

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 31, 1989

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a number of guest artists from the Ukraine who are attending Mosiac'89, and appearing at the Poltava Ukrainian Pavilion. They are Alla Kudlai, Nina Rudehenko, Vitality Bilanozhko. They are stars of Ukrainian Television Radio from Kiev. Also with him is Victor Stelmah, editor of news from the Ukraine, Kiev. They are accompanied by Anna Lapchuk and others from the Poltava Ukrainian Pavilion. They are seated in your gallery. I would ask all members to join with me to wish them a very hardy, Vitaemo!

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kowalsky: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add a few words to my colleague from Regina Victoria.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kopelchuk: — Mr. Speaker, representing a constituency in rural Saskatchewan that is predominantly Ukrainian, it is my pleasure also, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, to welcome the dancers to our province.

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising to introduce some students, but before I do that, I'd like to join members who spoke before me in extending greetings to our guests from the Ukraine. I know that they're here to perform at the Mosaic, and I, as well as my colleagues and others, look forward to enjoying their talent during the Mosaic three-day event that is taking place in Regina. This is a regular event that takes place; we have guests who come from the Ukraine to entertain at the Poltava pavilion. And so I wanted to join other members in welcoming them and wishing them an enjoyable time while they are in Canada, and in Saskatchewan in particular.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I want to draw attention to the House, in the east gallery, some 28 grade 5 students from Judge Bryant School here in Regina, in the constituency of Regina North East. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Wilson.

I'm going to meet with them after question period for pictures and some refreshments and any questions they may ask — and I know that they are going to have many. I hope that they will have an enjoyable stay here and get something out of question period, as they witness one of the democratic processes that we have in our

parliamentary system of government. I ask members to join me in greeting these students to the legislature today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Saxinger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, two ladies sitting in your gallery, Leona Weixl, and her daughter Debbie. Leona had worked for me while I was in the implement business. She's a member of the Cudworth town council. She's also a board member of the Carlton Trail Regional College. And I would like to ask the members to welcome them in the manner to this House, and I hope they enjoy the visit.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you, and through you to the other members of the Assembly, 52 students from grades 5 and 6. They're seated up on the left hand side of the Speaker's gallery there, accompanied by their teachers, Mrs. Verna Taylor and Mr. Jim Emmons.

I'll be meeting with the students for pictures and refreshments at 2:30 in room 255, and I'd ask all members of the legislature to welcome these students here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in the west gallery, I have Orlin (Bill) Hanson and his wife. They are from the great state of North Dakota. Mr. Hanson, in fact, sits in the North Dakota House of Representatives.

Mr. Hanson and a large following in the state of North Dakota, as you are well aware, are great supporters of the Rafferty-Alameda project, and it's my pleasure to have them with us today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Problems with GigaText

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, the government agency which has a sizeable interest in the GigaText company.

Madam Minister, yesterday the Deputy Premier, in discussing what has become the latest of this government's scandal, told the House here that a considerable amount of research and feasibility studies had been done looking into the translation by GigaText of statutes, and that they had thoroughly investigated it.

Reported in *The (Montreal) Gazette*, Madam Minister, it indicates that in 1987 the federal government had done a study, evaluation of Dr. Young's project, and it described

it in these terms: snake oil, it called it — said he made outlandish claims and that when an independent test was run on the machine, it coughed, sputtered, and died.

I wonder, Madam Minister, whether you were privy to the federal government's investigation into the feasibility, and whether you would be able to table today the feasibility study that you did into this sputtering, coughing, and dying machine.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question, member. We as a government, the Crown Management Board had outside evaluation done of the company and of the technology, and we are confident that the technology is capable of doing what it purports to do.

With regard to the tabling of the documents, I will take notice of that question on behalf of the Deputy Premier who was involved through Crown Management Board on the acquisition of the portion of the company.

Mr. Koskie: — New question to the same minister, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, can you confirm that \$2.9 million out of the \$4 million that your government put into this project, frittered away on this project, went to purchase 20 outdated, over-valued, Lambda computers, which works out to about \$145,000 each; and can you confirm that the computers came from the firm called GigaMos Systems, which is owned by one Mr. Montpetit, your partner in GigaText?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I will neither confirm nor deny that. I will take notice of that question.

Mr. Koskie: — A new question to the same minister. Madam Minister, could you confirm that part of the \$4 million that your government invested into this project went to paying 35,000 a month for Mr. Montpetit to rent a private jet from GigaMos air services, owned 100 per cent by Guy Montpetit? And can you confirm, Madam Minister, that the company also paid Mr. Montpetit a travel allowance of 18,000 per month?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, as was indicated by the Deputy Premier very clearly yesterday that . . . and I'm aware of the article in *The (Montreal) Gazette* that the member is quoting from because some of us also have read it. But as was indicated by the Deputy Premier very clearly yesterday, that once we were apprised of a international court case against Mr. Montpetit, we referred the matter of our \$4 million to the RCMP here. And as I understand from the Attorney General, that investigation is ongoing.

Mr. Koskie: — New question to the same minister. Madam Minister, will you confirm that Mr. Montpetit's salary over and above all of the sizeable perks was 60,000 a year, and that GigaText paid 75,000 to a business associate of Mr. Montpetit for services rendered before

GigaText was even incorporated?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, again, because the initial involvement with GigaText was with Crown Management Board, of which I am not a member, I will on behalf of the Deputy Premier, who is a member of Crown Management Board, take notice.

Mr. Koskie: — New question to the same minister. Madam Minister, could you confirm that \$5,000 was paid by GigaText to board member Terry Leier, despite the fact that Mr. Leier, as an 80,000-plus a year solicitor for Crown Management Board, should have been working with the firm to guard the government's interests? Can you confirm whether a sum of \$5,000 was paid to Mr. Terry Leier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, now we're getting at the gist of the question, these innuendoes and allegations, the same that were made by the member of North Battleford yesterday. I will confirm, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Leier, as a board member of GigaText, was reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred as a member of that board and nothing else.

Mr. Koskie: — Madam Minister, as a supplement, Mr. Speaker, would you be prepared to table the receipts in respect to the expenditures of Mr. Leier, in respect to the \$5,000 he received.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, it is not uncommon for board members of public corporations or private corporations to be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred while on business for that particular company. And I say here, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Leier was reimbursed legitimately by GigaText for expenses incurred on behalf of the company.

Mr. Koskie: — A supplement to the same minister. Madam Minister, you say the payments were legitimate that were paid to Mr. Leier. Will you be prepared to table those documents to substantiate your statement, and have those same documents been turned over to the RCMP investigation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I believe, I believe that those things are probably part of the . . . over your investigation of the RCMP, because the RCMP is investigating the company. The RCMP would have access to all files, all things pertaining to do with the company.

Mr. Koskie: — A question to the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice whether he can advise this House whether in respect to the documents of investigation that are under way in respect to the RCMP, whether the expenditures made to Terry Leier, those documents supporting the expenditures have

been also submitted, and would you be prepared to table them if you're aware of them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member would not expect (a) that I would be privy to the files of the RCMP. The RCMP who are investigating the particular issue in question, and the government involved, or any persons involved with the government, certainly co-operated with any investigation by the RCMP. Now for you to ask me do I know what is in the RCMP files, no I do not, nor would I think anyone expect that I should. With regard to the question then, should I release anything in the RCMP files, I think, as the hon. member as a practising lawyer would know, that once the RCMP have a file, then it's clearly up to the RCMP. If they wish to make something public, they will. If they don't wish to make something public, they do not. And that's the long-standing tradition of the RCMP. And certainly it's not for me to ask the RCMP: what is in your file, and can I have what's in your file to make it public?

Mr. Koskie: — Mr. Minister, a new question to the Minister of Justice. As a member of the Executive Council, in the RCMP investigation, have you any knowledge as to a request by the RCMP in respect to any documentation of expenditures relating to Terry Leier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — I can advise the hon. member as follows. When this particular matter came to the attention of the government and came to the attention, through the media, of this particular trial last fall down in Montreal, the Department of Justice — the Department of Justice of our government — referred the issue to the RCMP. It was we that referred that to the RCMP.

We also made it clear that everyone was to co-operate with that investigation. Now what they have in their investigation we don't know, nor do you think anyone suggests that I should know what is going on.

Payment to Regina Law Firm

Mr. Koskie: — Final question to the Minister of Economic Development. Madam Minister, would you confirm that the company, GigaText, paid almost \$13,000 in legal fees and expenses to the law firm of Balfour Moss Milliken Laschuk & Kyle, of which Larry Kyle is a partner — the same Larry Kyle who is chairman of the board of SEDCO and who acts as legal counsel to the Crown investments corporation?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, again I think the question would be best directed to the chairman of Crown investments board.

Considerations to Dr. Paillet

Mr. Lautermilch: — Mr. Speaker, I too have a question to the minister of SEDCO. Madam Minister, would you confirm that GigaText has purchased a condominium for

one Jean-Pierre Paillet, who is, I believe, the company's current operations manager, and purchased this condominium at a cost of \$137,500.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — No, Mr. Speaker, I can't confirm that.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Another question to the same minister. Madam Minister, I have a new question to you. Could you confirm that the company also acquired a Mercedes vehicle, model 300CE, for Dr. Paillet for, I believe, \$8,573 a year? And can you tell us if these costs are included in the \$50,000 a month which this government is currently forking over to keep GigaText operating?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that SEDCO, through an appointed board, has taken over the daily operations of this company because we believe that the technology will be a valuable tool, will be an important part of our economic diversification here. I believe there are presently 26 people working in this company. We hope to have a workable model ready about mid to late June. And we have confidence that this technology is at the forefront of artificial intelligence, and it will be a boon to have it in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lautermilch: — Supplementary to the minister. Madam Minister, I'm asking again about the \$8,573 to rent the Mercedes for this gentleman. Can you tell us in this House today whether or not SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation) has authorized the expenditure of this 8,000-and-some dollars to rent this car?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I would assume that when this person came into the province, when the company was initially set up, that may have been part and parcel of his employment terms. I will endeavour to bring that information to the House.

Finances of GigaText

Mr. Lautermilch: — New question to the same minister. Madam Minister, while you're investigating that, could you as well confirm that on October 31, 1988, GigaText had a bank balance of zero, and that the full \$4 million advanced by your government had been spent, and the people of Saskatchewan had not one sentence, not one syllable translated into French to show for it.

Madam Minister, is it not also true that your government's actions have placed this province on what I would refer to as the bleeding edge of technology.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, here we have an opposition crying from their seats about something they know nothing about. They know nothing about . . . they

have no concept of what this technology is, Mr. Speaker. I would say that to translate our statutes from English to French requires around 5,000 keyed-in characters. I believe that the company is at the point of having over 3,800 characters keyed in.

What I would say, Mr. Speaker, is that I would offer to the member opposite, and to the member from Quill Lakes, to arrange for a tour of this company so they can demonstrate the type of thing that they are striving to do, and I would say with a degree of confidence, Mr. Speaker, that they will be able to do.

Mr. Lautermilch: — New question to the same minister. Madam Minister, we're not asking for the tour of this particular corporation, we're asking for some facts surrounding the dealings that your government has had with it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lautermilch: — Madam Minister, you've taken notice of every question that we've asked in this legislature today, but I have one more for you. I want to know: yesterday the Deputy Premier confirmed that Mr. Montpetit had the sole signing authority for the company, that he was the only person in a position to check the disbursements which were going out almost exclusively to himself from this corporation. Madam Minister, given that fact, the people of Saskatchewan had \$4 million invested in this company and Mr. Montpetit had zero, why would you grant him such sweeping signing powers?

Why would you give him these blank cheques from the people of Saskatchewan? And why didn't you have some kind of a system in place to ensure that the taxpayers' money was being spent properly? Why didn't you do that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that the taxpayers' investment, Mr. Speaker, is secured through shares in Nohrlus. I would again make the offer to the two members — I could do it tomorrow afternoon probably — take them over so they can see what it is this company is striving to do.

They would have the people of Saskatchewan believe that we bought one whole big block of technology and you plug it in and it works. It works, Mr. Speaker, but the things have to be programmed. Things have to be entered before it can work. And as I said, the 5,000 characters that are required, I think it's about 3,800 that are presently keyed in.

So I would again make the offer. If they want to see what this company does, I'd be more than happy to arrange for a visit.

Meeting in Montreal re GigaText

Mr. Anguish: — New question to the same minister. Madam Minister, we don't want a tour of the plant; we can go and do that ourselves. What we want are answers in this legislature; rather than the tour tomorrow

afternoon we suggest you bring back answers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — And if you are suggesting that these are our allegations, I suggest you read the transcripts from the examination for discovery of the court case that's currently going on in the city of Montreal.

Now the waste of the \$4 million has been shameful enough. Now all I can say is that we're lucky it wasn't more. And you know very well, and I know very well, and I want you to confirm this, that some time early in the fall of 1988, September or October, the Deputy Premier met with Mr. Montpetit for a three-day meeting in his Montreal suburb office, with Mr. Leier in attendance. There was also a Toronto-based consultant, Dr. Fabian, a Montreal associate of Mr. Montpetit named Dr. Hare, and a U.S.-based computer scientist associated with Montpetit by the name of Dr. Voschenkov.

Now can you confirm this meeting for us here this afternoon, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't doubt that a meeting between Mr. Montpetit and the Deputy Premier probably did take place. Whether or not it was late October or where it was I wouldn't have that knowledge.

Mr. Anguish: — Well since you're fielding the questions, or the Premier might want to answer if you can't answer any of them, new question: would you confirm that the purpose of this meeting was to negotiate a further . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I don't believe that it's a new question. I believe it's seeking further information about the meeting in question, and I'd like you to phrase your question in those terms.

Mr. Anguish: — I'll phrase the question like this, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, could you confirm that the purpose of the meeting was to negotiate a further Government of Saskatchewan investment of an additional \$125 million with Montpetit, on what Mr. Montpetit refers to in court documents as the GigaMos project, a semiconductor manufacturing venture, and that the Deputy Premier was on the verge of signing this deal until the lawsuit blew up in Mr. Montpetit's face? Can you confirm that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — The additional 125 million is news to me, Mr. Speaker. But I could assure the member opposite that no individual cabinet minister can commit a government to that amount of money without cabinet approval or treasury board approval, or approval somewhere. So I think he's just on a fishing expedition.

Mr. Anguish: — New question, Mr. Speaker. You may be able to smile about that now, but wait until some of the other questions are being asked before you laugh too hard on that topic, Madam Minister.

Madam Minister, Mr. Montpetit has testified in Montreal

that your government commissioned a feasibility study of the project, and that study was carried out by a Dr. Fabian of Toronto, who was at the meeting in Montreal. Can you tell us how much that study cost, and will you have that study tabled in this legislature so we can see the expert advice you were going on?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mrs. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, SEDCO did not get involved in this company till late November, early December of 1988. The proper place to ask that question is to the minister responsible for Crown Management Board. On his behalf I will take notice, and the minister will respond.

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, documents tabled at the court-house in Montreal clearly show that on October 31 of 1988 GigaText had not a red cent left in the bank. In less than six months it had run through the taxpayers' 4 million and had failed to produce one translated document. Yet at the same time, the Deputy Premier was in a suburb in Montreal meeting with Mr. Montpetit, and according to Mr. Montpetit's sworn testimony, on the verge of committing another 125 million of taxpayers' moneys to Mr. Montpetit's operations.

Mr. Premier, did the Deputy Premier have your authorization and permission, and the authorization of cabinet, to commit a further 125 million to Mr. Montpetit's operations?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Devine: — Well, Mr. Speaker, two points in response to the hon. member. One, certainly the government was and is looking for the best technology we can find to translate from English into French because of the obligations of the Supreme Court and the Bill that we passed here and, I believe, certainly supported by the opposition. In fact I believe it's fair to say that they would perhaps even like us to translate more, and virtually everything, and that was their response. So we are, Mr. Speaker, looking for the best technology and the most efficient technology to do that.

As the hon. member has said, when you're designing this technology and putting it together, we knew that it'll take some time, I mean a matter of months, so that in fact you can program it and put it together in the computer so in fact you can have very rapid translation, and accurate — I mean that's the intent — and, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that if at all possible, we can take advantage of translating other things, like other languages, because internationally we get the request for that kind of thing as well. So in fact it is an opportunity for diversification.

So if the member is asking me, have we looked at technology to find the best translation equipment possible? Absolutely. Does it take some time to translate it? Does it take some time to program the computers? Absolutely. And have we had consultations with people that have been scientists to do this? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Mr. Speaker, I move first reading of a Bill respecting the protection of spousal rights in Homesteads.

The Speaker: — The minister is moving first reading of a Bill; however, we'll need leave from the Assembly to go back to them.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 42 — An Act respecting the protection of spousal rights in Homesteads

Hon. Mr. Andrew: — Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to go back to introduction of Bills. I would like to move first reading of a Bill respecting the protection of spousal rights in Homesteads.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

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. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, I want to say from the outset that it does not give me very much pleasure to be addressing this government motion today simply because, Mr. Speaker, simply because, Mr. Speaker, this is not the most pressing and urgent problem facing the people of Saskatchewan. We should not be . . . we should not be addressing this issue today.

If the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Finance, who is chirping from his seat again, would take into consideration the most pressing problems of the people of Saskatchewan today, he would be addressing problems facing agriculture, he would be addressing problems facing our deficit, he would be addressing problems that are facing our young people because they're unemployed and have no jobs in this province. That's what he would be doing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear to the people of Saskatchewan, I want to make it very clear to the people of Saskatchewan where the opposition stands on pressing issues. Yesterday . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could ask the Minister of Finance to please quit hollering from his

desk while I am speaking.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear where the opposition stands on the pressing issues confronting this legislature. Yesterday our acting opposition House Leader, the member from Regina Centre, wrote a letter to the deputy House Leader on the other side, and I want to read parts of that letter so that the people of Saskatchewan know exactly what we feel are the pressing needs of this legislature other than the bell-ringing that the government members are bringing forth. And this is what we have said to the government opposite:

I am writing in response to your letter of today (that means yesterday) addressed to Mr. Lingenfelter, the opposition House Leader, regarding the expediting of government business in the Assembly.

We said further:

I would reiterate the opposition's willingness to facilitate the consideration of government business before the Assembly, including budgetary estimates and government Bills.

As you know, the government may call any of those items on the order paper at any time of its choosing, and it has only been your refusal to call them that has delayed their consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the province of Saskatchewan should know that it's not the opposition that calls the agenda for the day in the legislature, it is the government. And we have asked the government time and time again to address those problems that are facing Saskatchewan. Problems in agriculture — we have farmers who didn't have sufficient money to put in their crop. Did they address those problems? No they didn't. We have young people by the thousands leaving this province because they can't find employment. Did the government address those problems? No they did not. We have people, Mr. Speaker, who can't get into our hospitals because of the long waiting list. Did the government address those problems? No it did not.

But what does it prefer to do? Day in and day out, hour after hour, it presents to this legislature the motion of the ringing of bells. They think it is a very pressing and urgent problem for the people of Saskatchewan, that we must stop the ringing of bells. The people have very clearly indicated, Mr. Speaker, that that is not an urgent and pressing problem.

So when we wrote to the government yesterday, we ended our letter by saying this: the agenda of the Legislative Assembly is determined by the government, which may call any item of government business at any time, on any day other than Tuesday, private members' day.

I believe that the people of Saskatchewan would be much better served if your government would proceed with substantive items of government business instead of concentrating solely on your unilateral proposal for an arbitrary change of the rules. Mr. Speaker, that is our

position.

We urge the government opposite to turn to government business, substantive government business to address very urgent and pressing problems of Saskatchewan. Let us put aside the motion that is before us on bell-ringing. Let us turn it to a legislative committee as we have always done in this province. Let us then turn to government business and let the committee come to a consensus and bring forward a proposal to the legislature which we can all then agree to. That is not an unreasonable request.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me say the Minister of Finance again is chirping from his desk. He says 1995. If that was their thinking, why did the Minister of Justice originally put out the olive branch? Why did he suggest that it be turned over to a legislative committee? Is it because the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Finance don't know what they're doing opposite? Don't they ever talk to each other?

But we can see now who was opposed to it. It's probably the Minister of Finance. When he came back, he said to the guys, look, I'm not going to stand for this. You withdraw that olive branch. And that's what happened. Is it the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, opposite, who refuses to continue with and address substantial government business that we should be addressing today? I believe, yes, it is the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, why? One must ask the question: why, day in and day out, is the government bringing before this House this motion of changing the ringing of bells? And one can only surmise that it must be related to some other motives that this government has.

And I think one has to only turn to the papers, and I will do that a little bit later. But I think one must conclude that the government wants this ringing of bells stopped so that then they can address the SaskPower legislation. They will bring in the SaskPower legislation and try to ram that through this House. And I say to the members opposite, you're going to be here a long, long time — a long, long time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — You are not getting, and I want to tell you people today, you are not getting this change to the ringing of bells, not for the foreseeable future unless you turn it over to a committee of the legislature like we've always done in this legislature — you are not going to unilaterally propose changes to this legislature without our consensus and without consulting the legal opposition in this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — That is unprecedented. I want to say to the Minister of Finance, you can take all those trips you want. If you go away for another two weeks or you go away for another month or you go away for another two months, and if your government insists on bringing this motion back before this House, that will be the first thing that will greet you when you walk into this House. We will not let this go through.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1445)

Mr. Rolfes: — It's going to be a long, long summer. I'll say to the people of Saskatchewan, we will do whatever we can in this legislature to save SaskPower. We will save SaskPower whatever it takes, Mr. Speaker. The people opposite did not have a mandate. They did not have a mandate to privatize SaskPower. The Premier of this province gave his word — not once, but many times to the people of Saskatchewan that he would not privatize SaskPower, he would not privatize the utility.

And what has he done? — he's done exactly the opposite. He has lost his mandate. Not only that, but a year ago in this House the member from Regina Rosemont asked the Deputy Premier a very specific question: are you dividing SaskPower because you want to privatize SaskEnergy? He said, and I'm not using the exact words because I can't remember them, but he made it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that his answer was no. No, it is not our intention to privatize SaskEnergy.

An Hon. Member: — He didn't tell the truth.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, I agree with you he did not tell the truth. He was not completely honest with the people of Saskatchewan. That was their intention. That's why they divided SaskPower.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the members opposite, we know what your motives are. The people of Saskatchewan know what your motives are. They have spoken. They have spoken very clearly. They have spoken very clearly, and they're speaking again at your meetings.

An Hon. Member: — Talk about the meetings last night, Herman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Well the meetings last night in Regina — I believe there were four in Regina. One they cancelled because I think there was either one or two people there, so they cancelled that one. And another one I'm told there was 17 people there. And if you watch the other two, Mr. Speaker, if you watch the other two, the people were very clear in their determination to do whatever they could to stop the government from privatizing SaskPower.

The people made it very clear; the people made it very clear where they stand. The poll conducted by Angus Reid when we were ringing the bells clearly indicated that approximately 67 per cent do not support the government in privatizing SaskPower. They do not support them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, what else, what else could an opposition do? We would not be carrying out our responsibilities if we did not use every means possible to stop the government and carry out the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan. That is our job — that is our job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Oh, I see the member from Regina South again chirping from his desk. Mr. Speaker, I wish that for once he would get up and tell the people of Saskatchewan where he stands on their mandate, where he stands on opposing the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan. Where does the member stand? Where does he stand on these issues?

Mr. Speaker, the government opposite is so riddled . . . the members opposite are so riddled with scandals as we have seen yesterday and today and last week, and I know again next week, that they simply cannot address the urgent problems of the people of Saskatchewan. Not only that, not only that, but they are so blinded on their privatization of everything in Saskatchewan, everything that is good — we've seen it from health care, when they privatized the dental plan, privatized prescription drugs.

We have now, Mr. Speaker, last night as I addressed the Assembly, a study being done by the Minister of Health as to how we can privatize other things in the Department of Health. And, Mr. Speaker, we have so many urgent problems in this province.

Today in my office I received a copy of SADAC (Saskatchewan Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission) research report. Very, very serious problems of our young people. In fact, Mr. Speaker, on page 4 of the report we have the worst record of all the provinces in Canada when it comes to abuses of alcohol and drugs and assaults of our young people. Are we addressing those problems? Is the Minister of Health coming forward with any solutions to those problems to help our young people? Not one — not one.

But what does he want? He's going to force this legislature to change the rules on ringing of bells so that he can then proceed with their ulterior motive of privatizing SaskEnergy. That's what they want.

Oh, sure, there'll be some people who will profit by their privatization. Ah, we found out today that one Terry Leier does fairly well. Oh, there are a number of others in this province, friends of the people opposite, who will profit by that privatization. But the ordinary folk of Saskatchewan will be the ones that are going to suffer, and we're not going to let it happen. We're simply not going to let that happen.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, don't take my word for the motives of the people opposite. Let us turn . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . oh, the member for Regina South, I knew he wouldn't take my word for it.

But let us go to the *Star-Phoenix*. Let us go to the *Star-Phoenix*, and on May 11 the *Star-Phoenix* has an editorial which says, "Motive questionable" — motive questionable.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to read the whole editorial, although it's damning of the government opposite, but I'll read some of it. It says:

The government claimed the NDP would have refused any change.

And they're referring of course to the bell-ringing, that the NDP would have refused any change.

But (it says) both sides may well have come to a compromise, if change indeed is necessary.

There does not appear to be any pressing need for a rule change.

I want the member from Shellbrook to note that. There does not appear to be any pressing need for a rule change.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — So why? So why, Mr. Speaker, are they putting it before the House, day in and day out, when we have such pressing problems that must be addressed by the government opposite? Have they lost their desire to govern? Have they lost their mandate? Have they lost their objectivity to govern in Saskatchewan? I say yes, they have. I say yes, they have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, the Angus Reid poll could have been no clearer than in what it reported. I think less than 30 per cent of the people now in Saskatchewan support the members opposite. I think if a poll were taken today, it would be even less than that. When we see all the scandals that have been brought forward in this House; when we see how they feather the nests of their friends, how they fill the pockets of their friends, and how they profit, yes, I think the people of Saskatchewan are saying, we've had enough, we've simply had enough.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on with the editorial. It says:

Saskatchewan is no worse off because the bells jangled for a record 17 days over the SaskEnergy issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: — Better off.

Mr. Rolfes: — My colleague says in fact they're better off, and the *Star-Phoenix* editorial agrees with you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — What does the *Star-Phoenix* editorial say? The *Star-Phoenix* editorial said:

In fact, the public is probably better informed. People were spurred to take up the argument — the discussion took place everywhere, around kitchen tables and in taxicabs.

The stand-off also got political action — the government will delay legislative debate while a panel it appointed travels the province.

But there's one thing the *Star-Phoenix* did not fully appreciate, and that is that it's simply a delay. If you listen to the ministers opposite, it's just that. We're going to wait until October, and then we're going to ram it through the House anyway. So that's why they want this motion. That's why they want this motion, and you will not get it. You will not get it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, members opposite have told me that, well, you guys abused the system; you let the bells ring too loud and too long. What does the *Star-Phoenix* people say about that? They say:

The Opposition was able to accurately measure acceptance of the bell-ringing tactic, returning to the legislature when people felt the point had been made.

The *Star-Phoenix* agrees with us that when the people were informed, when they were educated, when they were educated about the problem, the NDP, the opposition returned to the legislature. We returned. That is the democratic procedure. We did nothing illegal. What we did was we used our roles to inform the people and the people said, yes, you are doing the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, let me finish the editorial.

In this case, a legislative rule allowed the public to become more directly involved in democracy. The government needs to make a much stronger case for changing this rule.

Mr. Speaker, here was a rule, here was a rule that was not a detriment to democracy, but it furthered the process of democracy. It gave the people an opportunity to become involved and to tell the government, no, we don't want what you are putting forth, and asking the government, in fact pleading with the government . . . I know they are receiving letters; I know they are receiving phone calls where people are asking them to withdraw the legislation, to not break their mandate and not to proceed with SaskEnergy. But are they listening? No, they're not listening any more.

That's why I say they've lost their right to rule. You've lost your right to rule because you're not listening to the people, and you are doing exactly the opposite of what you promised the people when you went to the people in the election.

And the Minister of Finance, he agrees. He says the government did err, and I have here, "Lane admits government erred." And he says the government made a mistake for not consulting with the public before it moved on privatization of SaskEnergy, which is SaskPower.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance agrees that they made a mistake. But will they now, will they now say, all right, we've learned our lesson, we've listened to the people. No, what they're attempting to do is to change the rules in this House so they can ram that legislation through at their convenience. And I say that this is not going to happen. We will simply not permit that to

happen.

An Hon. Member: — We can't.

Mr. Rolfes: — As my colleague says, we can't, and you're right. We have an obligation to protect the public out there.

And as I said, polls shows that 67 per cent, 67 per cent of the people reject the sell-off — 67 per cent of the people. And I would venture to guess if you took that poll today, Mr. Speaker, that that would be well over 75 or 80 per cent. Well over 75 or 80 per cent of the people would be with the opposition in protecting Saskatchewan from those people opposite who are trying to sell off everything to their few friends. That, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I have said, therefore, that the motive of the government opposite . . . some have said it was revenge. And at first when he brought it in, when the Minister of Justice brought it in, I thought it was petty revenge. He was going to show the opposition: oh, you did it to us, legally yes; you used the rules, but I didn't like it, so I'm going to show you people who the boss is. I thought that that . . . well, he was revengeful.

Well, towards the end of his speech he held out the olive branch, and I said to myself: no, all right, he is willing to compromise, willing to send it off to a committee, and let's look at some changes. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we need to make some changes to this House. The rules ought to be changed from time to time.

But I'd like to see a number of changes, not just bell-ringing. While we're looking at bell-ringing, let's look at some other things. Let's look at the responsibility of the government in tabling public accounts on time so that the Public Accounts Committee can scrutinize accounts that are timely and complete and accurate.

An Hon. Member: — The public would support that.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, the public would certainly support that. Let's also have some other changes. I would support that the budget for the Provincial Auditor be set by the Legislative Assembly, by a committee, Board of Internal Economy, because then the Provincial Auditor would have sufficient staff and sufficient finances to do his job so that his report could be in on time. Let's not blame it on to the Provincial Auditor.

An Hon. Member: — A longer question period, Herman.

Mr. Rolfes: — Yes, there's another thing. I would like to have a longer question period. And, Mr. Speaker, there are lots other things. I, as you well know — and I've talked to you privately about this — I think your position would be enhanced. Your position would be enhanced, and that of the Deputy Speaker would be enhanced if you were elected by all the members of the legislature. I think your position would be much more effective if you were an elected person of all the members of this legislature. So let's have a look at that.

Oh there are a number of other things, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to see changed, I think, to make this Assembly

a more effective place in which we can work, to enhance not only the position of the members opposite but also for the position of the members on this side of the House.

(1500)

Executive branch doesn't need any more power; the executive branch doesn't need enhancement. But certainly since my coming back to this House in '86, I have seen more and more power taken by the Executive Council, and less and less control and power by the members of this Assembly. I would like to have a look at that rule and see how we can enhance the role of all the members.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Justice held out that olive branch, that it should go to the committee, I supported that and I thought, well here's an opportunity to . . .

An Hon. Member: — And your leader supported it.

Mr. Rolfes: — And my leader certainly supported it when he spoke. Well, so I couldn't really oppose it could I? — that's only in jest.

Mr. Speaker, really I think we need to make some changes. But why, why is this government so set on ramming this one little thing through, the changing of the bells? And it can only be because they intend to bring back the SaskEnergy legislation and then ram it through this House against the wishes of the people.

That will not happen, Mr. Speaker, that will not happen. And I'll tell the members opposite, this Legislative Assembly cannot work unless we establish trust between this side of the House and that side of the House. You are not going to do that by ramming through this kind of a rule change. You are not going to get this through, and you're going to be sitting here a long, long, long time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice indicated also very clearly that he . . .

An Hon. Member: — Good speech, Herman. Keep going.

Mr. Rolfes: — Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, he gives me further fuel to continue. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice . . .

An Hon. Member: — Filibuster, eh?

Mr. Rolfes: — The member for Regina South said that I'm filibustering. I agree with him — I am!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — I am, because, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have asked us to do whatever we can to stop the privatization of SaskEnergy. And the members opposite simply want this motion through so they can ram through the SaskEnergy Bills. And we say no, no, no.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — We agree with the people of Saskatchewan. We agree with the people of Saskatchewan that that would be a negative motion and a negative effect on the people of Saskatchewan. And we certainly feel that that is the wrong way to go. The opposition feels that; about 70 per cent of the people feel that, and I think we would not be carrying out, as I said before, our duties, our responsibilities, if we didn't do whatever we could to stop that from happening.

And I have given the members opposite the assurance that we will stop at nothing legally that we can in this House to prevent that from happening. And I will give you my word and the word of all the colleagues on this side of the House that that is exactly what is going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer also to several other articles. The Minister of Justice did indicate that this was an unprecedented move, that nowhere in the history of Saskatchewan had this taken place in this legislature where a government unilaterally brought in a motion to change the rules of this House. It has always been the custom of this House that when there have been rule changes, that we sent it off to a committee. The committee came to a consensus, brought it before the legislature. It was then discussed in the legislature, and it was passed.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is the way it has been, and that's the way it should be. And the government has no right, simply doesn't have a right to try and bring this through unilaterally or bring this about unilaterally. And as I indicated before, it's going to get a rough ride.

Mr. Speaker, Ron Petrie of the *Leader-Post* quotes the Minister of Justice in saying this — and the Minister of Justice was referring to the atmosphere in this House, the lack of trust in this House — and I just want to read what the Minister of Justice said. It said:

But Andrew wisely steered clear.

(He said) "In my 11 years in the chamber I have not witnessed an environment where the distrust, where the rowdiness, where the personal bitterness and the inability of people . . . to strike gentlemen's agreements have been at such a low ebb," he told the legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just elaborate on that. I think the Minister of Justice is right in saying that. I could not believe when I came back in 1986 of the distrust and the bitterness that existed in this Chamber.

But I want to say to the Minister of Justice, what you are doing with this legislation, with this motion, you are only furthering that distrust. When you bring before this House a motion to unilaterally change the rules of this House, which as I said is unprecedented — we've always done it through committee — and then you say at the end of your talk, however I will reconsider and I will refer it to the legislative committee, then withdraw that suggestion, what can you expect? How do you expect it to improve the environment if you go back on your word because

your caucus would not support you? The caucus wouldn't support the Minister of Justice in forwarding this to a legislative committee.

Mr. Speaker, this legislature simply cannot function and will not function if that is the way the members opposite, the government, are going to conduct the business of this House. Because you can't trust them. You can't trust what they say.

We had two of our members sit down with the Minister of Justice to work out some of the other rule changes, and there were a number that they thought, well, we could change. And the Minister of Justice brought others forward, like lengthening question period, and other things. And as I indicated earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are some other changes that we should make.

And when it was brought before our caucus, we accepted it. We thought it was not a bad idea, and we were going to send our members back to the Minister of Justice to do further negotiations. Ten minutes later, a note came in saying that everything was off, and that very same afternoon we were back on this motion. The government had decided that it was going to unilaterally push through, unilaterally push through this motion in order, Mr. Speaker, so that it can carry out its secret mandate — well, no longer secret; some of it may be, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We know that they want to privatize SaskEnergy. They also want to privatize Sask potash. But we don't know how many other Crown corporations they have on the list that they want to push through before the next provincial election. And the reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why I think they want to privatize as many as they can is that because deep down in their hearts they know that they won't be back on that side. So they're going to carry out as much of their privatization of their free enterprise ideology as they can before the next election, satisfy their friends, their big business, and push it through before that next election.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, an opposition has an obligation to carry out the wishes of the people, and so does the government have. But if the government doesn't listen to the people . . . and the people spoke very clearly three weeks ago in the Angus Reid poll, and they spoke very clearly through the 90,000 petitions that we tabled in this House, and there's still more to come. They spoke very clearly.

They're speaking very clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the meetings that are being held by SaskEnergy, that they do not want the government to proceed on the trend that they are on. And they're saying to the government, withdraw those motions; withdraw that legislation; please confront and address the problems that are facing the people of Saskatchewan: problems in agriculture, as I indicated before; problems of our young people in the abuse of drugs and alcohol; problems of our young people out-migrating to other provinces because there are no jobs in this province. Those are issues that we should be talking about today.

Why aren't we addressing the estimates of the budget?

Those are things we should be talking about in those estimates. But what are we doing instead? The government brings forth its agenda day in and day out on changing bell-ringing. That's not urgent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not urgent at all.

And it shows what can happen to a government that won't listen; a government that becomes arrogant; a government that puts on the blinkers and simply moves ahead blindly with an ideology that is simply unacceptable to the people of this province. They have no mandate to do what they're doing.

They made a promise to the people of Saskatchewan. They made that promise through their leader and through the deputy leader that they would not privatize the utilities. And when you go back on your word, when you do opposite to what you promised, you've lost your mandate to rule. You've lost your mandate to rule. And the people have spoken very clearly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, there are incidents in Canadian parliamentary governments where bell-ringing has taken place before. Certainly Saskatchewan was not the first one. We saw it happen in 1982 in the House of Commons when the Progressive Conservative Party did not like an omnibus Bill put forward by the Liberal government at that time. And by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I agreed with the Tories on that. It was an omnibus Bill; parts of it were good, others were not very good at all.

And the Tory members sitting in opposition disapproved of what the government was doing and let the bells ring for a number of days — a number of days. And if I remember correctly, I think the Liberal government finally backed down and broke the Bill into two or three different sections.

And it worked. The Tories at that time in the House of Commons thought that they were right, and I think they were right. I don't think that we were right; I know we were right because the people spoke.

About 70 per cent of the people are agreeing with us, saying no to the government opposite, and said yes to the bell-ringing, and said yes to the petitions, and saying to the government, please get off of that bell-ringing motion, please get off of privatization and deal with the pressing and urgent problems facing the people of Saskatchewan. But will they listen? No they won't. Day in and day out, coming back with the same motion over and over. And in the meantime the problems are not being addressed. The problems simply are not being addressed.

But, Mr. Speaker, what did the Speaker of the day say in the House of Commons on bell-ringing. The Hon. Jeanne Sauve, she expressed an opinion regarding the use of bell-ringing by the Conservatives in the House of Commons in 1982, and this is what she says, and I quote:

I may point out that obstructive tactics are allowed by the rules.

Exactly the same thing that we did here ... (inaudible interjection) ... Yes, it's obstructive. It's obstructive. Oh, the minister of rural affairs says, come on Herman. Well, Mr. Speaker, what would we do? What could we do? The minister of rural affairs wouldn't listen to his people; he wouldn't listen. I suppose he didn't even speak up in cabinet; no, he didn't even speak up in cabinet. He wasn't listening to his people, because we got thousands of people signing petitions out of his constituency. But did he listen to those? No, he didn't. No, they didn't listen.

She says ... she goes on to say:

However, their use must be regulated so as to safeguard the government's right to have the House consider its order of business, and the equally important right of the opposition to criticize, oppose, and even obstruct a government measure.

(1515)

That was March 18, 1982 by Jeanne Sauve. She said it must give the opposition the right to criticize and obstruct government business if we feel within our obligation that they are not abiding by the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan.

And it was very clear, and is very clear, that the people do not want the privatization of SaskEnergy, they do not want the privatization of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), which probably will be coming later on, but they've certainly spoken on SaskEnergy.

Why don't the members opposite listen? Why don't they carry out the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan, withdraw this motion — withdraw this motion and get on to substantive government business? Get on to substantive government business.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rolfes: — Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think it is too late for the Minister of Justice to bring back in that olive branch, to say to this House: all right, I've tried, but I couldn't get it through.

An Hon. Member: — There's nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Rolfes: — No, he's simply saying that: all right, I offered it and my caucus wouldn't let me do it. They asked me to withdraw the olive branch, and we have now reconsidered and we will bring the olive branch back in. We will turn it over to a committee, and let's get on to government business. Let's then address the estimates. Let's address some of the substantive problems that are facing the people of Saskatchewan and we'll fully co-operate with the members opposite; we'll fully co-operate in that committee, but not just on bell-ringing.

As I indicated before, this House needs some updating of its rules. It can't function the way they are right now. And as we have seen, it doesn't function. It doesn't function. And I don't think it is only personalities. I think some of the rules simply are outdated. We need to update them and we need to get on with the business of running this

government and running the legislature.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that can be done. But I want to say to the members opposite that if this motion is not withdrawn and is not submitted to a committee, as has been done in the past, we will be debating this motion next month and the month after and the month after that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Oh, there goes the member from Regina South chirping from his desk again. He's always chirping from his seat. That's where he makes his best speeches because, you know, he's not on record then, because if he put on record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what he says from his seat, the people from Regina South would throw him out so fast that he wouldn't even have a place to go.

Mr. Speaker, I'm simply saying to the members opposite, I do think that we need to have another look at this, and the best way to address this problem, in my opinion, is to refer this to a committee.

An Hon. Member: — In your humble opinion.

Mr. Rolfes: — No, in my opinion . . .

An Hon. Member: — In your humble opinion.

Mr. Rolfes: — There goes the member from Regina South again, always interrupting, Mr. Speaker, always interrupting.

Mr. Speaker, but see, that's the problem with the members opposite. The member from Regina South takes this so lightly, he makes fun of everything that takes place in this legislature. He doesn't think that it's important that we address the problems of the farmers in Saskatchewan; he doesn't think that it's important that we address the problems of the unemployed, the people who are leaving this province and have no place to go.

Oh no, he wants to talk about bell-ringing, a very urgent and pressing problem. But to him, agriculture, the unemployed, the out-migration, hospital waiting lists, people can't get an education in this province, have to go somewhere . . . those aren't urgent problems. But bell-ringing, oh, that's really urgent for the member from Regina South, that's really pressing. And so he supports that.

And I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan he is as arrogant on this issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as he was with the ward system when he brought in legislation unilaterally opposing the urban municipalities of Saskatchewan. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that arrogance that we have, not only on those issues but on this issue also, on the bell-ringing, when they won't listen to the people of Saskatchewan. When the people of Saskatchewan have spoken, they have indicated to you that they do not support you on the privatization of SaskEnergy. They're asking you to address the other problems.

I am simply saying to you, bring back that olive branch; let's submit this to a committee; let them address it; let them address other rules of this legislature, and let us then get on with the business of running this province. Let us get on with the business of doing the estimates. Let us get

on with the business of addressing the problems of agriculture and of education and of unemployment, so that, Mr. Speaker, we can do and carry out the wishes of the people of this province. If that is not done, if that is not done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then I think progress will not take place in this legislature.

We, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the opposition have also a mandate, and that is to protect and carry out the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan who have spoken. Approximately 70 per cent of the people have said, we agree with you in the opposition. We will carry out those wishes and we will do our utmost to stop the government unilaterally changing this rule and unilaterally passing privatization legislation against the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, with those words, I will very clearly indicate that I will not support the motion before us on bell-ringing. Thank you very kindly.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is one sentiment that I concur with from the member from Saskatoon South, and that is that it does not give me a great deal of joy this time to participate in this particular debate. I think it is a sad commentary on the state of affairs that Saskatchewan has deteriorated to; however, I think that the member from Saskatoon South, having just spoken, the people of Saskatchewan probably have witnessed one of the best reasons why a motion such as the Minister of Justice has come forward with to limit the time of ringing of the bells, why that motion should be put forward.

I think we have witnessed a sad situation of a lot of empty rhetoric coming from the member from Saskatoon South. There's a lot of deflection of the purpose by irrelevancy and clouding the issues. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel very convinced that what we are witnessing here is a blatant affront upon the democratic process.

It's rather ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am an individual who has spent a fair number of years in the educational system. I had the opportunity of starting school at the age of five and going through university for five or so years and then spending 22 years also in the teaching field. And what I did on a constant basis during those periods of time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to answer bells, bells, bells, bells.

One of the reasons why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I chose to curtail my teaching career, at least for the moment, was to escape from bells. And I came into the Saskatchewan legislature. It seems very ironic to me that one of the things that I am facing most at this particular time is bell-ringing.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a sad commentary on our affairs here, because this legislature was unceremoniously held hostage for 17 days — a literal hijacking of the Saskatchewan legislature. And my constituents back home in Rosthern are telling me that they do not take kindly to that kind of thing. They are telling us that this must not be allowed to be repeated, that this must not be allowed to continue on.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I just heard from the member from Saskatoon South could be construed as a back-to-back, a series of threats. You're not going to get away with it, he says. We are going to continue to hold this legislature as ransom. We're going to continue on our process even though we are not walking out. We are quite willing to filibuster and to do away with a legitimate purpose for which this legislature has been commissioned. And with people like that, with the number of radicals that that member from Riversdale has to contend with in his caucus, it is no wonder that he has lost control of that caucus. It is no wonder that we are forced to deal with the legislative hijacking.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not foresee things changing in the foreseeable future unless we can gain control of the legislative process. And I refer you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Wednesday, May 31 edition of the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*. And the headline in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* says, "'Romanow's radicals' hold up legislature." "'Romanow's radicals' hold up legislature."

This is not members from this side of the House. This is an article and a headline carried by the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, which I think is probably not being recognized as being a favourite son or supporter of this particular government.

But what are some of the comments made? Well, this particular article states, and I quote:

NDP members are reluctant to give up their right to ring the bells and have vowed to use every legislative tactic in the book to block the motion.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's another paragraph, and I'm sure members opposite, if they are interested in the rest of this article, will feel free to stand up and read the rest of the article, and I invite them to do that. But there's one other further article . . . part of the article:

"Clearly, in my opinion, Romanow's radicals are in control and I'm having a difficult time. Frankly, I don't believe they are interested in co-operation," Hodgins said outside the house.

Our deputy House Leader recognizes the problem for what it is. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we're looking forward in this legislature is a totally inoperative legislature which should be representing the views of the people. We know, for example, that the member from Regina Elphinstone, in conjunction with the NDP surrogate member, Barb Byers, have claimed that they are going to render the province of Saskatchewan ungovernable.

And that's a scary thought, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have an opposition that has publicly stated that this is what their agenda is. And we, the members on this side of the House, are saying that that will not be the case. And that is why I have gotten to my feet to make a point to the people of Saskatchewan that we will not be held hostage; that they will not be held hostage; that their voice will be heard where it is legitimately supposed to be, and that is right in these halls.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Now Mr. Deputy Speaker, are we on this side of the House asking members opposite to do something that is unreasonable? Are we doing and are we asking them to co-operate on a line of approach to make this legislative more operable? Are we doing anything unreasonable? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suggest to you, and I suggest to the people of Saskatchewan, no we are not. No we are not.

There are two main jurisdictions within this Dominion of Canada that allow bells to be rung continually for an unpredetermined length of time. One is, of course, the province of Saskatchewan. We know what problems we are experiencing. The other jurisdiction is Ontario. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is happening in Ontario right now, the bells are also ringing.

I might add that there is another jurisdiction, I do believe the Northwest Territories, are somewhat similar. And of course that august assembly called the Senate also does not have a restriction on the length of bell-ringing there, but that is to be understood. I understand many of those gentlemen might have a difficult time getting to the place of voting with any great speed, so we will allow them probably to continue along that line.

(1530)

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my point was, are we asking anything unreasonable of the opposition? I don't believe we are. Because if you take a look at the different jurisdictions, there is Nova Scotia and Manitoba that have a time limit on their bell-ringing of 60 minutes — 60 minutes. And 60 minutes is what we are asking for, and it does not seem to be unreasonable.

What about the House of Commons? What about the Mother of Parliaments in Canada? The House of Commons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has a 30-minute time-ringing limitation. New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Quebec — how much do they have? They have 10 minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker — 10 minutes. Alberta has eight minutes. British Columbia, Prince Edward Island have a time limit for bell-ringing of five minutes.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could use other examples of some of the Commonwealth countries, democratically elected governments, just as we are here. And I could mention Australia. I could also refer hon. members to New Zealand. How much time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do they have in Australia and New Zealand? Two minutes — two minutes. And so I'd suggest to members opposite, it is not unreasonable for the government to ask for a one-hour time limit to the bell-ringing.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having made that point, I want to just refute some of the comments made by the member from Saskatoon South. He made a great issue of quoting from some magazines and from editorials and so on. Well he failed to, I suppose, mention the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*.

What does the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* think of the

strategy employed by the NDP members opposite? And I'm sure that the members opposite are going to get a kick out of the first paragraph that I'm going to quote, which states:

Government members have the difficult task of ruling this province (and I think we would all concur with that). If we don't like what they're doing, we can boot them out of office come election time.

That's the ultimate recourse that the people of this province have. And that by legislation is curtailed to a maximum of five years. Within that five-year period of time the government has a mandated right to govern this province, not the opposition. It is not up to the opposition to pick up their ball and go home every time something happens that they may not agree with.

But let me get back to the article, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

At the same time (the editorial continues), we expect our opposition members (what is their role — what is their role? — we expect the opposition members) to serve our interests by opposing legislation introduced by the government.

You have that right. It's not only a right; it's a responsibility. The people of this province are expecting you to do your job by keeping us on the proper track. That's your responsibility — not to walk out, not to hold this legislature hostage for 17 days so that none of the work of this province can be continued.

The article continues:

However, when it comes to an opposition party walking out of the legislature and refusing to return until it gets its way, the voters are not being fairly represented.

The article continues from the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald*:

That's exactly what has been happening in Saskatchewan since last Friday when the New Democrats walked out of the legislature in protest of the government's privatization plans.

It continues:

... NDPers were not elected with a mandate to walk out of the legislature just because they feel justified in taking such action.

It's fine to fight the government's plans tooth and nail, but do it in the work place — the legislative assembly — and not (out) on our main streets.

That's what the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* has to say, and I want government members to take note of that. I want them to take note of that before they come in here in a threatening gesture, as the member from Saskatoon South did.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's one more article that I would just like to draw your attention to, and this comes from the

May 1, 1989 *Yorkton Enterprise*, from the *Yorkton Enterprise*, an editorial. And this editorial is entitled "The wrong approach."

When the provincial New Democrats walked out of the Saskatchewan legislature to protest the Progressive Conservative Party's decision to sell off a crown corporation, the NDP stepped on the sordid side of politics.

But, by walking out of the Legislature, the NDP has so distanced themselves from their mandate and so ostracized the people of Saskatchewan from their right to be governed by the party of their choice, that we must wholly condemn their actions.

This is the *Yorkton Enterprise*. And the article continues, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

The NDP, instead of being the intrepid protectors of the left, have become more the spoiled little brat who picks up his ball and goes home.

Those are not my words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the words of the public. These are the words of an editor in a rural constituency, in a rural-urban region, if I may use that phraseology. But he continues on:

The NDP has foregone the system. Instead of wrestling power from the Tories through legitimate means, they have played a hand in a game of political cards Saskatchewan voters should look at with distaste and contempt.

Those are not my words, Mr. Speaker, those are the words of the editor from *The Yorkton Enterprise*.

And I want to conclude with the two paragraphs that follow:

It is not a hand with which the people of Saskatchewan can win. It is a hand where the dealer, in this case the provincial NDP, has dealt from the very bottom of the deck.

The depths from which those cards have been dealt has lent a stench and a putridity on a hallowed system which should and probably will, hang over the NDP and seriously detract from any claims they may lay to being a legitimate political power.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce some guests who are in your gallery.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery there's some 49 students, many of them who

are from E.D. Feehan School in Saskatoon, and I'd like to introduce them on behalf of the member from Saskatoon Westmount. They are accompanied by Jeannette Darroch, C. Willick, M.P. Paquet, and M. Bonneville, Mr. Speaker.

Also with them are 25 students from Ste. Foy, Que pébec, who are here with these students as exchange students, I understand, Mr. Speaker.

Pour nos amis Québécois, l'opposition officielle et le Nouveau Parti Démocratique voudrait faire bon accueil aux étudiants de Ste. Foy, Québec. Nous souhaitons les très bons souvenirs de votre séjour en Saskatchewan lorsque vous rentrez chez vous. Nous souhaitons que votre visite à la législature de la Saskatchewan sera mémorable. J'ai un rendez-vous avec les étudiants, M. le président, pour faire une photographie en quelques minutes. Merci; bienvenue; welcome.

(Translation: To our young Quebec friends, the official opposition and the New Democratic Party would like to extend greetings to the students from Ste. Foy, Quebec. We wish you happy memories of your stay in Saskatchewan when you go home. We hope that your visit to the Saskatchewan legislature will be a memorable one. I have a meeting with the students, Mr. Speaker, for photographs in a few minutes. Thank you; welcome; welcome.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the students from E.D. Feehan High School in Saskatoon, and also their visitors from Quebec.

Many of these students attending E.D. Feehan High School live in the constituency of Saskatoon Mayfair, and I certainly wish them a warm welcome and would ask all of my colleagues to join with me this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Amendments to Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly (continued)

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much again, Mr. Speaker, and I too would like to welcome the students here. We are engaged right now in the middle, or somewhere along the line, of the debate on the ringing of the bells, and it is the government side that is having an opportunity now to put forth some of their points in this debate, and I'm sure it will be followed by some of the members from the opposite side.

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to carry on much further. I had some of what I thought were important, salient points to bring forth in this debate. I have made most of them, and I do believe that what we are witnessing here by the Assembly being held hostage is certainly an abrogation of the fundamental democratic principle upon which this

country, this province is based. And I do not see where it is in the best interest of the people of this province to have this Assembly silenced as it was for 17 days.

Silence in a democracy is a death knell, I would suggest to you, in such a system. I would further suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Neudorfs in Germany know that the precursor to the sound of jackboots is silence in an Assembly such as ours. And that's why that this motion is perhaps a grain of sand, or perhaps a chunk of mortar in a barricade against this flood of intolerance and rule-breaking and anarchical tyranny that we are witnessing here.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, very firmly, that the Legislative Assembly is the corner-stone for free speech; it is the democratic foundation upon which we are built; it is the embodiment of the principle of responsible government. And that is what I stand for, and that's what the members on this side stand for. And it is a hope that that is what the members opposite will also see their way to stand for.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that those who vote against this motion are voting for the closure and the silence of this Assembly. At a whim, at a pure whim, they are saying that they want to usurp the basic principles of democratic process for short-term ideological gains. And that, Mr. Speaker, must not, cannot, and will not be allowed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, I will be voting for the motion, as indeed all members of good conscience from both sides of the House in fact will do — indeed, must do. And I thank you for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to get involved in this debate because it seems that the members opposite, as they've been getting up and speaking for the last two or three days since they've come back to work, often seem to pick on me for whatever reason.

And I'm not interested in filibustering this Bill, Mr. Speaker, but rather just speak for a few moments on some ordinary common sense. I hear them repeating — and there they go from their chair again — but I hear them repeating time after time, perhaps the best reason that I and my members, my constituents from Regina South have, and that is the fact they fail to realize one basic principle, Mr. Speaker, and that is the fact that they are indeed opposition. They are not the government of the day. They were elected to form Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, and she expects them to perform in that way. And I don't believe that they do.

We are debating now, Mr. Speaker, the bell-ringing situation that exists in two provinces only. And here we now spend more time going through this debate, as the NDP, by the member from Saskatoon South's own admission, they will be filibustering and, you know, spending more time in here talking about something that only makes common sense.

(1545)

And you know, the NDP they keep harping about an election. Well it's not up to them to call that election, Mr. Speaker. And when the time does come for the Premier to call one, we will welcome it with open arms. And the people will judge us accordingly at that time. The people will judge us, not the opposition members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

You know, they mentioned that the government does call the agenda, and indeed the government does call the agenda. But obviously the NDP doesn't want anything to do with the agenda that the government calls. And I think that it's about time that the opposition understood that yes, indeed, the government does call the agenda.

How can we debate properly in this place if at the end of the day the NDP choose to go on strike by ringing the bells. I mean, there is no way of doing it. The old former opposition by the former leader, Allan Blakeney, and when he was here with seven members, effectively, Mr. Speaker, in 1982, if he would have wanted to take his ball and go home, he could have rang the bells for four or five years.

Now are the NDP opposition, members opposite, trying to tell me and my constituents of Regina South, and indeed all of the people of Regina, that that's how this place is supposed to work? They don't expect that. They don't expect that from the eight elected members of the NDP in this city. They expect the NDP members to be able to get up and debate, and debate properly and not use the nonsense of the bell-ringing — the bell-ringing nonsense we saw before, Mr. Speaker, a year ago when I carried legislation in this very Assembly.

And what did they do? They had phone calls coming into their lounge. Do you recall that perhaps, Mr. Speaker? And the bells were ringing. Do you remember that joke? The bells were ringing, people phoning in. Boloney, they were phoning in. They're phoning in now. They're phoning in to me and they're saying, tell the NDP to get back to work and quit the bell-ringing. That's what they want.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — The *Star-Phoenix* had it right: "Romanow's radicals hold up House." Now that's what the *Star-Phoenix* said, and they're famous for quoting from the *Star-Phoenix*, so there's a dandy.

But I'm really surprised, Mr. Speaker, at the new leader. I really did truly expect more from the new Leader of the Opposition. But it does tell me that that headline is right. It does tell me that what the new leader admitted publicly, that he is having disunity in his caucus, is true, and the radicals indeed have control of that caucus.

Now they start talking about other rules, and yes, it's true that they too must be reworked, Mr. Speaker. You know, perhaps those other rules could indeed go to a legislative committee. There's the matter of television where the members opposite, the NDP, freely admit that they debate to the TV screen. That's who they're talking to.

They're not talking to the government; they're talking to the TV screen. They figure that they're some great star. Well I've got news for them.

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order, order. Order. Just calm down.

Hon. Mr. Klein: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems that the NDP really get excited when I talk. I don't know why, but . . .

You know, even the media disappear from here now, Mr. Speaker. Why? Because they can go and do their work in the comfort of their lounge and do whatever, and have one eye on the TV screen in here and have another TV set and watch a baseball game or something like that. And that's how they cover the news that comes from this place.

There's a lot of outdated things in here, Mr. Speaker, that the rules should be looked at. But the matter of the bells certainly is the most important because it only exists in two provinces. The other provinces changed for a reason, and the reason makes a lot of sense — so that you can get on doing business.

The bells, Mr. Speaker, are designed to call the members in, not to take the members out. And everybody out there understands that. My constituents, the people of Regina, have been telling me all along, why do you let the NDP ring the bells? Why do you let the NDP ring the bells?

And certainly, before we can proceed with any other work in this Assembly, the issue of the bells must and will be dealt with. And as firm as they may be, as firm as they may be, and as much as they want to debate this in this Assembly, that's fair game. But they know and we know that one day the bells will ring on the very issue of the bell-ringing.

Will they seize that opportunity to again march out of the Assembly and go on strike? Will Barb Byers and the House Leader of the Opposition, who publicly said that they were out to stop government, to stop this Assembly, will those radicals prevail, Mr. Speaker? That will be an interesting situation when the bells ring to call the members in to vote on the bell-ringing issue. And we'll see where they sit there — the Barb Byers and the member from Regina Elphinstone. Obviously our government can't proceed with business until the threat of that kind of nonsense is gone with.

I watch visitors come into this Assembly day after day, and right now I see some more coming into the galleries, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine what they thought about this democratic government, this great democratic country of ours, when visitors, perhaps from out of country, would come in, look at the Assembly, hear bells ringing, see us here while the NDP opposition is out, not even within the building, selling their propaganda?

And then they wonder how a democracy works and how the great democracy in Canada works. Because the first question is, don't the bells call the members in? That's the underlying factor, Mr. Speaker, that we have to remember on all this. And soon the bells will be ringing on this issue.

The people, Mr. Speaker, the people, if they do not like our management, if they do not like our philosophy, if they do not indeed like our legislation, they will deal with us when the time comes. And that's the way it should be. And until when that time comes, the NDP opposition over there, Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, entitled to debate, yes; entitled to go on strike, no. Definitely not. They are not permitted to bring union hall tactics into this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Klein: — I believe that it's about time that the new Leader of the NDP, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, discovered that he is the Leader of the Opposition. He indeed is not the Premier of this province; he probably will never get there. In the meantime, run the opposition. Don't let that radical from Regina Elphinstone run it, as he said publicly he was going to do. Obviously he's still trying to be the leader of the NDP. He hasn't given up his fight yet, and he's armed with all these other little radicals, trying to take over that leadership.

Perhaps maybe one day the new provincial leader will move on to the federal scene. They are leaderless there, and they have no hope of getting any kind of a leader there as well. Surely somebody with some gumption to keep that together would be the leader there.

But in any event, the people know that the bells are the only responsible way to call in the members. They know that it's only in two provinces, Mr. Speaker, that this doesn't work. And they're asking me to implore that the NDP come to their senses and do what indeed the people expect them to do, and that is to be an effective opposition. They have no problem with them being an effective opposition.

And I'm speaking to all the people on behalf of all my constituents, Mr. Speaker; not partisan — I'm not speaking about Tories or Liberals or NDP — but all the people out there. They just say, get on and govern. You are elected as the government. Whether I like your government or not has got nothing to do with it, but you were elected to govern. Don't let them pull off that nonsense. Please get them back to work.

So let's vote on this motion, Mr. Speaker. Let's get this thing into place. Let's get on with what this Assembly was designed to do. Let's get on with debates; let's get on with our business; let's indeed call a vote on this.

I said that I wasn't going to speak long, Mr. Speaker, and at this point in time I just want everybody obviously to understand that I support the motion. And I know that my member from Shaunavon has more words to say on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my address today by reading for the Assembly and for the people who are watching us in the Assembly today, the motion that we're dealing with. And it's on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Andrew, the Minister of Justice:

That the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* be amended by adding the following after rule 33(1):

(2) When the Speaker or the chairman of Committee of the Whole, or Committee of Finance, has put the question on a motion and a recorded division is requested under rule 33(1), the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than one hour, provided that while the members are being called in, either the government or official opposition member serving as House Leader, Acting House Leader, chief whip, or deputy whip may approach the Speaker or chairman to request that the division be deferred, in which case the Speaker or chairman shall announce that the said division has been deferred until a specified time, but in any case not later than before the orders of the day or the second sitting day thereafter.

Then it goes on to say:

(3) When a recorded division is deferred pursuant to rule 33(2), the Assembly shall continue with the business before it.

(4) When pursuant to rule 33(2) the Speaker has directed that the division be deferred: (etc., on number five and so forth.)

Mr. Speaker, I read that motion for the edification of the members here and for those who are watching here for a very simple reason. And that is, is that that motion, the changing of the rules of House of this Assembly, it is in our humble opinion not quite the most pressing business facing the people of Saskatchewan.

We think that there are many other things out there which deserve the attention of this Legislative Assembly. We think for example, Bill No. 41, An Act to amend The Agricultural Credit Corporation (of Saskatchewan Act) is more important than dealing with the rules.

But we in the opposition, Mr. Speaker, don't decide what the government business of the day is to be. Mr. Speaker, the government decides that, not the opposition. And so those who are here trying to somehow imply that the opposition is holding up the work of the House are filled with boloney — quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, are full of it — up to here. Because, Mr. Speaker, we in the opposition do not decide what the business of the House is.

But why are we dealing with this resolution at this time, Mr. Speaker? I think it is very, very clear to each and every person in this province who is watching the proceedings of the House, this proceedings of this Legislative Assembly. The reason we are dealing with rules changes, despite the pressing needs out there in Saskatchewan, is so that the government can ram through its attempt to sell off SaskPower. That is what this debate is about, Mr. Speaker.

They want to be able to muzzle the opposition, to cut off a

tactic that the opposition has by precedent and by history, used in this province, the precedent of . . . the tactic of ringing the bells to draw to public attention an issue which we in the opposition see as an important issue.

In revenge, Mr. Speaker, for the opposition bringing the attempt of the government to sell off the power corporation of Saskatchewan, in an attempt to bring revenge on the opposition, the government is ignoring all the other business of Saskatchewan — not dealing with the questions of unemployment, not dealing with the questions of the agricultural crisis, of debt restructuring, of all those things which it should be doing.

Instead, what we've seen is day after day after day, the government bringing forward its rules and regulations Bills in order to ram through what the majority of people in this province — the majority, Mr. Speaker; the overwhelming majority — of people in this province, something that they are opposed to, and that is the government's attempt to sell off SaskPower.

Mr. Speaker, that is why, that is why that the opposition rung the bells. And that is why that the opposition is proud of the job they did in ringing the bells, Mr. Speaker, proud because it helped to stimulate one of the most democratic exercises that this province has seen in a long, long time. Because, Mr. Speaker, what this debate is about at one level, it is about the government's attempt to ram through the privatization of SaskPower.

(1600)

But at another level, at another level which is much more fundamental in terms of the history of parliamentary democracy in this province, but also throughout the British Commonwealth — on another level, it deals with what is the role of the opposition. Here, Mr. Speaker, we have one of those rare opportunities in history where theory meets practice. What we are asking and what we are saying, Mr. Speaker, we have asked ourselves the question, should we go out and ring the bells to stop the privatization of SaskPower?

We answered that by saying, yes, Mr. Speaker, because to ring the bells and to mobilize the people of the province of Saskatchewan against the sell-off of SaskPower is the duty of a responsible opposition. It is the duty of a responsible opposition to bring to a halt things which the populace in their overwhelming majority have opposed.

And, Mr. Speaker, what the members of the government side are trying to hide, what the members of the government side are refusing to deal with is precisely that question. They can make speeches all they want, quoting newspaper articles saying, well we don't think that the New Democratic Party should have done it.

And that's the right of editorial writers, to answer to their owners. And their owners say, we don't think it's good that this issue be brought to the public attention. Editorial writers have that right to make that comment.

But we think, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, that it is the responsible role of an opposition, when confronted by an outright abuse of power and an outright

abuse of a mandate given to a government over which there is some question as to its legitimacy, its legitimacy in regards to carrying out a mandate which it hid from the people of this province in the first instance, and which does not enjoy even in terms of parliamentary arithmetic in terms of the election, does not enjoy the confidence of a plurality of the people of this province.

And so that brings to mind some question of that government's legitimacy, and I say that in the full technical knowledge of the word legitimacy, and of that mandate. And so I say, Mr. Speaker, in that regard it is important that people of this province understand that it is perfectly in keeping with their traditions of the development of parliamentary democracy to use the tactics available to an opposition to bring to the attention of the people, in this case, the sell-off of SaskPower against the overwhelming wishes of the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I say that we are at a point in our history where we have seen theory meet practice. Because, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the theory of what we are dealing with, we are dealing with on the one hand, the rights of the opposition, the duties of the opposition in legislative assemblies not only here in Saskatchewan but throughout the British parliament, the British Commonwealth.

Mr. Speaker, that question that confronts us here today in dealing with the question of rule changes is a question which has been dealt at great length by many, many other people, some of whom have much greater knowledge, most of whom have much greater knowledge of parliamentary tradition and practice than myself.

But I want to, as I begin, advise you of some of the material which is available for the members of the government, and I would advise that they begin to peruse some of the material available to them as to what constitutes the legitimate role of an opposition, in this case the role of the opposition in bringing to a halt the sell-off of SaskPower.

Mr. Speaker, I would refer to publications. For example, *Government Through Opposition: Party Politics in the 1970s* by Frederick Allyce; or Gregory Archibald's book, *The Role of the Opposition in Parliamentary Legislature: Alberta as a Case Study*; or Rodney Barker, *Studies in Opposition*; or Andre Bernard, *Système Parlementaire et Mode de Scrutien*; or Edwin Black's *Opposition Research: Some Theories and Practice in the Journal of Canadian Public Administration*; or opposition party's *The Anti-New Deal Tradition*.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many, many publications that deal with this. I have here a bibliography prepared for me by the Library of Parliament in Ottawa in regards to this question. There are approximately 70 articles in the parliamentary library in Ottawa alone which deals with the question of the role of the opposition.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why are we here debating this motion? Okay, on the substance . . . first of all, of the motion itself, Mr. Speaker, the substance of the motion makes it impossible for the opposition to engage in the

kind of bell-ringing tactic that the opposition employed a little while ago in bringing to the attention of the public the sale of SaskPower.

It would muzzle the opposition, I would submit, Mr. Speaker, in a right which has been determined in parliament here in Saskatchewan, the legislature of Saskatchewan, in other legislative assemblies in Canada, and also in other legislative assemblies throughout the British Commonwealth.

It is a right, Mr. Speaker, a right of an opposition established by historical tradition to in fact utilize whatever tactics that parliament as a whole has determined to be legitimate parliamentary tactics in order to conduct the business of those who are governed by whichever parliamentary jurisdiction that one happens to be operating in.

The substance of the Bill, that is the substance of the Bill to outlaw bell-ringing, Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you, flies in the face of the traditions here in Saskatchewan, but also, more importantly, flies in the face of a tradition of a movement in history established since 1215, that is at the Battle of Runnymede in which the questions of absolute power, the question of the use of power and the abuse of power first gained attention within the realm of Britain.

Now the Battle of Runnymede, Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, but other members of the government may not be so well aware, was the battle at which the baronial figures of British history took on an absolute power, that is King John. King John . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — . . . and forced King John, through their use of a legitimate opposition tactic, which in that case was civil war because there was no parliamentary forum such as we have today, forced King John at that point in time into codifying what many people have said to be the underpinnings of the basis of British parliamentary democracy.

That, Mr. Speaker, is contained within the Magna Carta, the great charter, the great charter which has outlined the rights that people have in opposing, such as the legislature here did, we in opposition did, in opposing the sell-off of SaskPower.

The Magna Carta, Mr. Speaker . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you. I will thank my colleagues for that support because the Magna Carta, Mr. Speaker, grants, as the very basis of British common . . . pardon me, British parliamentary law, certain fundamental rights. Those rights include the right to have representation in regards to taxation. The American Revolution, Mr. Speaker, I may say, despite its influence from Voltaire and others, can trace the ancestry of its activities back to the battlefield of Runnymede and to the articles contained in 1215 in the Magna Carta.

That, Mr. Speaker . . . And there are many parliamentary

experts, among them Sir Edward Coke — Sir Edward Coke, Mr. Speaker, if you're familiar with the works of that famed parliamentary historian, said that there is a continuous line that runs through all of the British parliamentary system stretching from, on the one hand, the field at Runnymede, to each and every legislature in the British Commonwealth today.

Now Sir Edward has passed away, and he was speaking at a somewhat earlier time. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that his words in regards to how we conceived the Magna Carta and the activities of the opposition, and our activities in regards to the bell-ringing of SaskPower, can tie together very nicely. Because Sir Edward's thesis was . . . is that the movement towards progress, the movement towards progress in politics and in the development of the British parliamentary system has been a movement from, on the one hand, wresting power from a small, élitist, authoritarian, in fact, absolutist power, and taking that power and more and more spreading it out, with ups and downs in the course of history, but more or less taking that power out and putting it into the hands, first of all, of representatives in the legislature; but more importantly, giving average, everyday citizens of whatever democracy that those citizens are engaged in, taking that power and putting it into their hands and giving them some right, giving them some direct right in the activities of those who govern them. That is the movement of history in regards to the development of parliamentary democracy, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with that Bill, in dealing with this motion put forward by the Minister of Justice, does that motion enhance the process of taking power from the hands of absolutism and putting it into the hands of people in the conduct of their daily affairs, or does it in fact take us a step backwards? I would submit, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that in dealing with this Bill that it is a step backwards. I would also . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — I would also submit, Mr. Speaker, that the activities of the opposition in ringing the bells and developing a political debate in this province around the sell-off of SaskPower was a step forward for democracy in this province, contrary to what the other members, the other members on the government side of this Chamber have to say about it.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, let's put it in this context. If in 1215 King John had prevailed, if King John had prevailed, would we have developed in terms of the political situation and the political rights and freedoms that we have here today? The question is no. Maybe . . . we would obviously be some steps away from that kind of absolutist monarchy because there are not many left in the world. Obviously the history is . . . has some movement forward, but without the role of the opposition, in this case the barons, who probably with outside what was then determined to be legitimate opposition by the absolutists — in fact I know that it was outside what was termed legitimate by the absolutists, in this case King John — without that kind of opposition from the barons on the field of Runnymede, we would not have established the same kind of fundamental political liberties and rights

that this legislature enjoys and that the people of this province enjoy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — So, Mr. Speaker, it is not up to the King Johns of this world to determine what is legitimate political dissent. It is not up to those who hold the power to decide what is legitimate for the opposition to engage in, Mr. Speaker.

If, for example, Mr. Speaker ... And the member from Rosthern earlier made reference to events during the pre-war years in Nazi Germany. I want to say this, Mr. Speaker: if those people in Germany who objected to the rise of absolutism under the parties of national socialism, under the Nazis, if those people had taken more interest in what Hitler would have probably determined to be legitimate political opposition, we may have not had to go through the wars of World War II; that in fact, that those in opposition are the ones who determined in Nazi Germany what would have been legitimate political opposition.

(1615)

And after all, Mr. Speaker, in Germany at that time there were mass political parties; there were strong trade unions; there was the right to freedom of speech; there was the right to freedom of assembly; there was a parliamentary tradition established during the establishment of the Weimar republic. If, however, Mr. Speaker, other courses and other actions had been taken, then maybe World War II with all its horrors might not have been visited upon the peoples of this earth.

And after 1933 in Nazi Germany, Mr. Speaker, the government ... and it had a certain legitimacy because after all von Hindenburg, who was the chancellor of Germany at the time, granted to Hitler the status of legitimacy by asking him to form the government. And we all know what happened after that, of course. We had things like the immediately curtailing of democratic freedoms in the Reichstag. We had the curtailing of democratic freedoms and witch hunts and repression outside among the general populace by those who claimed to be upholding the rights as their rights to govern, their absolute right to govern. And we all know what happened, Mr. Speaker. We all know what happened in Nazi Germany because those in Germany who supported freedom did not act in freedom's cause, and we ended up with what history records for us as an horrific period of human endeavour.

But you see, the point I'm making there, Mr. Speaker, is very simply this: the opposition in Germany during the times of Hitler, it was up for them to determine what would be legitimate opposition, and not for Hitler. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it is the right and the duty and the role of the opposition here in Saskatchewan today to determine what is the legitimate role that an opposition is to play.

Because, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we learn from history in the development of parliamentary institutions and the development of parliamentary precedence and the development of the role of the

government and the role of the opposition, is that that process is not one of legality. It is not a legal, formalistic process. It is a process in which politics takes precedence.

And there's a recognition, I think, of that fact throughout by those people who write, as I've pointed out, in terms of the bibliography of the role government and the role of the opposition, that the fundamental tenet and the fundamental shaping of the course and development of parliamentary democracy is not a codification of rules and regulations so much as it is the development of a political struggle, or as Benjamin Disraeli said in this regard, dealing with the British parliament, "Principle is married to necessity."

That, Mr. Speaker, is what is happening here in this legislature — and I want to touch on that some while later — but I want to get back to the point that I'm making in terms of the role of the opposition and its opposition to the privatization of SaskPower.

That is, is that this opposition, the members of this side of the government, defined what was legitimate, and in doing so, did so with the full knowledge that there would be political rewards to reap as well as a political cost to pay. And of course, whether the rewards were to reap or the costs were to pay were dependent solely and entirely upon the political judgement exercised by members on this side of the House.

In this particular historical instance here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the ringing of the bells has reaped political rewards for members of this side of the House and has reaped some fairly serious political price on the members of that side of the House, because the members on this side of the House understand and understood that the people of Saskatchewan do not want to see the privatization of SaskPower.

They do not want to see their assets sold off. They want to see their political representatives stand up for them, to defend them in an attack upon their rights, their assets, by a government which broke its promise, by a Premier which broke faith, by a government which, we submit, has no mandate and hence no legitimacy to do what it is doing. Because that's what we're dealing with, Mr. Speaker.

We are dealing not here with just a rule change in the abstract, we're dealing with a political struggle here between a government which wants to sell off the assets, to take a course to sell off the assets of the people of this province, to take a historical course which is opposed by the people of this province, opposed by them in overwhelming numbers, and by an opposition which is standing up and utilizing what every tactic it may employ to speak up and do its job: to represent the fundamental will of the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, that is what we are dealing with here.

If this is, as I said before, a place where practice and theory fall in.

We took, Mr. Speaker, if you like, the political gamble because we knew, we knew very well what the members

of the government were going to say, that we were going to hijack democracy. That's the first charge that they laid against us, that somehow we've hijacked democracy. Well let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, the history of that government, the history of that government shows the total hypocrisy of its statement.

After, Mr. Speaker, I was elected in October of 1986 to this legislature, I waited until, I believe it was June 20 if I'm not mistaken, or June 12 of the following year before the budget was presented . . . June 17 before that was presented, before I saw a budget put forward by that government. Right?

Who hijacked democracy in that case? Right? Who hijacked democracy, in which the threat of lawsuits hung over a government? Lawsuits hanging over a government because the government refused to carry through with what it legally was supposed to do, that is to bring a budget forward to the people of the province and to this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, who hijacked democracy in that case? It seems to me that's about an eight- or nine-month period in which the government reneged on its . . . not only reneged — failed to do its duty, was derelict in its duty. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that there is one person responsible for that hijacking of democracy, and that person is the Premier of this province. That is the person. That person is the Premier of this province.

Then, Mr. Speaker, because the government got . . . well to be polite, I guess it got beaten up somewhat after it did call the legislature and after it did present its budget. It then, after the legislature finished, waited for another — how many months was it? Eight or nine months.

An Hon. Member: — Nine months this time.

Mr. Lyons: — Nine months, they tell me. Waited for nine months to recall the legislature; held the legislature hostage for nine months; refused to allow the voices of democracy to be heard in this Chamber. Wouldn't call the members into this legislature to do its work.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that for those members on that side of the House, for those members with that record of hijacking this legislature, for those members with this utter disregard for parliamentary tradition, for them now to stand up and accuse the opposition of hijacking democracy is nothing more than pure hypocrisy, and those who espouse that position, Mr. Speaker, are nothing more than hypocrites. When it comes to that, they are nothing more than hypocrites, Mr. Speaker, for those who say that.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — And why, Mr. Speaker? Why? Because fundamentally these people do not have respect for what is essential in the democratic process. You know, Mr. Speaker, many people have tried to define democracy. I looked up the other day in the Oxford concise English dictionary, and it defines it as, "government by (all) the people, direct or representative . . ." Government by the people, direct or representative.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are components to that, as you know. There's several components to that, one of which of course is elections. Well let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to an election, we want one, and the people of this province want one. They don't want to have the time of the legislature wasted in useless debates over rule changes, an act which is foreign to the whole history of this House. They don't want the representatives of the people to take the time to debate this measure, Mr. Speaker.

Fundamentally the people of this province are saying, we want an election. They want an election. The polls prove they want an election, Mr. Speaker, because they want to get rid of this government. And that is the first . . . and that, may I say, Mr. Speaker, is the primary component of democracy, is the election. For elections, despite all their faults, and they have some, are even at worst, they're representative of the popular will.

Now we, Mr. Speaker, for our part, are ready to be tested on the question of the popular will.

The second component, Mr. Speaker, in regards to what constitutes the democracy as defined by government of the people, direct or representative, is the right of the people to participate in the affairs of the province — the right to participate, either directly or through the representatives, to participate.

Now I want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition brought to the attention of the people of this province the government's attempt to sneak through the sale of SaskEnergy, despite what it had said earlier, despite the fact that it broke its promise never to do so, I want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, was the action of the opposition designed to enhance the role of the people directly or indirectly through the representatives in dealing with the matters that affected them? Was that, Mr. Speaker, enhanced by what the opposition did? Or was it limited by what the opposition did?

Well I think, Mr. Speaker, any fair-minded citizen in this province, whether they're Conservative or Liberal or New Democrat or whatever, would say that what we in the opposition did was enhance the rights of citizens in this province to directly participate in the affairs that affected them.

Mr. Speaker, I have yet to hear to the contrary by any other member of this legislature. I have yet to hear to the contrary, Mr. Speaker, by any other . . . (inaudible) . . . that what we denied citizens the right to participate in the affairs that directly affected them. One just has to look, Mr. Speaker, at the number of petitions that were presented to this legislature in regards to the attempt of the government to sell off SaskPower.

You know, Mr. Speaker, they broke their promise never to do it, but the people of this province, by way of petition, which is an accepted parliamentary practice with a long, long history . . . In fact, one only has to read the agenda of the House of the legislature. For example, today under routine proceedings, after prayers, Mr. Speaker, what is the first item of business of this House? What is the first

item of this House, Mr. Speaker? Presenting petitions — presenting petitions.

We stopped the bell-ringing for . . . we stopped this government for 17 days from driving through a Bill which would privatize SaskPower. We went out to the people of this province, held meetings where thousands and thousands and thousands of citizens participated directly by way of question, by way of discussion, by way of debate, and by way of presenting petitions, Mr. Speaker, where we now stand at somewhere around 100,000 people in this province exercising their democratic right — exercising their democratic right to directly govern themselves in the affairs of the province; in this case, directly exercising their right to stop the privatization of SaskPower through way of presenting petitions. Because that's the first item of business of this House day in and day out, is to present petitions.

Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition are proud of the job they did, going out, getting people to express their political will through the use of the forms of petition. I don't think there is one member on this side of the House that is less than immensely proud of the job she or he did in collecting those petitions, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1630)

Mr. Lyons: — And what do we have, Mr. Speaker, as the second order of business of this House today? Reading and receiving petitions — reading and receiving petitions, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, don't tell me, don't let anybody in this House tell you, sir, or tell any member of the opposition that we don't have the right to read or receive petitions in this House. Because, Mr. Speaker, what we did in stopping the sale of SaskEnergy, going out and getting those petitions, we undertook it upon ourselves to try to impress upon the government the massive opposition there exists in this province to an action and a course of action which the overwhelming majority of people in this province oppose.

And we did it through reading and receiving petitions, the second item of business that occurs on a day-by-day basis in this House. Then, Mr. Speaker, I can go along and read what is . . . Mr. Speaker, I can then deal with what we find on the agenda on a day-by-day basis.

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, I bring the question of the agenda to the attention of this House. Because the agenda itself, in the history of the development of parliamentary democracy in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in the development of parliamentary democracy — presenting petitions; reading and receiving petitions; presenting reports by standing, select, and special committees; notices of motions and questions; introduction of guests; oral questions; ministerial statements; introductions of Bills; orders of the day — all have been agreed upon and were put together as a daily agenda; not through coercion, Mr. Speaker, not through coercion, but were dealt with through a concept of co-operation, a concept of the opposition and the government working together to

define the rules, in this case the agenda of the House, to define those rules of what would work and what would carry through on a day-by-day basis.

And, Mr. Speaker, the question of that kind of political co-operation, the question . . . no matter how much the heat of battles get, whether its real battle as in the case of Runnymede or the verbal sparring that takes place in this place on a daily basis, there is an underlying element that that co-operation must exist. In order for Magna Carta to be signed, in order for the development of some fundamental political liberties, at some point in time there was co-operation between the subject and the ruler.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just me saying that. I'd like to quote, if I may, from page 167 and 168 of a book called *People and Parliament*. It's by Nigel Nicholson, printed by Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 7 Cork Street, London, written in 1958. And it deals with, Mr. Speaker, the development of people, parliament, and political parties, written from the point of view of a Conservative member, a member of the Conservative Party of Great Britain, with a very high regard for the notions of what lies behind democracy.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Nicholson — and I'll read you two paragraphs — talks about how co-operation must serve as a corner-stone for parliament to function. It says:

The difference between Burke's views on democracy and our own is illustrated by Leo Ameroy's definition of our system as . . .

And I think this is what's important, Mr. Speaker, here, because it gets to the nub of what Mr. Nicholson is trying to make in his book.

. . . democracy by consent and not by delegation. Government of the people, for the people, with, but not by the people.

Even that definition, with which I wholly agree, might now be considered by some as already outdated since it still contains a trace of Burke's oligarchic attitude, namely, that parliament knows best. And hence by parliament, there's an implication throughout the preface of the book, Mr. Speaker, that from parliament, that is cabinet, and then from cabinet into the inner cabinet and hence on to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say, in regards to the role that people have, in terms of developing consent and co-operation:

. . . they demand the right to interfere in government, the right to be wrong, the right to suffer the consequences of their own prejudices. They will not be treated as children or incompetents.

And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, for those members of the government who are thinking of getting home this summer or thinking of getting home next summer, we will not be treated as children or incompetents when it comes to defending the rights of the people of Saskatchewan to stop the privatization of SaskEnergy . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — . . . and to stop this rule change from being rammed unilaterally down the throats of this legislature. You, sir, may think you want to act as boss, or some kind of strict authoritarian figure, a schoolmaster, or some kind of dictator, but let me say this again: we will not be treated as children nor incompetents in that matter.

They employ (Mr. Speaker) a member of parliament . . .

And here we're speaking of the people and the relationship between us in the opposition and our opposition to these rule changes, and those who have elected us to act as the opposition.

They employ a member of parliament as they would employ a plumber or piano tuner to do a job. His (and I say hers to avoid sexist language) job is representation. That does not mean that he (or she) is to be controlled at every stage of his work by their instructions any more than is the plumber or piano tuner.

But, Mr. Speaker, and this is particularly relevant, particularly relevant to the members of the government, Mr. Nicholson goes on to say:

But it does mean that they must pay attention to their wishes. They will not be fobbed off with the alternative theory that true representation sometimes means doing the opposite of what they ask.

In this case, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you that the ramming of . . . the attempt by this government to ram through a totally unwarranted rules change, and the rationale provided by the members of the government for doing that, is nothing other than trying to fob off the people of Saskatchewan with the alternative that true representation means doing the opposite of what they ask.

Because, Mr. Speaker, what are the people of Saskatchewan asking for in this regard? First of all, they're saying, don't sell off our Crown corporations, don't privatize SaskEnergy, don't even attempt it. That's what they're asking, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't matter what kind of road shows that the government can put forward, such as the fiascos that occurred in Regina last night — tens of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money wasted for meetings in which nobody comes.

An Hon. Member: — Well they were coming by the pairs.

Mr. Lyons: — They were coming by the pairs in one meeting — one pair, one meeting — and I would certainly like to know how much that meeting cost the taxpayers of the province.

They don't want that kind of nonsense. The people of Saskatchewan are sick and tired; they're fed up to here with that kind of nonsense, that kind of total fobbing off, to quote from Mr. Nicholson, if you like; that kind of

waste, that kind of mismanagement, that kind of attitude which says: we, the government, are the true representatives. We know what's best for them. We know what's going to happen to them. We know what's best for them. They're too ignorant.

That's what the government is saying. And they're trying to fob off an alternative theory that their true representative government, supposedly true representative government, is legitimate.

We say, Mr. Speaker, that this government is not legitimate. It does not have the mandate to sell off SaskPower. The people of Saskatchewan have given us, through overwhelming support, the right to say that.

Once again, practice and theory meet. The practice of the opposition is to speak up, to oppose the misuse and the abuse of power by the government, in this case, the selling off of SaskPower.

The people of the province have given us the right, the parliamentary right in its true legal and practical sense, the right to employ the tactics that we did. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the people of this province want an opposition to stand up to tyranny in whatever its form, and they don't want this rule passed.

They see, Mr. Speaker, the sell-off of SaskPower as not being in their interest. They see it as a betrayal. They see it as a form of tyranny, of an artificial tyranny put together with dollar democracy and parliamentary arithmetic that they, in the reality, the overwhelming reality, oppose. And they have given us the legal as well as the moral right to use whatever tool is in our arsenal to oppose that. And they don't want, Mr. Speaker, they don't want these rules rammed down our throat.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — They don't want these rules rammed down our throat, Mr. Speaker, because they know from bitter, bitter experience, Mr. Speaker, precisely that when tyranny goes unopposed, it runs rampant. There are no checks and balances on it, and they are the ones who will bear the brunt of tyranny.

Oh yes, there may be legislators, as there were in Nazi Germany, who carted off and put in concentration camps, or shot or hung or gassed or whatever . . . My friend and colleague from Moose Jaw North doesn't like me using those barbaric examples, but history has been barbaric, and history has been barbaric because those who are opposed to a lessening of democratic rights suffer the consequences. They suffer the consequences even though those consequences are unintended, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker. They don't particularly like having the consequences of not opposing tyranny brought down on their necks.

Mr. Speaker, in saying that, it's important to look back on history, the history, first of all, of this legislature and how rules were introduced, how rules were put together, and how we govern ourselves as members of this legislature. It's also important to look at those who in opposition, which once were termed to use tactics which were once

deemed illegitimate, have all of a sudden have become, in the eyes of history, legitimate.

(1645)

I'd mentioned earlier on, Mr. Speaker, the Runnymede and the battle of 1215 in which the Magna Carta issued forth in all its glory to put forward some fundamental political rights for citizens. Now, Mr. Speaker, it obviously was not a perfect document. No document can ever, ever, ever encapsulate the beating heart of democracy as it flowers forth in all its vibrancy to give meaning to the political wishes of the Demos of the people. There is no document that's able to capture and capsule that fully, but the Magna Carta, at least in terms of English history, was the first document to do that.

Mr. Speaker, then we can move forward in English history, because there we had, on the one hand, an absolutist king versus a rising nobility, if you like, a nobility which wanted to exercise its powers — not for the benefit, I may say, of the peasants or of the artisans or of the landless in England at the time, those poor and those who lived a wretched and miserable existence and whose average life tension . . . life span was 36 years of age. They didn't fight for Magna Carta for those interests, Mr. Speaker, they fought for Magna Carta for their own interests, primary of which was not to have the king come in and loot their treasuries without their say-so and without their consent.

But as English parliamentary history developed, Mr. Speaker, and as English parliamentary history moved forward — I shouldn't use the word parliamentary history in this; it's a misnomer — but as English democratic history, upon which the present parliamentary system is based, moves forward, what we found is not nobles versus the king, but we found merchants and artisans in the emerging towns and villages of Britain, in the Londons, in the Westminster, and so on, aligning themselves together so that they themselves had a direct say in the conduct of their affairs, and that they had themselves the right to put forward their representatives, including your ancestors, Mr. Speaker, in the parliamentary sense of the first Speaker.

We had a struggle in Britain, a massive and bloody civil war, a massive civil war in Britain between, on the one hand, those forces led by Oliver Cromwell and his supporters, and on the other hand, those who were led by the supporters of the monarchy, i.e. ending up in Charles II.

We had the establishment of the Long Parliament. And let me tell you, if the members think that their stay in this particular legislature was long, may I remind them that they look back in history to determine the length of time that the Long Parliament was established in Britain, because by the time that these members who are present here, with the exception of the female members we hope, will be leaving here with long, grey beards if they were to replicate that, and they may.

If they may . . . if they continue to try to press forward, if they continue to try to press forward with this unconscious rule change, if this unneeded and

unnecessary piece of legislature blither, if they want to keep driving that at us, they'll be here until their beards are touching their feet and the Long Parliament will be matched by the legislature in Saskatchewan.

And I see the Minister of Education looking somewhat askance at that. Well let me remind the minister, when they tried to scathe and tried to fool the people of this province in 1987, they sat here for a considerably lot longer period of time than they wished. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that same fate for them is in store — 1991 looks like a good stopping point for this long parliament, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Because the same . . . because, Mr. Speaker, just as the issues that faced the people between Cromwell and the absolutists of the days of the English civil war — just as those issues were important to those people, let me tell you that the issue of the sale of SaskPower, the issue of the sale of honesty in government — because this involves the question of the breaking of faith and hence the denial of the government's own legitimacy; this involves the question of why the bells were ringing to stand in protest against that kind of breaking of faith — just as those issues were important to the people of Cromwell's day, so too are the issues which face the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, just as the opposition formed and re-formed in the days of the Long Parliament between the Roundheads and the Diggers and the Levellers and all those people, all of which had legitimate political platforms, all of whom had a world view, all of which tried to proceed from their own point of departure in regards to what was good for their class or what was good for their sectarian interest; just as they proceeded, so too are we are proceeding today; and so too is the government proceeding in that same kind of authoritarian manner which led to the events surrounding the Long Parliament.

Once again absolutism tried to, without the consent of all parties concerned, tried to impose its will on its subjects. And, Mr. Speaker, just as in Saskatchewan in 1989 the people of the province rose as one to oppose the privatization of SaskPower, so too did they during the days of Cromwell and the Long Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

And they used tactics, Mr. Speaker, they used tactics which I'm sure you as Speaker are well aware of. At that time when the absolute monarch didn't like what the parliament had to say, he took it upon himself to deal with the mouthpiece of parliament, in this case the Speaker, and did away with that Speaker, and did away with him on a somewhat permanent basis through forms of execution.

And they did that, Mr. Speaker, and they did that because at that point in time, absolutism saw the rule of parliament, that is, the right of those gathered in the parliament. And by at that point in time, I may stress, that that parliament was not representative, not representative of the people of England, but were representative only of a small cross-section of people of England, the

squiredom.

But, Mr. Speaker, those absolutists tried to impose upon parliament its view of what parliament should be, and it did it without the consent, did it without the consent of those involved, and hence we had that long and bloody and inglorious period of British history in the English civil war.

Mr. Speaker, what we saw at that period of time, we saw a certain establishment of certain institutions, which I will a little later on in my speech go into in my presentation because it relates directly to the role of the opposition, and in this case as we stand here in opposing this rule change and in opposing the privatization of SaskPower, we stand upon that historical prerogative, the same kind of historical prerogative that those in opposition to absolutism in the Long Parliament stood for.

And we, in fact, have historical basis for what we have done, unlike those of the government opposite, whose only historical basis in terms of ramming through, this chipping away at democracy, of taking away something which has been established as a right, and that is the right of the opposition to oppose and to take upon itself not only its role as an opposition but the responsibility as an opposition; it's taken upon itself the role of the absolutists in history, the potentate, the potentate, the dictator, the Ayatollah Khomeinis of Saskatchewan. That's how they see themselves, Mr. Speaker, unilaterally imposing on the people of this province and on the representatives of the people of this province, through an absolutist measure, the change in the rules.

Mr. Speaker, the methods employed by those in opposition at that time were again viewed as illegitimate by the absolutists but, you know, became to, as we look now from the vantage point of this point in history, came to be seen as legitimate and necessary, given the historical times. Once again, principle is married to necessity, Mr. Speaker.

And we can go from there, Mr. Speaker — that point in the development of the . . . the development, because we're now dealing with the development of the British parliamentary system. We could go forward. The evolution of the British parliament to the old reformation, if you like, of parliament, the doing away of the rotten boroughs, Mr. Speaker, because there was mass opposition by people in Britain at the time to the creation of these rotten boroughs where you had five or six people who had the right to vote and would elect the squire into the House of Commons. Right?

And do you know, Mr. Speaker, it took what at that point in time were illegitimate means of opposition, illegitimate from the point of view of those in power, to do away with the rotten boroughs. But has much changed here, Mr. Speaker? Has much changed here?

We have, in this legislature, the tabling of a report by an electoral commission which begins the march backwards to the rotten boroughs by a government which has a consistent history of limiting the forward march of history into direct participation in public affairs by the people of this province. And when, Mr. Speaker, and if the Bill

dealing with the gerrymandering of the electoral constituencies of this project come forward, we will have the same type of situation as presently confronts us in dealing with the changes of the rules.

We have a Bill which establishes, not a new modern form of democracy which takes into account the modern technological devices that we have and the examples around the world that allow people to directly participate in their affairs, but from these absolutists we hear once again the sound of the jackboots trying to drag us back into feudalism when it comes to the days of democracy.

Because, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that occurred during — I call it the period of Gladstonian democracy — was a whole method of procedures and rules which were put into place to develop consent as to the way in which parliament was to be conducted.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it was the kind of consent that this government would do very well in trying to pursue, because instead of trying to ram SaskPower down the . . . making a decision to sell off SaskPower, then trying to ram that decision down the throats of this Assembly and down the throats of the people of Saskatchewan, to sell off those assets, instead of trying to . . . and then after having made that decision, attempting in the most blatant, politically stupid manner, if I may use the term, to send out a travelling road show that nobody listens to because nobody comes to it, because it doesn't have any legitimacy because . . . You know, they come in pairs to it because they know that it doesn't have any legitimacy, that it's nothing more than a few Tory puppets like Oscar Hanson trying to defend a few . . . trying to defend what is a political decision by the government and a horrendous political decision from the point of view of the government.

Instead of trying to, instead of trying to engage in that kind of waste of taxpayers' money and political flimflammy, why didn't the government go and try to build consent in this project, in this province, try to build some sense of co-operation in how we are best to go forward to develop economically.

An Hon. Member: — What did they do?

Mr. Lyons: — What did they do? Instead of trying to build that co-operation, they tried to loot the public treasury for their own political purposes, to fill the pockets of their friends — right? — and to engage in a unparliamentary and undemocratic form of action such as the introduction of this Bill into the legislature.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It being 5 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

The House adjourned at 5 p.m.