I continue to quote . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Mr. Speaker, on the point of order that I wish to bring forward to you and bring to your attention here is that members from the opposition there are running across the floor to the member that's speaking, with different types of information that is not related to the bell-ringing motion.

And I want to indicate to you, sir, that they're reading all sorts of implications and everything through from other members here. And I must ask you to ask the member, sir, in all due respect to this Assembly and your Chair, to get him back on track and speak directly to the motion.

**The Speaker:** — I've listened to the hon. member's point of order, and the initial portion of the hon. member's point of order wasn't what I would consider a point of order. However, I have been listening to the hon. member's remarks very closely, and since the last time I called him to order, he has been speaking to the topic.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the ruling and point out for the information of members opposite that I am responding to comments made by the Minister of Justice defending the government's commitment to the great principles of democracy.

And I make the point for you, sir, and for all members of this Chamber, that those principles have been violated substantially in the last two and a half years that I have been here. And I refer the chambers again, Mr. Speaker, to the *Report of the Provincial Auditor* for the year ended March 31, 1988, tabled in these chambers today. And the auditor says, and I quote, Mr. Speaker . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. What is the hon. member's point of order?

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Mr. Speaker, in relation to the auditor's report, that is of another day and another debate. What I am saying here, Mr. Speaker, is that when we're talking about the bell-ringing of this Assembly, we're talking about bringing the bell-ringing under a control. We're not talking about allowing this legislature to be held at ransom and in strike because of the NDP wanting to walk out of this legislature. That is the particular issue that's at hand here, not the auditor's report, Mr. Speaker.

There is no way that that can be anything relevant to . . . We're not saying we're abolishing the bell-ringing in this Assembly, but we're bringing some order to it, Mr. Speaker. And I think that as your ruling can be, is that the auditor's report has nothing to do with the bell-ringing issue.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I have listened to the hon. member's point of order. It was similar to the one he raised initially. And I had ruled on that, and my ruling hasn't changed.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — I want to rise on a point of order. It's a well-known fact of parliamentary procedure that when a member rises on a point of order, that member must go directly to what the rule is that was broken. He must allude to the rule directly so that the Speaker can decide whether in fact . . . (inaudible interjection) . . .

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, Mr. Speaker, a member must go directly to the point of order. The member for Cut Knife is interrupting the House with irrelevant points of order, and that is my point of order, that he constantly does that by not going directly to the rule that has been abridged in the House. And the member must do that at once when he rises.

**The Speaker:** — I have listened to the hon. member's point of order for Saskatoon Westmount and given it consideration, and my judgement is that the hon. member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster was raising a point of order dealing with relevancy of an issue being discussed by the hon. member. And in that context, his point of orders were in order.

**Mr. Hagel:** — Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor says in his report, tabled here today, in the area entitled current issues of importance, the Provincial Auditor says, and I quote, it's item 2.20:

The Provincial Auditor can no longer effectively serve the Assembly because:



Point one:

he now sees the financial transactions for about 50 per cent of the public spending (only half, Mr. Speaker);

Item number two:

when reliance on an appointed auditor is not justified, it is no longer possible to carry out the work not done by the appointed auditor; and

Point number three, and I underline this one, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor says, and I quote:

I am being denied access to information.

The Provincial Auditor, in his report tabled in these chambers today, has to say about these great defenders of democracy that he now sees financial transactions for only about half of the public spending. And again I quote:

I am being denied access to information.

Are these the defenders of democracy, Mr. Speaker? Are these the defenders of democracy? How facetious — how facetious! You know, they've got lots of debate from their seats; they speak well from their seats. But how facetious. None of them will stand to defend their Minister of Justice's own motion and to defend their record of protection of the principles of democracy, because quite simply, Mr. Speaker, their track record, when you look at their behaviours and not their words, their track record says that this group does not defend and does not believe in the principles of democracy for the people of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Hagel:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have several more comments that I would like to make on this motion, and I note that we are ... noted we are approaching the time of adjournment. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I will move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.