

June 1, 1989

## EVENING SITTING

## 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. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a privilege — although a sorrowful one at this point in time — to speak on this motion. I want to say that we have taken a number of tacks in terms of dealing with this Bill in a reasoned and a reasonable fashion.

We've shown to the people of this province that there is a constitutional right for the activities which led up to the introduction of this Bill. We have shown that, in fact, there was an obligation placed upon us as members of the Assembly to do that; at least we've shown to some extent that that was the case. I think that there are many more cases in terms of the activities of the British House of Commons and also the Canadian parliament, as well as those other parliamentary forums throughout the British Commonwealth, that would lead one to the same conclusion that I have, that indeed there are many, many reasons and many examples in history to show why the kind of . . . the duty that we as members of the Legislative Assembly have in opposing what we think to be Bills which are harmful.

And apparently, Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from somebody who was watching the speech today. And I'd like to read that letter into the record because it relates directly to the comments that I was making in regards to how people in this province perceive these Bills, perceive this action by a government which intends to ram the Bills to change the rules unilaterally of this Assembly. And this letter reads as follows:

Dear Bob and Ned: (And this refers to the member from Regina Centre.) This is a Bill that women in Saskatchewan, perhaps more so than men, are strongly opposed to. For centuries women have been powered over (that's the terms that the writer used, powered over, i.e., by those who have more power than women, powered over) and silenced, and this Bill attempts once again to silence their opposition to the privatization of our utilities.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to stop there for a moment from reading that letter because today we have seen in this House examples of members of the Legislative Assembly trying to deny that that's what this Bill represented.

And once again I remind members that this Bill came about as our bell-ringing in opposition to a Bill called the Bill to amend The Power Corporation Act, Bill No. 21, which would end up privatizing the natural gas portion of Saskatchewan Power. So that those people who are watching our reasoned discussion of this Bill are beginning to make the connections that there is

something to what we in the opposition have been saying, that the rules themselves of this parliament are being changed in order to ensure an initiative of the government which is the privatization of The Power Corporation Act. It says once again:

To silence their opposition to the privatization of our utilities, women in disproportionate numbers signed the petitions presented in this legislature.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that is a very interesting observation, because, as you know, we presented so far to date nearly 100,000 petitions in this legislature opposing the privatization, and this person who was watching what's going on on television says that:

. . . women in their disproportionate numbers signed the petitions . . .

And I don't know whether we do a gender count when the Clerk here at the legislature makes the count of the petitions and checks their validity, and whether or not in fact they do a gender count, but it would be interesting to know if in fact that were true. I tend to think that it probably is true. I think that it probably is true, that women in disproportionate numbers signed that petition and opposed what this government is doing.

This writer goes on to say:

They did so because they know full well that they and their families will be the losers if our utilities are privatized.

Mr. Speaker, I think that everybody in this province, everybody but the most rock-rib, hard-nosed, right-wing ideologue, knows very well that when these assets are privatized, that for the great majority of people in Saskatchewan, and particularly women and their families, that they will be the ones to bear the brunt — and as this writer says, the losers.

The government opposite (the writer goes on to say) has nothing to say to women, nothing to offer women, and fails to recognize that it is the women of Saskatchewan who provide what little stability there is.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this to that writer: that we on this side of the House can whole-heartedly agree with that; that it is women who bear the brunt of the bad times that we are going through in Saskatchewan; and that this Bill which is presently before us and the consequences of the enactment of this Bill which presently is before us will do nothing less than add to the burden of misery and to the instability which women and their families find themselves faced with here in this province at this time.

And I want to say that I think that this writer is right on, right on when she says that this government has nothing to offer women and has nothing to say for women, and their actions, their callous actions and the consequences . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order, order. The letter is

very interesting; however, it is not on, directly, the issue under discussion. I have been listening to the hon. member, and he has been using the letter to discuss the privatization of SaskPower, as he puts it, more than the bell-ringing. I don't think that's the intent of the use of the letter. Certainly citizens have concerns and they write members; however that doesn't seem to be really related directly to this topic.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will relate this letter directly now, and it's in the very first sentence. And it says, "This is a Bill . . ." The Bill that we're discussing, the Bill which would limit bell-ringing in this legislature — the motion; excuse me, Mr. Speaker. And maybe that's where the confusion arises, is that it is a motion before us, a motion put forward by the Minister of Justice, that it's . . . are strongly opposed to it because they themselves realize what the consequences of that Bill is. And, Mr. Speaker, when someone is consequent of their actions, when somebody knows that if A is going to lead to B and that there is a causal connection between A and B, I would submit, as the writer out there does, because she goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, directly on the point that you have raised:

Against great odds and with no help, no support (no interest by members opposite and of their big-business friends), just as women in Saskatchewan are working overtime in 1989 to protect their families, their communities, and their future, so too did the women of England struggle in the 1600s for . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I think the hon. member is — and I'm sure he realizes this — that he's drawing kind of a long bow. And, once more, I repeat that citizens certainly have concerns and they contact their members on it, and that's as it should be. However, the letter that the hon. member is using and the direction of his argument is really not directly on this motion, and as far as the privatization of SaskPower, an argument which he has used many times already today, and I have brought that to his attention too — that one cannot repeat his arguments over and over in the same debate.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the writer goes on to say in the next two words ". . . in the 16 . . ."

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Order. Order, order, order! I have now . . . This is the third time, and I know that the member who's speaking knows this is correct because he is a member who is capable. Now for the third time he's referring to that letter, and even though the letter may be of great concern to him and to other members as well, I repeat again that you have not been using it, and have not been able to use it, to directly discuss this issue.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The contents of the letter . . . The writer makes the point that she sees democratic freedom being at stake here. This Bill is about the question of the democratic rights and the right to oppose in the legislature. I agree with the point that she's making, that this Bill to muzzle the opposition — this motion, excuse me, to muzzle the opposition — will lead

to a loss of democratic freedom by denying us the right, just as this writer of the letter does, it will lead to a loss of democratic freedom and hence an overall improvement in the standard and quality of life. That was the point that that writer was trying to make, Mr. Speaker, and I agree with that point.

Mr. Speaker, she is opposed to bell-ringing. She is opposed, I will say, Mr. Speaker, opposed to a motion which will limit bell-ringing because she sees it as an attack on her democratic freedoms. Mr. Speaker, I suspect that she is not alone out there. I think, far from it, that she is not alone, but there are literally tens of thousands of people in Saskatchewan who do not want the opposition muzzled in any shape, any kind of form whatsoever; that they, in fact, want us to be able to continue the job which this motion that would limit us in doing our job puts us in that position of taking away, as she puts it, a democratic freedom.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in regards . . . She also — this woman who wrote me and the member from Regina Centre — also included a book called . . . by Antonia Fraser called *The Weaker Vessel* — Women's lot in 17th century England. And it deals with, in a great detail, with the lack of democratic freedom that women had, on the one hand from their exclusion from the parliamentary process which . . . And as you know, Mr. Speaker, there were two great eras of democratic reform in Britain. One was in the 14th century and the other was in the 17th century. According to most constitutional experts, those were the glory days of democratic reform in which those things which we cherish, including our democratic rights which are being threatened by this Bill here tonight, that those freedoms were denied to women in the 17th century.

(1915)

In fact, there was a popular rhyme of 1641 — I'll just open to this page, quite by accident — entitled: "Lucifer's Lackey or the Devil's New Creation." It ran:

When women preach and cobblers pray,  
The fiends in hell make holiday.

At the bottom: "It was a women's demand for freedom of conscience," Mr. Speaker, that's what it was on. At the bottom: "It was a women's demand for freedom of conscience," a freedom of conscience which was denied to women in the 17th century, precisely because of arbitrary actions initiated by a government which tried to deny a whole class of citizenry, that is to say women, their fundamental, democratic rights.

What we're saying, Mr. Speaker, is that we have come a fair distance from that situation in the 1700s. Certain democratic rights and freedoms have been won. And why should anybody in good conscience or right mind stand in their place and vote to turn the clock backward, if not to a time when women were denied the vote and were treated . . . in fact more than denied the vote — treated as chattel, were totally excluded from the political process.

As I submit, Mr. Speaker, to you, that the intent of this rule change has much the same kind of intent as the intent to deny certain citizens their right to participate in the

democratic process.

I want to go back, Mr. Speaker, if I may, to some of the comments made by members of the opposition who said that what we did was anti-democratic and somehow denied citizens' rights. The government did that. Somehow, Mr. Speaker, that what the opposition did was deny people their rights the same way that women were denied their rights in the 17th century and were excluded from public affairs; that somehow the bell-ringing incident was somehow a denial of democratic rights and freedoms.

And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I for the life of me can't deduce where that type of logic comes from other than it is, on the one hand, some weird ideology, some twisted misconception of what democracy is all about, or on the other hand, it's a deliberate attempt by a government to deny the citizenry its rights.

And what are its rights in this regards, Mr. Speaker? What are the rights of the citizenry to participate in the political process, and how does this Bill which would limit the opposition's ability to operate in the legislature, how would this Bill also limit the rights of citizenry to participate? Because, Mr. Speaker, that's what this writer was talking about, was that this motion before the House tonight, this motion to limit the use of bell-ringing, is a motion which denies not just the members of the legislature but, more importantly, denies citizens their rights to participate in the democratic process of this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, that's what this debate is all about. That's what this debate is all about. There is absolutely no hesitation or doubt in my mind that that is what we are doing here tonight. We are defending the rights of citizens to participate in the democratic process, unlike the members opposite, who would deny citizens the right to participate in the democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, that tendency, that mind-set, and that mood, as I . . . I would submit to you, sir, is the mind-set of an authoritarian government. That's the mind-set of authoritarianism.

We've already made this afternoon what I think . . . rather than drawing a long bow in regards to the activities of the government and the activities of a feudal monarchy, we have seen precisely how the parallels run on the same track. Now I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that, as the other side of that coin — the executive, if you like, and its relationship to the parliament — the other side of the coin is the parliament and its relationship to the citizenry. Because that's, Mr. Speaker, ultimately where the bottom line is drawn when it comes to what is democratic and what is not democratic.

I want to ask another question of the members opposite, because I think it's important that they answer not this one but also the other ones I put to them. Does this Bill enhance or does this Bill inhibit — pardon me, Mr. Speaker — does this motion enhance or does this motion inhibit the ability of citizens of Saskatchewan to

participate in the affairs of their province?

The argument I will now make for some period of time, Mr. Speaker, is this: is that this bell-ringing, this motion to limit bell-ringing, inhibits the citizenry of Saskatchewan to participate in the affairs of their government, and that far from having bell-ringing as an anti-democratic exercise, the only anti-democratic exercise that we see here in the last several weeks has been this government's attempt to silence the opposition and inhibit citizens from participating in the democratic process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what constitutes inhibiting citizenry in the democratic process? Well we know that there are a number of factors. One is the denial of certain fundamental, basic facts that are cherished by all those who call themselves democrats. First and foremost of those is the right to freedom of speech.

Secondly, the right of freedom of assembly. Thirdly is the right to form themselves, the citizenry to form itself to not only seek redress but to ensure that redress is done as it was in the case, for example, of the barons and their opposition and the ability of them to deal with Henry IV, and the ability of the barons in feudal England to force Henry IV to undertake certain things that will be done, including not collecting wool taxes, or not imposing new levies on them that weren't in existence before.

But as part of the democratic process and tradition, the right of Assembly to force the government to do those things, which the citizenry don't want it to be done, is also an elementary democratic right. The right to either directly, or indirectly, participate in the affairs of government, whether by way of election of representatives, or by seeking elected office, or through forms of direct democracy which have existed for numerous years in this province and which exist on a day-to-day basis; whether it's in the Kinsmen club, or the Kinettes club, or the Lions club, or whether it's any of the service organizations where members get together and vote on the direction that those organizations would take — an example of direct democracy.

And all those things which allow the citizenry to come together and to directly exercise influence over those things which would affect them, all those relate to the enhancement of democracy. I don't think that there's any argument . . . I don't think any member on the other side would argue with that, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that they would in theory — I don't think that they would in theory.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've outlined four, four of what are probably some of the fundamental aspects as it operates in practice of what democracy is all about.

First let's deal . . . First of all, does this Bill expand the limit to exercise freedom of speech? Or, on the contrary, Mr. Speaker, does this Bill confine . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Motion.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Pardon me. I am sorry, I keep getting mixed up; it is motion, Mr. Speaker. There is only one reading on this and it's a motion to limit bell-ringing, not a Bill. I want to make that clear that when I use Bill, I sometimes tend to

use interchangeably with the word motion.

But motion, Mr. Speaker, motion is this. Does this motion allow freedom of speech to flourish or does it trample on freedom of speech? Mr. Speaker, I think any fair and honest observer of politics in this province realizes that this motion to limit bell-ringing tramples on the right of freedom of speech.

And here is why. All we have to do is look back to the last little while in this province — the political affairs when the bells were ringing and the citizens of the province, open line radio shows, television interviews, letters to the editor in the press, editorials in the press, direct representations made to their elected representatives, postering, meetings.

And I remember in particular a meeting of April 19 in Martin Collegiate in which over 500 people gathered in my constituency to oppose privatization — over 500, Mr. Speaker — an event which quickly escalated as the bells rung, and thousands of citizens met in Assembly around this province, first and foremost in formal meetings to make known their opposition.

The bells were ringing. There was no limit on bells ringing; there was no motion which to deny citizens that opportunity to use the breathing space that the bell-ringing episode provided.

Freedom of speech, Mr. Speaker, was fanned and was fed by the bell-ringing. As part of the fundamental democratic right, and as part of the fundamental democratic processes which lead to the overall self-governance of society, people spoke out and spoke out strongly on this particular issue. Mr. Speaker, that would not have occurred, I submit to you, had not the bells of this Assembly not rung.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, if the case is, is that the citizens speaking out on issues which affect them, and which affect their families, such as this writer mentioned in her letter, that she thought that families in Saskatchewan would be affected by this motion; Mr. Speaker, if it is the case that bell-ringing enhanced freedom of speech in Saskatchewan; I ask you, sir, with all due respect, why is it that the government opposite is trying to limit that tool which enhances democracy as opposed to which tramples on democracy? It makes no sense to me, Mr. Speaker, particularly since those members opposite claim to be the great defenders of democracy.

**An Hon. Member:** — Let's leave the government behind closed cabinet doors.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, unless you believe, as my friend and colleague from Moose Jaw North says, a government behind closed cabinet doors as the only criteria for what constitutes democracy in this province, I think that the members opposite do not have one logical leg to stand on when it comes to arguing that this motion to limit bell-ringing will enhance freedom of speech.

Reality says that that is just not so. Reality says that that is just not so, and it's not just here is Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We can look back from the days of the Irish nationalists, and Parnell, in the British House of Commons, who used that tactic to bring the plight of Ireland to the attention of the monarch and the British people.

(1930)

Now there are those who say that they were obstructive and disruptive. And I ask, Mr. Speaker, and again it's speaking from the dawn of history, looking back into the past at the sweep of human affairs. Mr. Speaker, perhaps if those in the parliament of Britain had not tried to limit those gathered together in the Irish nationalist cause, the ensuing centuries of bloodshed might not have come to pass. That, in fact, if the Irish nationalists and their grievances had been redressed as it is for most of the 26 counties of Ireland south of the partition, in which we don't see the violence and the bloodshed and the civil war, perhaps if the rest of Ireland had been treated by paying attention to the use of things like bell-ringing in the British parliament in 1741 and thereabouts, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, we would not be in the same situation that the families of Northern Ireland face.

That's perhaps. And as I've said, history in hindsight is often 20-20, but I suggest, sir, that whenever dissent is stamped out it does not deal with the cause of dissent. All it does is make the sore which is festering, deeper, wider, and in the case of Ireland much more fatal, Mr. Speaker.

And that is a lesson in regards to the rights of those in citizenry, in this case Ireland or in this case Saskatchewan, to engage in a democratic exercise called free speech. And once again, Mr. Speaker, I know that I have said it before. I want to just finish on that point — is that it does not, this motion does not enhance the rights of people in Saskatchewan to engage in free speech on a political level in matters that affect us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's the first element of some of those things which make up what constitutes civil liberties and democracy. The second element, I suggest to you, that is inhibited by this motion to limit bell-ringing, is the freedom of assembly, and not just in the abstract, but the freedom of assembly to get together in common cause to deal with the grievances which are on the minds of those who assemble.

Did the ringing of the bells in Saskatchewan help bring people together to talk about an issue which affected the whole of the province? Prima facie evidence for that, Mr. Speaker, given the results of what's happened. Did it help bring people together in not just the formal meetings, Mr. Speaker, that my leader went out and spoke to, to thousands and thousands of Saskatchewan people, not just to the thousands of people that the member from Saskatoon Riversdale was able to express and articulate their grievances in this regard. No, Mr. Speaker, there was another form of democracy taking place in this province outside and below what I would call the level of media consciousness. There were certain organic processes, in a sociological sense, that were happening here around this political question, and those processes and those things

that were done — and I'll enumerate some of them in a minute — not only helped but were spurred on by the ringing of the bells, because the ringing of the bells focused, crystallized, and put into perspective precisely what this whole notion of privatization was about.

Now what was the nature of the democratic assemblies that were being undertaken that this rules change would do away with, or would help do away with?

First of all, there is what is known in Saskatchewan as coffee row. And, Mr. Speaker, having visited many small towns, including towns in the constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood . . . let me assure you, sir, and as I know very well that all members of this House realize, that not only are there fine folk in Last Mountain-Touchwood, in that constituency, and the towns of Southey and Cupar, Raymore, and so on and so forth, but that those people in that constituency, as there were in the constituencies throughout this province, were getting together on coffee row to discuss this question.

And, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, as I went to the number of small towns and sat and had coffee and listened with these people, what struck me was, first of all, the knowledge that these people had in regards to the political situation in the province, and perhaps it's why Saskatchewan has the reputation of being the most politicized province of any political jurisdiction, I dare say, in North America, given its history.

And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, as part of that politicization, sir, there can be no doubt in anybody's mind that as that politicization occurs, so does the strengthening of democracy. Because as that politicization occurs, each and every individual citizen of this province realizes that they have a stake in whatever political issue — and in this case the privatization of SaskPower — of what is going on, that each and every citizen has a direct interest in determining the future of this province.

Coffee row, Mr. Speaker, coffee row, that time-honoured tradition in this province, was alive and well, and the democracy of the streets, the Demos, the democracy of the people, where people live, because not many people live in this institution.

But let me tell you: on coffee row democracy was alive and well — not only in terms of the debates, not only in terms of the gibes and the quarrels of a partisan political nature, but more importantly, the issue itself was being dissected with all its ramifications. People understand and people understood that political issue.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that the bell-ringing enhanced that democratic, the actual Demos, in Saskatchewan in a way that we have seldom seen in this province, probably not since 1962 and the great debate around medicare.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what does the government have to say about that? If that is true, if coffee row was alive and well and the democracy of reality was out there alive and well — if that was true, how can a limit on ringing the bells be anything other than anti-democratic? Only, Mr. Speaker, you can only say it is anti-democratic if you don't believe

that people arguing, debating, discussing political issues around the province is something other than democracy. Only if you believe that democracy exists away from the people; that freedom of speech is something that is divorced from reality; that freedom of assembly is something that occurs only in textbooks of political theory; can one say that the bell-ringing in Saskatchewan to stop the privatization of SaskPower was anti-democratic.

As I submit, that coffee row was strengthened and the democracy in coffee row, the kind of democracy, Mr. Speaker, that leads people to make informed choices as citizens when it comes to election time because, Mr. Speaker, it is on that basis that we are all, at least in theory . . . Goodness knows in some of our cases, it's certainly not based on our good looks, but Mr. Speaker, that is based on, particularly in Saskatchewan . . . I hear the member from Moose Jaw North cackling there. And I shouldn't use the word "cackle." He's having a hearty chuckle at that. He knows that obviously I can't be referring to myself in that matter.

Mr. Speaker, coffee row was strengthened by that debate. But you know, there are other things, Mr. Speaker. There were other forms of freedom of assembly to discuss political issues which took place during that debate. Mr. Speaker, there were schools around this province who invited in speakers from both political parties represented in this legislature to speak on this matter, and there were school assemblies held to discuss what was going on.

Mr. Speaker, church organizations dealt with the matter, as people discussed it openly when they got together either after the formal religious service or when they were meeting in presbytery or when they were meeting in all the forums that exist in this province for people to determine the fate, to determine the fate of the church affairs.

People discussed it. It was discussed all over the province, Mr. Speaker. One would have to be deaf to say otherwise.

That's all I have to say on the question of the right of freedom of assembly, Mr. Speaker, because it was enhanced by ringing the bells. We had exercised, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, not just the right of freedom of assembly on everyday life, if you like. There were much more formal freedoms of assembly held in this province, much more formal manifestations of the right of freedom of assembly held in this province, with the avowed intention of deterring the government from its course. Let me say, Mr. Speaker, there can be no higher democratic pursuit than for those citizens to join together under the rubric of freedom of assembly, in order to change the government from a course that those, the citizens, believe is an incorrect choice.

Mr. Speaker, did or did not occur during the bell-ringing episode, political meetings of a scope and magnitude not witnessed in this province in decades, if at all? That's the question I want to ask those members opposite. Did not political meetings to discuss the issue of Sask . . . the privatization of SaskPower occur during that time or not?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is obvious. Citizens of this province got together, joined together, banded together, in common cause to deter the government from the course it was set upon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, meetings took place all across this province involving literally tens of thousands of citizens joined together to try to find ways in which the government could be deterred from its course. As I said earlier, my own constituency of Regina . . . In Regina, Regina Rosemont, Martin Collegiate drew 500 people. In the constituency of the member from Elphinstone, 1,200 people, representing people from all over the city.

Mr. Speaker, in Redberry, the constituency of Redberry, represented by a government member, there were five meetings in one day of the citizenry of Redberry constituency to band together to figure out ways to oppose the privatization of SaskPower. In North Battleford, in Yorkton, in Prince Albert, in Weyburn, in Swift Current — Mr. Speaker, from one end of this province to the other, from Big Beaver to Stony Rapids — people of Saskatchewan met together in common cause to deter the government.

Mr. Speaker, is that democratic? Is or is that not a democratic exercise? I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that democracy in action or isn't it? The members who accuse us of engaging in anti-democratic activity owe that explanation to the people of this province.

How is it, I ask you, colleagues, how is it that when thousands and thousands of citizens join together in common cause on a political activity to exercise their right of freedom of assembly, how is that anti-democratic? What is the rationale and what is the logic for that kind of thinking, Mr. Speaker?

(1945)

There is absolutely nothing — only, Mr. Speaker, only one reason, and that is to muzzle not just the opposition here in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, but to use this motion to change the rules to try to muzzle the opposition of the people of this province to a course that they do not want the government to pursue. That is the only reason, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — I ask you, Mr. Speaker, from the point of view of freedom of speech, from the point of view of freedom of assembly, from the point of view of common action, of common democratic action, who are the defenders of democracy and who are those who would eviscerate democracy?

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the bell-ringing exercise that we have undertaken in this province showed the people of Saskatchewan who really stand for the voice of the people and who will put the muzzle on, Mr. Speaker. We know that they want to put the muzzle on.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, this letter by this citizen who

watched the debate on this motion has caught precisely that spirit — that this debate is about what constitutes democracy and what constitutes legitimate political activity.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I've been listening to the hon. member's argument, and while there is an issue of democracy involved, I really don't believe that this debate is intended solely as a wide-ranging, absolute, historical review of democracy. It's a part of that; it's part of that; but certainly the motion itself doesn't deal with that specifically. And while certainly that can be dealt with, you, sir, are a . . . have been using that argument virtually all day as the essence of your debate. And I don't believe that this motion is intended as a wide-ranging, total historical view of democracy. If that were the case, there'd be no limit at all.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the point of view of democracy as it exists from one month past to the present day, I will, in the next little while, limit my remarks, as I have for the last half-hour, regarding, did not the bell-ringing, did it enhance freedom of speech — yes or no? The bell-ringing here in Saskatchewan. Yes. Did it? Yes or no? Yes.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Did not the bell-ringing which took place in Saskatchewan enhance freedom of assembly? Yes or no?

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Did it not enhance, Mr. Speaker, democratic action? I'm talking about the bell-ringing of a few weeks past, Mr. Speaker. What this motion is about, which would limit that, Mr. Speaker, that is precisely . . . I have proven, I think beyond a doubt, that we had the constitutional and the moral obligations to do what we did.

Now I am saying to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, that our activities enhance democracy in its widest form. Because this legislature stands as a symbol, Mr. Speaker. This legislature stands as a symbol of democracy. It is not democracy. This legislature is not democracy; it is a symbol of democracy as an institution.

So I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that only those who believe that democracy can exist inside these four walls would ever, ever, take the view that limiting the rights of the opposition, and hence limiting the rights of the citizenry to participate in democratic affairs, somehow destroys democracy.

Because I guess, Mr. Speaker, if that's the position that those members opposite are taking, that somehow democracy exists only in this place, then what is all this cant and what is all this *brouha* about public participation? That's what it is, that's what it is: cant and empty air and *brouha*.

Because there was a recognition, Mr. Speaker, that democracy, even the blindest, even the blindest neo-authoritarian legislators, those who say to

themselves that the only place we're going to rule is behind closed cabinet doors — even those, Mr. Speaker, understands that in reality democracy exists beyond the walls of this Chamber, exists mightily beyond the walls of this Chamber.

And I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that, given the conduct of the members opposite, that in most other institutions in this great province of Saskatchewan, democracy flourishes at a height much higher than these members would like to see it exist, Mr. Speaker. Otherwise, how could they possibly take the position they have in regards to this motion which would limit the ringing of the bells?

Mr. Speaker, what are some of the other fundamental elements of democracy as we have come to know them? Well we've dealt with freedom of speech; we've dealt with freedom of assembly; we've dealt with freedom of democratic action that is joined together — all those things outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But there's a few others we haven't dealt with, Mr. Speaker. So let's put this motion of the government, let's use this as the litmus up against those other aspects.

Freedom of the press, Mr. Speaker. Does this motion enhance or does it restrict the democracy of the freedom of the press? Mr. Speaker, let me outline for you what I mean by freedom of the press. We all know that there's, in a very technical sense, there's only freedom of the press for those who own the press. So if you're a Michael Sifton or you're one of the big-business magnates that own the communications network in this country, then you do enjoy certain freedoms not enjoyed by the rest of the citizenry of this country.

But there's another fundamental meaning to freedom of the press above and beyond the right of the fourth estate to operate from freedom of government interference. Freedom of the press also implies, Mr. Speaker, the freedom to disseminate information to the widest possible audience of those who, whatever side of an issue they may be on, have an interest in that issue — to disseminate the widest possible information.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's look at what happened when the government tried to privatize SaskPower and see whether or not the bell-ringing, which this opposition used to oppose that move, helped to disseminate to the widest possible audience the information, the facts, the figures — no matter which side of the debate one happened to be on — to the people of this province.

In the first instance, Mr. Speaker, the opposition refused to allow introduction of the Bill — walked out, rang the bells in order to draw citizens' attention to the matter. That was the first act of dissemination of information. The opposition said, this is a matter which we think affects all people in the province of Saskatchewan. That was the first message, if you like, Mr. Speaker, that was sent out. And, Mr. Speaker, that message was picked up by the press and the press reported it, whether it was print or electronic or whatever . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order. I must draw to the member's attention we are not discussing freedom of the press except in a peripheral manner. He is devoting his

time, from what I can see, to discussing freedom of the press, and it's some peripheral matter attempting to relate it to bell-ringing. But that's not the main issue.

Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, point of order.

**The Speaker:** — What is the point of order?

**Mr. Kowalsky:** — Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to your ruling, I also have been listening to the member speaking, and I've been listening very diligently. And I find that he has been relating something which I feel is very, very important to the people of Saskatchewan and relating it to this motion. I can't see how the motion can be interpreted in any narrow sense. It applies to the entire, entire democratic process in this legislature.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I'd like to remind the hon. member that I have made a ruling. I have given wide latitude in this debate. My rulings are not debatable. I've been certainly giving wide latitude to people in their debates, and I'm just reminding people that they must try to stay on the topic. And I will continue to do that.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will try to relate directly the attack on the right of we in the opposition to disseminate information to the people of this province on how the motion to ring . . . to stop the bells from ringing in this legislature, how that directly ties together.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that we don't have to go outside a very narrowly defined view of what constitutes one of the fundamental tenets of democracy in this province, in this legislature, and that is the right to disseminate information, i.e., freedom of the press, freedom to get information out.

This motion, Mr. Speaker, I submit to you, sir, in all due respects, inhibits that. And those who say that it doesn't, those who say that it enhances it, have an obligation to stand up and say that, Mr. Speaker. They've got to prove to the people of the province that it helps get out information.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — We're talking about, Mr. Speaker, a motion which arose directly out of a political event. We're not talking about something that arose out of a whim or arose out of the twisted mind of maybe one of the members opposite. We're talking directly about this motion and its relationship to the fundamental tenets of democracy.

Because, Mr. Speaker, that notion was raised by members opposite that the bell-ringing was anti-democratic, and they went on at great lengths and spread their arguments over a wide range of precisely why it was anti-democratic. And I submit to you, sir, that I'm being a much more narrow . . . making a much more narrow and precise argument than any of those members did. And I say so, Mr. Speaker, because the ringing of the bells resulted in the massive dissemination of information regarding the government's intervention.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, I think to say otherwise is to belie the reality which has taken place in this province. On the one hand, we in the opposition stormed up and down this province giving our side of the issue of why the government was trying to privatize SaskPower — right? — breaking their promises. All the ideas and all the reasons that we put forward, Mr. Speaker, in a political act, and I'll make no bones about that, we were out to inform the citizens of this province of what we thought what the government was doing.

Mr. Speaker, that was a dissemination of information, and it was a form of freedom of the press that I tell you, sir, unless the officers of the legislature and members who sit in this legislature are not prepared to defend that actions and don't see that as a fundamental form of democracy, God help democracy in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Let me tell you, the day that someone says that we can't have the right to disseminate information to the people of this province, then we are in one sorry state — one sorry state.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, as it turned out, we did. We went out and presented our response, our side of the story, and the government responded. And earlier on today I made reference to the fact that they set up these commissions and set up all these things of SaskEnergy to go around and put forward their side of the story. Mr. Speaker, you know, we don't like it. We think it was a waste of taxpayers' money, but the government did it, and so be it.

(2000)

Now, Mr. Speaker, standing back from the partisan nature of that, did the ringing of the bells help both sides of this legislature get their messages out? Mr. Speaker, that's the question. Did our actions of ringing the bells, which the government now wants to limit, did it help the government even in getting its message out? Because, Mr. Speaker, it forced them into an expensive advertising campaign, and it forced them into these commissions, but at least they took the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity engendered by the bell-ringing which this motion will now limit.

Mr. Speaker, I think that that is a rather narrow argument tying that together. I don't think that's wandering very far afield. I don't think it is drawing a long bow in saying that we help the government by ringing the bells.

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

**The Speaker:** — I just want to remind the hon. member that I have made a ruling and he's perfectly aware of it, and I do not wish him to make any references to possible . . . his personal doubts about that ruling, either directly or indirectly. And I just ask him to carry on with his remarks.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I

certainly didn't intend to cast any doubts on your ruling, and I think if you check *Hansard* that there will be absolutely no intent, implied or explicit in that regard, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think any fair and honest judge of Saskatchewan politics will realize that not only did the opposition help get its message out by ringing the bells, it also spurred the government on to get its message. And so, Mr. Speaker, we now stand at a point in our history where the people themselves, the Demos, those who have the most to deal with in democracy, they will then make the decision.

Mr. Speaker, how is that anti-democratic? How is keeping information or helping . . . Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, let's put it this way. How is helping to get information about the privatization of SaskPower out to the people of this province anti-democratic? It takes a twisted and perverse mind, Mr. Speaker, I submit, to say so.

Because, Mr. Speaker, look at the obverse — look at the obverse. If the bells didn't ring, which this motion would stop it from doing, we wouldn't have been going around the province in the manner we did because we would be forced to attend to duties in this House. The government probably wouldn't have gone around and done its thing — the expensive advertising campaign, its road show.

And the citizens of the province, Mr. Speaker, I submit, would have been poorer off for it because they would have been less informed. There would not have been that kind of information which engendered the democratic debate which took place, and of which I spoke earlier, in the first place, if not the bells had run.

So on the litmus test of whether or not this motion, Mr. Speaker, will help or will hinder the right of the Assembly and the right of the government and the opposition to engage in that kind of political debate, I think that this motion, Mr. Speaker, fails on that count.

Mr. Speaker, this motion fails on the litmus test of does it enhance freedom of speech. It fails to enhance that; it fails to enhance freedom of assembly; it fails to enhance concentrated democratic action; and it fails to enhance freedom of the press, freedom of dissemination of information. How then, can it be anything but anti-democratic itself, Mr. Speaker? And how can it be anything else but wrong?

Now, Mr. Speaker, what are some of the other fundamental tenets of democracy that this motion goes to inhibit? Well, you don't have to think very long or very broadly to come up with some of the answers. One of the democratic rights and freedoms that we enjoy in this province is the ability to express by way of petition — and I'm not going to go into a long argument about that, Mr. Speaker, because that's recognized here in the legislature and was recognized on the street. It didn't stop people from petitioning. In fact it encouraged people to petition for their redress of their grievance.

So, Mr. Speaker, the bell-ringing enhanced the petitioning. Even the very operation of this legislature was enhanced by the bell-ringing. And for the life of me, Mr.



Speaker, I cannot see how it is that democracy is strengthened by this motion and that limiting bell-ringing is somehow anti-democratic just on using what we have come to regard as basic civil liberties — as basic civil liberties. All those things — the right of freedom of speech and the right of freedom of expression and so on and so forth — all those things have been enhanced by what we in the opposition did.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of democracy, my case rests.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Because, Mr. Speaker, I think that any fair-minded person in this province understands what the opposition did and agrees that, while they may have been on the other side of the issue, except for those with the narrowest of partisan political purposes . . . Only those with the narrowest of purposes, which sees democracy as something that is to be kept in the back rooms of the back-room boys of the Conservative Party; only those with the kind of perverse ideology which sees democracy as being okay for the boards of directors of shareholders, but not for its employees; only those who see democracy in its most limited form; only those who see democracy as an exercise that's carried out once every four years by marking an X on a ballot; only those people, Mr. Speaker, would term what we did as anti-democratic.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the next election comes, when the next election rolls around and the citizens of this province have a choice to make as to who stood up for democracy, and giving the citizens of this province the right to participate directly in the affairs that govern them, in this case stopping the privatization of SaskPower, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that it won't be the opposition that the citizens of this province castigate. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that what will happen is that they will trample . . . There will be a stampede to the ballot box to drive those people, those people who would limit the democratic rights of the people of this province, to drive them from the seats they presently occupy.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, of that in my mind there is no doubt, and there is no doubt of that in the minds of the people of this province. And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt of that in the minds of the members opposite. Because, Mr. Speaker, and here we get down to the final, if you like, argument that I am going to make this evening. It may be somewhat lengthy, but judging from the reaction, Mr. Speaker, judging from the reaction from the members opposite, some of what I am saying is beginning to strike home a little bit.

Some of those people opposite may realize, may realize that those who trample on democracy now, those who chip away at enhancing the basic civil liberties of the people of this province — and it may look like a small thing today, but it may be a big thing tomorrow — even those people, Mr. Speaker, even those people realize that democracy is not best served even from their point of view.

Now it may well be, Mr. Speaker, that this motion serves

the overall political game plan of the Progressive Conservative government of this province. And I think, in fact, Mr. Speaker, that this motion to limit the bell-ringing is an intricate part of their plan. What their plan, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you is this: they have put forward this motion to stop the opposition from ringing the bells in order to do a number of things. Let's examine what those things are.

The first, Mr. Speaker, I suggest, is that it is the political game plan of the Conservative government to, after this motion has passed, and as a consequence of passing this motion, then at a time that they feel is politically convenient, go ahead, reintroduce those Bills, in this case Bill 21, which led to the bell-ringing in the first place; that at some convenient time you will see the Minister of Finance or one of the front-benchers reintroduce this Bill to privatize SaskPower — Bill 21, An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act.

And they will use, Mr. Speaker, they will use this motion that presently is before the House in order to ram this Bill and all those other Bills that lead to the privatization of SaskPower, ram it through the House in a desperate attempt to achieve their political ends, which of course is to try to buy — as they did the last election — to buy the next election.

Mr. Speaker, that's what this motion is all about. In the narrow, dark, and dirty world of partisan politics engaged in by the government opposite, this motion is to privatize public utilities in the province of Saskatchewan so that the proceeds of those public utilities can be turned around to use to try to buy the votes on a one-time, short-term basis, the next election.

Mr. Speaker, we saw what happened in the last election when the government used government largess, in this case from the federal government, to bolster itself in a last ditch effort to stave off political defeat. This motion, Mr. Speaker, will lead to an unfolding of a scenario which will do the same thing, or attempt to do the same thing for this government.

Mr. Speaker, this is the political motive behind this motion that we're debating here. There can be no other explanation. They'll sell off SaskPower, they'll sell off the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, they'll sell off Saskatchewan Government Insurance, despite and against the wishes and expressed wishes of the people of this province that they do so.

Mr. Speaker, this motion will give them the legislative ammunition in order to shoot the opposition and shoot and muzzle and strap the opposition's ability to oppose those things which the people of Saskatchewan do not want to happen.

And they will take, Mr. Speaker, the proceeds from the sales of those corporations — and there's a billion dollars from the potash corporation; they undervalued it by a billion dollars, but there's a billion dollars there — and using this motion and ramming through the sale of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, they will take that billion dollars, and I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that we'll see the Minister of Finance, as he's already indicated to this

House, go around and say to this municipality or to that rural municipality or this urban municipality, Mr. Speaker, how should we spend that money?

And the people of the province are going to say, gee, we didn't want you to sell the potash corporation or SaskPower or Sask Government Insurance or Sask telephones in the first place. Maybe you should use the money to buy it back. And he says, no, no, no, that's all gone; that's all over and done with. And why, Mr. Speaker? What for? To try to buy political support in those areas that they know they need to buy political support in. Because when you're standing at 28 per cent in the polls, as this government is doing, and the opposition is over 50 per cent, poking around 56 per cent, Mr. Speaker, you bet your bottom dollar that this government will do everything in its power to try to buy themselves back into power in the next election, and they will use this motion to carry out that political operation.

Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, otherwise why wouldn't the government be dealing with the business of this province? They have a political game plan. They are sticking to that political game plan and it doesn't matter what's going on out in the real world. They're interested in one thing, and that is ensuring that their political game plan go ahead.

(2015)

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the people of this province, more and more . . . That is the way in which the people of this province are more and more looking at this debate. They ask themselves: why would the government, faced with massive farm debt, all the problems it's faced . . . I don't have to go into a list of the problems that the people of Saskatchewan face. We just had a report the other day that talked about how the infant mortality rate, and the mortality rate in northern Saskatchewan, is a national scandal here in Saskatchewan. But instead of trying to deal with something like that, instead of having the Minister of Health deal with something like that, what are they doing? They are dealing with a debate. They're dealing with a motion to muzzle bell-ringing. That's what they're doing, Mr. Speaker. Right?

Why wouldn't they be dealing with the problems of northern health care? After all, Mr. Speaker, the aboriginal peoples of this province have a long and valued tradition of a democratic way of life in which decisions were made collectively. And whether those decisions were to pull up camp and follow the caribou up through Stony Rapids and Wollaston Lake and Woldaia Lake and up into the Territories, that kind of democratic tradition which existed in the North, Mr. Speaker, and that kind of way of life is being ruined by the kind of misery those people face. And why isn't the government dealing with that? Why are they dealing with this motion?

You know, Mr. Speaker . . . And I'm not talking about health in the abstract; I am talking about there are young people in northern Saskatchewan who are literally — literally — starving and have all the signs of malnutrition, including rickets, something that we thought was abolished in this province. But does the government want to deal with those real problems? Does it want to deal with those real problems? No. It wants to deal with this

rules motion.

I ask you, how can that be? Why is it? What's going on? You know, is it a question of warped priorities? You know, that was the initial explanation, that the government had some kind of warped priorities. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I have now rejected that explanation. I have rejected that explanation because this is part of the government's political game plan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Bill 41 . . . The House Leader, the deputy House Leader, made a great to-do about the opposition dealing with Bill 41. And they wrote letters and put it out to the press to try to somehow blunt the criticism that the press and the people of this province made in regards to the priorities that the government is pursuing. The people in the press were saying, why are you guys following this motion? Why are you ramming this bell-ringing motion at the opposition? It doesn't make any sense.

And the deputy House Leader wrote a letter to our House Leader and said: why? Let's deal with Bill 41 on Wednesday, this Wednesday — yesterday. But what happened, Mr. Speaker? Now he doesn't need the permission of the opposition to deal with any Bills. As you well know, the government determines what is introduced into the legislature and no amount of propagandistic letter writing by the deputy House Leader can change that fundamental fact.

But when Wednesday came around, and after we on this side said, hey, we want to deal with Bill 41, which is The Agricultural Credit Corporation Act, to amend it — and there are some aspects there that I'm sure members on this side of the House will find cause to support — instead of dealing with that, which tends to grapple with the question of farm debt in this province, what did we see? What have we seen? We've seen a government that had the opportunity and the expressed permission and co-operation of the opposition to deal with that on Tuesday, the private members' day. What happened? No. Did the government introduce that Bill? No. No they didn't, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, when Wednesday rolled around, that is yesterday rolled around, when they had the opportunity and the deputy House Leader had made a great hullabaloo about the necessity to introduce Bill 41 and get it dealt with in the fastest possible time, did the government, did the deputy House Leader go, Wednesday morning or Wednesday at 2:30 after question period, introduce that particular piece of legislation? No. No he didn't; brought back this debate.

Okay, so maybe something happened that he couldn't do it yesterday. Well what about today? What about today? Why didn't he put Bill 41, the Bill to deal with farm debt in this province; the Bill that that deputy minister will, once it's introduced, trumpet to be the salvation of family farmers in Saskatchewan; the one, the centrepiece of their agricultural strategy. Instead of dealing with that particular piece of legislation, did he deal with it in the orders of the day? No.

What he did, Mr. Speaker, was brought this motion

forward which would limit, and I think I've outlined in rather broad terms, but also in terms which everybody in this province can understand, brought in a Bill which would limit the functioning of this House, the functioning of us as members, and the functioning of the citizens of this province to engage in the democratic process.

Why? That's the question I ask, is why are they doing this. There is no other answer than to say it is a part of the political priorities of the government in terms of its political game plan which is totally divorced, totally and absolutely divorced from the real problems facing real people in Saskatchewan. That's why.

I mean we have every opportunity in the world to be dealing with legislation which is fundamental, fundamental to the everyday lives of Saskatchewan's citizens. Instead, what we've got is a shoddy piece of goods cooked up by the Minister of Justice in order to limit the rights of the opposition, to limit the rights of the citizenry of Saskatchewan — you know, to muzzle us, to muzzle the people.

Because, Mr. Speaker, I submit that the howls of protests that they received from the people of this province when we rang the bells the first time will be far, far, far exceeded by the next time that we have the opportunity to express in whatever manner we in the opposition choose to do it, our opposition to this government's attempt to sell off the assets of the people of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have had nearly two and a half days to consider the options open to them — two and a half days to consider the political options open to those members. They can spend, Mr. Speaker, they can spend one or two or three or four or five or however many long months it is going to take to convince them that we are not going to allow legislation through this House which would permit the sell-off of SaskPower. They can get that through their head, and that the only way they will be able to get that through the legislature is to receive a mandate from the people of this province to do so. And the only way they will receive the mandate from the people of this province in order so to do is to call an election and to receive the mandate that way. They better get that through their heads, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — That, sir, is one political option open to them.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — In other words, to put it bluntly, they can keep coming at us, and at the people of Saskatchewan, with this anti-democratic act that's got nothing to do with reality and nothing to do with the people of the province and only in the long-term and fundamental sense, or they can get to work. They can stop their parliamentary filibustering, their filibustering by the total misuse of the legislative agenda, and get on to issues of vital and real importance for the people of the province. That is their other option.

Now what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? Well they say,

well for political convenience and for the sake of our political face and for our honour, we can't appear to be backing off this issue, because after all we're the boss, and we're going to tell the opposition what to do and not vice versa.

Of course, when they say the opposition, they mean the people of this province, in their authoritarian manner that they've grown accustomed to. That's what they're talking about. They're saying to the people of the province, we're going to kick the opposition around a bit. We can't afford to save face in this matter, can't afford to appear to back down. And we know such a big macho guy like the Minister of Justice, he couldn't possibly get himself in a situation where it would appear that it would look like he was backing down. After all, he had the shoot-out at the OK corral with Willard Lutz, the Provincial Auditor. Now he's going to have it out with the provincial opposition.

I say, Mr. Speaker, as long as that attitude prevails in the front bench, that attitude of legislative machoism, I guess — I don't know what to call it — that kind of confrontational, we're-the-boss type of attitude exists, nothing is going to happen here. Nothing is going to happen here because we've got a mandate from the people; they don't. We stand as legitimate representatives of the people on this issue, and they don't. And we're willing to go to the people of this province on this issue, and they're not.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, I say to you, why are they doing this? Why are they doing this except for some narrow partisan political purposes? This motion, which would stop the ringing of bells in this legislature, does not deserve not one one-thousandth of the time of the debate that, should this government persist, that they're going to get — not one one-thousandth.

Now may I offer, Mr. Speaker, a few words of advice to my friends in the opposition, and I do have one or two — in the government, excuse me. It's a Freudian slip.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that there are ways out of this dilemma for them. Our House Leader and others in this caucus have suggested various ways in which if this government wants to talk about rules, it can proceed in a manner that has the support of this House both in terms of partisan support but also by way of precedent. Because, Mr. Speaker, I haven't yet talked about the precedent of this House.

Well what is the way out, Mr. Speaker? Well, Mr. Speaker, they could do like every other meeting of this legislature in this province has done in the past. They could set up a rules committee to examine the rules of the legislature in all its varied forms and manifestations. Mr. Speaker, they could set that committee up with yourself, as has been the tradition in past, with yourself as chairperson; Mr. Speaker, with officers of the legislature on staff such as the Clerk of the House or the legislative law counsel to assist the work of that committee.

They could take a reasoned approach to the matter. They could remove it from here, because obviously it seems to

me, Mr. Speaker, that the government has made a fundamental political flaw in trying to deal with this, is that they have inextricably linked the question of the change of the rules to the legislature, with the whole issue of the privatization of SaskPower.

Now that, Mr. Speaker, is, in negotiating terms, something which I would have some little knowledge of. That is a bad, bad position to start out in trying to do any kinds of negotiation, in terms of change of whatever kind, whether it's legislative or contractual or whatever. You never start out in a position where A is linked to B and A depends upon B. It's just not done, because it leads to the kinds of impasses in which the government finds itself opposite.

(2030)

And the impasse in which the members opposite find themselves is this: in our mind, in the minds of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, your attempt to change the rules of the legislature, specifically to limit bell-ringing, is inextricably linked — as I've demonstrated by the use of a letter a little while ago — inextricably linked to the question of your so-called bound and determination to put forward your privatization measures.

That's the political conundrum that the members opposite find themselves in, Mr. Speaker. Everybody in this province knows that the only reason that this motion is before the House is that because they want to ram through the privatization Bills. And this party and our leader has made a commitment to the people of Saskatchewan, and I stand with our leader in that commitment, that as long as we remain representatives of the people in this House, they will never, ever, ever proceed with the privatization of SaskPower, Mr. Speaker — never.

So, Mr. Speaker, that kind of commitment, which is a strong and a firm commitment on behalf of the members here, made by our Leader and held by every member of this caucus opposite, unfortunately the government has gone and linked this particular commitment to stop privatization to the question of rule changes in the legislature.

And there's only one way out, Mr. Speaker, of the conundrum they find themselves in, by trying to put forward this motion. There's only one way out.

And I suggest, in all due respect, and to members of the front bench of the government opposite, that they'd better take that way out before what goes around comes around in political terms. I suggest that they better take that out; that is, follow the precedent of the House. There is not one person in Saskatchewan who is going to say, gee, the government did bad by following the precedent of the House in terms of changing the rules. Not one person in this province is going to have that opinion of the government, Mr. Speaker, in terms of dealing with this motion.

But what will happen, I suggest, that as the days and the weeks drag by, and as more and more people of this

province realize that the government, instead of dealing with the real problems of the people of this province, are intent on pursuing what has become nothing more than a blind political agenda . . . And that determination will be shown by how long they keep throwing this motion forward, because it's the government that determines what the order of business is and what the business of this House is, not the opposition.

So they will on a daily basis make that decision, Mr. Speaker. But they've got a way out, they've got a way out to deal with this which involves . . . Let's use the Japanese term for it, face-saving, that involves the kind of political face-saving that the government feels it needs, they can get. We in the opposition aren't so concerned about saving face as we are concerned about saving SaskPower.

But I say to the ministers opposite, in particular to the Minister of Justice and to the Minister of Finance who's had some skill in negotiating deals in the past, that it may be in your long-term best interests, Mr. Speaker, to set up a committee to remove from the partisan politics which have permeated the House in a manner unprecedented in this province since 1982, I submit, or since 1964, that they've got the opportunity to do it. And they've got the opportunity and the political space is now in order to carry forward that particular operation. Because like all windows in politics, the window begins to shut. And those who are only half-way through the window, those who are only half-way through the window generally end up with their fingers badly banged up, badly burnt. That's the political compromise. That's the way to deal with it; that's the way to deal with it. It's your decision to deal with.

We can go ahead, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can go ahead and debate this motion till — to use the words of the Deputy Premier — till the cows come home. We can go ahead and do that. Because there is lots and lots of ways that we can deal with this particular motion, Mr. Speaker, mark my words about that.

But what I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, is that at this point in time the members opposite may take a word of well intended, friendly advice, and that is to seek an out while that out is still available. Maybe they don't want to, Mr. Speaker. Maybe they don't want to because maybe they are so wedded to their political strategy that they're on the long, long, downhill slide to the great big mud hole that's at the bottom of that particular slippery slope. Because that hole is marked political oblivion.

And if you need any, any other example from the real world, from the real world, any other example, look what has happened in the last month in this province. Look what has happened to you and to your reputations, not just as a member of a government, but as individual members.

Look at what's happening in your own constituencies. I know some of you don't like going out there any more. I know you don't like going out there any more because of the heat that you're taking. But some members aren't taking much heat because not necessarily talking with those who oppose what they're doing, I'll admit that. You look at the polls. You look at the things that you live and

die by. You look at the weather vanes that you've been watching since 1980, '81, '82, and those weather vanes for you, my friends, are pointing in the direction which is neither east, west, north, or south, but pointing straight down — pointing straight down into that political mudhole that you are now beginning to feel. Because as your little toes begin to tickle in that cold, icy water of . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. I believe the member is just deferring or moving away from the topic of motion of discussion here, and we're dealing specific with rules, not the demise or so of a government or members opposite.

**An Hon. Member:** — Have you been listening all day?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I've been listening very closely.

**An Hon. Member:** — All day?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Member from Moose Jaw South, are you questioning the Chair? Moose Jaw North, sorry. Moose Jaw North to show some respect to the Chair.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I say, Mr. Speaker, that probably the state of the members' toes opposite is somewhat far afield from the questions of the rules. I wasn't speaking of toes, of course, in the literal sense. I was speaking toes only in the course of the political sense, of the political antenna and extremities of the members opposite must be feeling by now some cold showers of reality.

I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, for the life of me . . . I don't understand for the life of me, when an offer, the one I just outlined, was presented earlier on to that caucus, presented earlier on to that government, why the members opposite didn't jump at the chance to take it. It doesn't make any sense. Who, Mr. Speaker, who has convinced them that this motion and the day after day after day debating of this motion is going to serve them politically in the long run. Who? Who did it?

Now one of the members asked: why is it being debated so long? That member, Mr. Speaker, I believe it's the member from Pelly. The member from Pelly obviously does not understand the proceedings of the legislature. I would ask the member from Pelly to pick up the little brown book that he has here, that he finds on his desk, on page 1 under No. 48, No. 48 is the number of days we've been sitting in the legislature: *Routine Proceedings and Orders of the Day* of the Legislative Assembly, province of Saskatchewan, third session, twenty-first legislature, Regina, Thursday, June 1, 1989. Prayers. Then routine proceedings.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I've said this twice, and that member has been in the House, so I'm not going to repeat this more than this one, and if he actually has any more questions about it, perhaps two more times.

Mr. Speaker, the member has got to understand this, that it is his front bench, not the opposition, it is his front bench which determines the order of business. The member sitting there, the member from Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, the Minister of Finance, the

Minister of Justice, the minister there, determine routine proceedings. It lists five or six routine proceedings: 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; introduction of Bills. And then, Mr. Speaker, at the bottom it says: orders of the day.

Now I asked the member from Pelly, who asked me that, why are we debating this Bill? I'm going to give him the answer now, and if he wants to listen, if he wants to listen, I would say, Mr. Speaker, I would say . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — I said why are we debating this so long?

**Mr. Lyons:** — Oh, now he asked me a different question. I'll answer the first question first. The first question is: why are we debating this Bill? Mr. Speaker, we're debating this Bill because the government and the caucus of the party and the legislature to which that member belongs has made a decision to debate that Bill . . . to debate this motion, excuse me, Mr. Speaker, to debate the motion which would ring the bell . . . which would limit bell-ringing.

They made that decision, Mr. Speaker, not we in the opposition, but the government made that decision. Now the member asks: why are we debating this Bill for so long? Well, I'll tell you why. I'll tell you why, Mr. Member of the Legislative Assembly for Pelly, why we're debating this Bill for so long. We're debating this Bill for so long because we know that this Bill is nothing more than the legislative ammunition that you need to sell off Saskatchewan, and first and foremost SaskPower. We know, Mr. Speaker, that that is what this motion is all about. And we will debate this motion, my good friend from Pelly, we will debate this motion, as the Deputy Premier said, till the cows come home.

So that, Mr. Member, Mr. Pelly, is the reason why we're debating this motion so long. Now listen, we're here as political parties and you can decide what your political priorities are any day you want.

Who put it on the agenda today? Was it us? Was it the member from Elphinstone? Was it the member from Regina Centre? Was it the leader of our party, the member from Riversdale? Did he put it on the agenda today? Who put it on the agenda today? Who put it on the agenda today, Mr. Member from Pelly? The Premier of this province put this motion on the . . . (inaudible) . . .

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, that's who did it, Mr. Member from Pelly. It was your leader, your Premier. Now your leader and your Premier, Mr. Member from Pelly, will have a decision to make. You ask the question, why are we debating it for so long?

Well, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the questions from the member from Pelly, let me say this, that the length to which we debate this motion will not be decided by the opposition, but it will be decided by, guess who? Will it

be the member from Elphinstone? No. Will it be the member from Riversdale? No. The member from Lake Centre? No. They won't decide how long we debate this Bill.

(2045)

You will decide it, Mr. Member from Pelly? One person in this legislature will decide the length of this debate. Mr. Speaker, that one person is not a mystery person; he's not a mystery person. One person will decide how long we debate this motion before us, and that is the member from Estevan, the Premier of the province. And when you guys in the back benches stand up and put enough heat on him and tell him, let's get on to the real business of Saskatchewan instead of this phoney political agenda, when you do that, then we will decide how long it is going, Mr. Premier.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, the member from Pelly hopefully has had his question answered. Now when you undertake your duty as a member of this legislature and say, let's get on to the real business of Saskatchewan, let's get on and do what the people of the province want us to do, not what our narrow, right-wing ideologies tells us to do, not what the Maggie Thatcher's of the world would like us to do; when we deal with, as we could be doing now, the estimates of the province, the spending of departments, including Agriculture, including Environment, including Health, including Education — we could be doing that tonight. We could be discussing that. But no, the Premier of the province said, no, we're not going to deal with that. We're not going to talk about real things today. We're going to teach the NDP a lesson and we're going to teach the opposition a lesson because we're going to ram this motion right down their throats. That is what your front benchers are doing.

And do you know, Mr. Member from Pelly, you ask them, you ask them because they had the opportunity and they have the opportunity to get out of this conundrum.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this motion has brought considerable consternation, has brought considerable consternation to the people of this province. That, sir, is not political hyperbole. That is not by any means overblown political rhetoric or political hyperbole.

I heard several minutes ago the member from Swift Current say how proud they were of being able to deal with this motion, how proud that she as a representative of the front benches of the government was in ramming it to the NDP; how proud she was of taking up the time of this legislature to deal with something that by precedent could be done co-operatively outside the partisan nature of the debate that occurs in this Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that, while I respect in some ways the political judgement of the member from Swift Current, I think that she has lost touch with the political reality of even her own constituents on the matter of this motion.

And now why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Well I want to

refer, Mr. Speaker, if I can, very briefly, to an editorial in the Swift Current *Sun* of May 29, 1989 — that's two days ago. That's this week, two or three days ago, Mr. Speaker. The topic, Mr. Speaker, is on the question of the motion before us, so I don't think that the editorial is outside of what we're debating here tonight, sir. Now the headline is, and I quote, "Devine government shows its contempt."

Now, Mr. Speaker, this isn't an editorial from the *Commonwealth*. This isn't an editorial from the *Canadian Tribune*, or this isn't an editorial from even some of those supposed left-wingers that exist in the bowels of the *Leader-Post*. This is from the Swift Current *Sun*, a staunch supporter, time in and time out, of the Conservative government. And it says in its headline, "Devine government shows its contempt."

Mr. Speaker, how does the Devine government show its contempt, according to *The Sun* from Swift Current, Saskatchewan? It says, first of all, Mr. Speaker, that:

The provincial government seems to think lately that it can do anything it wants; drink our liquor from an old fruit jar, slander our names all over the place, even step on our blue suede shoes.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that that editorial, that that first sentence of that editorial kinds of sum up, opens a rather broad framework to discuss why it was that the Devine government shows its contempt.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it says:

The first scuff (not the last, not the second or the third, but the first scuff) came when the provincial government decided to sell shares in SaskEnergy (SaskPower) despite the fact that two out of three people in Saskatchewan don't like the idea.

Mr. Speaker, why is it that the Swift Current *Sun* can recognize reality when the member from Swift Current can't, Mr. Speaker, or the member from Morse or the member from any of those constituencies served by the Swift Current *Sun*? Now:

There's nothing intrinsically wrong with that — governments should lead, not do only what makes them popular . . .

Now, Mr. Speaker, nobody argues with that. There is a time for political leadership, and the role of any government worth its salt is to exhibit that strong political leadership. The nature of that strong political leadership is gathering together the people of the political jurisdiction which they are trying to lead, to form a consensus and to march forward into the future. That's political leadership, and nobody, Mr. Speaker, nobody on this side of the House opposes that.

But listen to what the Swift Current *Sun*, Mr. Speaker, says about political leadership, Devine government style:

. . . but then the Tories formed a commission to study the issue and appointed Lloyd Barber as its chairman. Barber belongs to a business group that promotes privatization and favours selling

SaskEnergy. How's that for a government that thumbed . . .

Pardon me, I want to read that again so I quote correctly:

How's that for a government thumbing its nose at people?

Mr. Speaker, isn't that what I have been talking about for the last several days that I've been speaking on this topic of this motion which would limit bell-ringing — that it shows a level of contempt for the people of the province — never mind, Mr. Speaker, the historical traditions of this legislature which I will get into at a later date — but shows its contempt for the wishes of the people of the province.

Now this, Mr. Speaker, is not looking back into the 12th century or 13th century. This is dealing with the Swift Current *Sun* of this week.

It goes on, Mr. Speaker, to say — and I won't quote it all, but I'll quote the salient points. It goes on to make the points that there was the Willard Lutz affair, and we all know what that constituted.

What did they call it? They called it, "Slander our names all over the place." Well isn't that what the Minister of Justice did with Willard Lutz, in thumbing their nose at the people of the province, showing contempt, the same kind of contempt that is contained in this motion which stands before us?

It says, Mr. Speaker, that this Tory, when dealing with the Willard Lutz affair, and I quote the words:

. . . responded shamefully. They didn't refute the auditor's claims, they attacked his integrity.

Mr. Speaker, when this legislature is misused and abused as it has been doing with this rules debate, as it is being done with this government's attempt to introduce and ram through a motion which would limit bell-ringing, contempt is shown to the people of the province.

The Swift Current *Sun* says it was done in the case of Willard Lutz, it was done in the case of SaskEnergy — something that, Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about at some length because we related that fundamentally the political project and the political agenda of the Conservative Party is nothing but a cynical and a contemptuous manoeuvre, contemptuous manoeuvre, and that's the word, Mr. Speaker, used in this editorial. They throw contempt; the Tories responded shamefully; they didn't refute the auditor's claim, they attacked his integrity. That's contempt, Mr. Speaker. It goes on to say that, ". . . few Justice ministers in Saskatchewan have acted so unjustly."

Then, Mr. Speaker, it quotes on in great length about the sins of the government, this from a paper which normally has supported the government in almost all its activity. I can't think of an editorial in the Swift Current *Sun* that opposed any of the government's initiatives. So I figure that coming from one of your friends, coming from one of your friends, Mr. Speaker, this kind of criticism has got to

sting home.

You would have to be totally insensitive, totally out of touch with any kind of reality, totally ensconced in the cocoon of the Barber palace not to realize that. This is their friend speaking.

Then last week the Saskatchewan Securities Commission ordered SaskEnergy to stall campaigning. (And then the editorial says) The government response in this case was to approve an order allowing SaskEnergy to bypass security laws and contain its campaign.

And it goes on and on to say a number of other things.

But, Mr. Speaker, it ends up, it ends up, Mr. Speaker, with the kind of cogent comment that only can be found by those with an ear to the ground and with their nose to the political winds which are blowing in Saskatchewan, in this case, the Swift Current *Sun*.

It says, it says, Mr. Speaker . . . And I think that it's important that all members on that side listen to what the Swift Current *Sun* is saying, because its characterization of the government, of the Devine government, which shows its contempt for the people of the province, is, in short, ". . . it does as it damn well pleases."

Those are in quotes, Mr. Speaker. That's pretty strong language, Mr. Speaker, that is pretty strong language in any editorial, in any editorial, Mr. Speaker, let alone an editorial from a newspaper which is supportive — well had been up till now — supportive of the initiatives of the government.

Mr. Speaker, isn't that what's at the crux of this debate here tonight? Isn't that the crux of the kind of things we've been trying to bring to the attention of the government members? That the government, despite its macho attitude, just can't do as it damn well pleases. Now I know it may be a blow to some egos there of some ministers who figure they can ram stuff at us, but I hope that all members of the caucus of the government opposite have had the opportunity to realize that their front-benchers were offered an out, that their front-benchers were offered an out, and that out consisted, Mr. Speaker, of my final topic for tonight, which is the question of precedent.

That is, Mr. Speaker — excuse the hoarseness — a question of precedent. Mr. Speaker, for those who aren't familiar with the language of parliamentary democracy, precedent means those things which have happened before, which have served to act as guides for the conduct of the parliamentary institutions, unless those things are mutually changed by co-operation and common consent — it's tradition, but it's tradition with a meaning, not in the stuffy sense of musty old things that may be thrown out along with great-grandmother's trunk of used clothing, but is a much more richer sense in the sense that it means that it serves as guides to actions today based on activities of people who came before us. And that's precedent, Mr. Speaker.

(2100)

Now what, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with this question of rule changes, have we seen by way of precedent, that is, by way of tradition and history in this Legislative Assembly? The Swift Current *Sun* says that the government goes ahead and does, to quote: "... as it damn well pleases." And that includes, Mr. Speaker, trampling on precedent; and that includes, Mr. Speaker, an activity which I personally find an affront, because it's not the first time, Mr. Speaker, as I, as a member of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan, have had to deal with this kind of contemptuous action, of this arrogance, of this thumbing its nose at the people, by thumbing its nose at the legislature, by this lack of respect for precedent and its inability to understand that the functioning of any institution — whether it's this legislature; whether it's a church; whether it's a service organization; whether it's a trade union — the part of the ordinary operations of all organizations involving and governing the activities of people, precedent plays an important part.

And I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that that issue has not, when we're dealing with this motion to change the rules, entered into, or at least twinged upon the consciousness and the conscience of members of the front bench opposite.

After all, precedence, as a concept in law, has a long and mighty weight to it. Lots and lots of things are decided, Mr. Speaker, as they are in here, and as, Mr. Speaker, in every Legislative Assembly does throughout the British Commonwealth, whether it's New Zealand or Australia, whether it's in Ghana, whether it's in Saskatchewan, no matter where it is, the concept of tradition and the way in which things have been done in the past plays an important part in determining how things today, and in the future, will be carried on.

Mr. Speaker, what is the precedent that the government has for doing what it's doing in muzzling the opposition by putting forward a motion which would limit the ringing of the bells? What precedent does it have, Mr. Speaker, in this legislature? None. Absolutely none, Mr. Speaker. No precedent. That is, Mr. Speaker, what the government is doing is — without any fear of factual contradiction in the very literal and technical sense of the word — that what the government has undertaken is without precedent; that is, it is unprecedented.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is abnormal. What the government is doing is not normal to the conduct of the affairs of this Legislative Assembly here in Saskatchewan. It is abnormal. It does not have the normal conduct of the legislature to back up its authority to do what it is doing.

Now not one, Mr. Speaker, of the members opposite will rise to their feet at a future date — and it may be far into the future, let me say — to try to refute that statement that what they're doing is abnormal and without precedent. Because the historical facts of the matter are that in Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, as in most jurisdictions in which the precedence of British parliamentary tradition has some kind of operative norm, precedence in making rule changes to the legislature forms a great part of how governments and oppositions draw up rules so that they can live harmoniously.

And I use that, Mr. Speaker, in a not literal sense but in the sense that to outline the guide-lines by which this legislature can operate and operate to fulfil the mandate given to it by the people of the province, in a manner which, I guess, boils down to the question of civility and the question of good manners. Notions which may be outmoded ...

**An Hon. Member:** — Around here.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Around here, but which lie, in fact, that many of the formalisms which we observe about us and which are, if you like, the material manifestations of the historical precedence. In other words, Mr. Speaker, just as your three-cornered hat is as much a matter of the precedence of this legislature, as is the Clerk at the Table, or as is the Mace, or as is the title that you yourself have. The title, Mr. Speaker, is a material manifestation of the form of historical precedence.

So too are the other activities which are governed based on precedent, and that includes, in this particular legislature, the changing of the rules. And when that precedent is broken, when that precedent is swept aside by a unilateral action as it is presently being done by the members of the government opposite, well, Mr. Speaker, they're trampling on your three-cornered hat, in a figurative sense. They are throwing underfoot, they are throwing underfoot that symbol, that symbol of historical ... of historic tradition.

And just, Mr. Speaker ... And, Mr. Speaker, just as there is a symbol and a reason for the use of that hat, so is there a reason for, in changing the rules of the legislature, the rule of precedence to apply. That precedent becomes operative in dealing with activities that are, by and in and of themselves, intrinsically sensitive.

The first speech, Mr. Speaker, that I delivered to this House involved precisely this issue. After the general election of 1986, there was an attempt to unilaterally deal with the question of quorum, as it was, I believe, in the rules committee, what constituted quorum, and how things were going to be operative in the committee of the legislature which determined how other things operated.

And unilaterally the government made some motions and undertook some activities which were unprecedented in terms of dealing with the activities of that committee. Not a great thing in and of itself for the person on the street in Saskatchewan, but an affront, an affront to the legislature, an affront to precedence, an affront, Mr. Speaker, which led to a ruling which went against the government in that instance; an affront, Mr. Speaker, which said that no, when it comes to dealing with things of precedence, that the government should not in and of itself undertake, because of the way the rules are structured, activities of a unilateral nature.

Mr. Speaker, I haven't researched whether or not that ruling may apply in this instance, but I suggest, Mr. Speaker, as I stand up here at a future date to undertake this debate, that that issue may well indeed arise. Because, Mr. Speaker, there is the question here before us all as members, of whether or not the government has the right, the government has the



right to change by way of artificial majority what was changed by way of unanimity in the House.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, there is some question, I submit to you, that the government does not have, based on the rules and procedures of this legislation — and I'm not pretending by any means at all to act as an expert in this regard, but I do say, Mr. Speaker, that it seems to me that there is some room to question the activities of the government in this regard, of changing the rules unilaterally when the whole history of Saskatchewan has been to change the rules by way of unanimity; that is, by striking a committee.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, that by the reactions of the member opposite, that precedent is something to laugh at. And the operations of the legislature since the time it opened is something to be scuffled underfoot, because as the Swift Current *Sun* says, "Devine government shows its contempt." And the members of that government do as, to quote the Swift Current *Sun*, "... damn well as it pleases."

But I say, Mr. Speaker, in regards to this change of rules, that this government will not damn well do as it pleases because the members of this side of the House are bound and determined that this government shall damn well do what the people of Saskatchewan want it do and none other — none other, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, they may laugh and they may thumb their nose and they may show that contempt. But in this issue of changing the rules, Mr. Speaker, they will not ... the Spanish have a saying for it — *no pasaran, no pasaran* — they shall not pass.

Let me say then, Mr. Speaker, just as the people of Cuba and Nicaragua and now of El Salvador are putting it up to the tyrants they find in their country, of *no pasaran*, so shall we here in Saskatchewan refuse to let this government damn well do as it please, thumb its nose at the people, slander our name all over the place, step on our blue suede shoes and drink liquor from an old fruit jar — just as the Swift Current *Sun* said of the type of activities that the government is engaged in.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, doesn't precedent mean anything to the government opposite? I ask you, sir, and I ask, through you to the other members of the Assembly, to look back at the history of this Assembly. Because long after you and I are but faint remnants of dust scattered over goodness gracious knows what field somewhere, this legislature, or a forum much like it, will continue in existence.

Mr. Speaker, long after we're gone from here, there will be the history of this legislature. This rule change, by way of motion introduced by the Minister of Justice, breaks with the history and tradition of this legislature. That's what I talk about when it tramples on precedence.

And why, Mr. Speaker, why does it do that? Why does the

government take the time of the people of the province to scoff at the history and tradition of this legislature, to go about and try to gain by force what it cannot gain by consent? In legitimate and honest debate, Mr. Speaker, these people cannot win.

What they will do, Mr. Speaker ... And, Mr. Speaker, I want to make a prediction here now tonight: this government will attempt to use by way of force what it cannot gain by way of consent, by the use of parliamentary rules and regulations which have been rarely, if ever, used in this legislature. They will drag out some — or attempt to drag out — some dusty, musty, old rule from way back when, that's rusty from misuse, that hasn't been oiled lately, but will be oiled up with the snake oil that these people are peddling in order to try to stop this debate on this rules motion, Mr. Speaker.

(2115)

I make that prediction, Mr. Speaker. I make prediction, Mr. Speaker, because these people are well known for the kind of arrogant bull-headedness that leads to, Mr. Speaker, editorials in the Swift Current *Sun*, but also led to, Mr. Speaker, another political event which took place tonight within 50 miles of this legislature — another political ... animated, I may say, Mr. Speaker, by the ringing of the bells of the opposition, just some of the kind of political reverberations and tremors that are reverberating around this province.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the people of Regina and the constituency I represent, that the fight against the privatization of SaskPower is not over, and that in Southey tonight, Mr. Speaker — here in the midst of this debate on changing the rules — in Southey tonight, Mr. Speaker, over 300 people ...

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Over 300 people in the little town of Southey tonight gathered together, Mr. Speaker, to fight the privatization of SaskPower, fight this government's attempt to ram through unilaterally rule changes which inhibit the opposition from stopping the privatization of SaskPower.

And, Mr. Speaker, those 300 people gathered in Southey, overflowing the hall, spreading out to the main speaker, had one message to this government, had one message to this government. Mr. Speaker, their message was: what you are doing is wrong. You have no mandate for doing what you are doing. If you want that mandate, call an election and let's see if you have our support, say those 300 people in Southey, Mr. Speaker. Let's see if you have our support.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, this is in rural Saskatchewan, the same type of rural Saskatchewan represented by those people who read the Swift Current *Sun*, who say, "Devine government shows its contempt." Well, Mr. Speaker, it was obvious that the 300 people in the constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood, in the town of Southey, were saying the same message to the government of the

province of Saskatchewan, we've had enough of your contempt. We've had enough.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — We've had enough of thumbing their noses at us, Mr. Speaker. We've had enough. You are not going to slander our names all over the place. You're not going to dance on our blue suede shoes; you're not going to drink our liquor from an old fruit jar, as the Swift Current *Sun* says. Because we've had enough, and we, says the 300 people in the town of Southey tonight said, not only we have enough, Mr. Speaker, we've had enough of that government; we had enough of your arbitrary action.

And you, Mr. Speaker, you, Mr. Speaker, can pass that message along to the government. You can pass that message along, Mr. Speaker, to the government, because those people in Southey fundamentally are saying, this government will not damn well do as it would please. Over our dead bodies. We're going to fight. We're going to continue that fight. And they will not stop. Just like this opposition, Mr. Speaker, the people of Southey will not stop. And neither, Mr. Speaker, will this opposition. The fight goes on.

Mr. Speaker, people across this province . . .

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Southey at that meeting asked questions. I am told — I wasn't at this meeting, but I am told by my colleagues and by way of note that people at this meeting in Southey, of 300, were saying: why is the government trying to ram this Bill change through? Why are they trying to put forward this motion which would help the privatization of SaskPower?

Don't they realize, say the people of Southey, that everybody in the province, just like the Swift Current *Sun* says, two out of three — two out of three — they're opposed to it? Don't they realize that? What have they got in their head? Rocks? Why don't they listen? What have they got in their ears? Wax? Don't they have the brains to understand that we don't want the privatization of SaskPower? We want the government to listen to us and treat us with the respect that we deserve, and not with the contempt that we've been getting.

That's what the people of Southey say.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, a rural constituency, a rural constituency that the Premier now holds, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of the province has made the decision to go ahead and ram this rules motion at the people of the province — not at the opposition, Mr. Speaker; he's ramming it at the people of the province — because he wants to privatize SaskPower. The Premier of the province has made that decision.

And, Mr. Speaker, he can make that decision, but he won't have to pay the political price for making that decision. Not him, Mr. Speaker, oh no, he's poured his

two billion dollars-plus into his constituency to help out his political friends down in Estevan.

But what about the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, and the members of the other side of this House who are going to have to pay the political price for the political decisions made for by the Premier of the province? Mr. Speaker, someone in Last Mountain-Touchwood is going to pay that political price for the decision that the Premier has made. Mr. Speaker, somebody in Pelly will pay the political price for the political decision that the Premier has made . . .

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, someone in Rosetown will pay the political price for the political decision that the Premier has made. And not just on this matter, Mr. Speaker, but on the whole question of backing Cargill versus backing the local people of Rosetown. That member from Rosetown will pay the political price, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, some other of us are going to pay that political price, or should I put it this way, Mr. Speaker, some other political people are going to reap the political rewards. I would love to be in the shoes, Mr. Speaker, of one of those five candidates of our party who's running for the nomination in Last Mountain-Touchwood constituency, five people who are opposing the sale of SaskPower, who oppose this Bill which will limit the opposition; five people, Mr. Speaker, who are vying for the seat, vying for a seat when we'll be backed for it, backed by those 300 people that were out tonight in Southey, saying to the government of Saskatchewan, don't you keep on doing what you're doing. I'd love to be in their position, Mr. Speaker.

I'd love to be, Mr. Speaker, in the position of those who are going to reap the political rewards in Kinistino. In Kinistino, Mr. Speaker, where there are three or four . . .

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Where there are three or four or potentially more candidates for our party who are out there working hard, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that this opposition will be backed up in every farmyard in the constituency of Kinistino by all those farm folks out there who are saying, I don't want some private entrepreneur holding on to my gas line; I don't want this government to ram this rules motion at us; I want to be respected by a government here in Saskatchewan; I want to be respected by the people that I put in.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, those will be the political rewards reaped by those who've had the political courage to stand up and say what this government is doing over half-way through its term, with the political clock ticking, saying, we stand not for a cynical, political manoeuvre so that we can buy the next election, but who are standing up for principle, who are standing up for the people of the constituency of Kinistino.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not the only people who will reap the political rewards, and I don't mean, Mr. Speaker, reaping those political rewards in any personal sense. Goodness gracious knows that we all go through long hours and we all have a tough row to hoe, particularly in Saskatchewan where Tory times are tough times. So it's not a question of political reward, but it's the kind of reward where . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. Order, order. I'm having difficulty hearing the words of the member from Regina Rosemont. The reason is of course there are many debates taking place on both sides of the House, and I would like the co-operation of the members.

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I appreciate your comments in this regard. Mr. Speaker, as I was saying — and I know that you said that you missed some of the remarks — basically what I was saying is that the work in this House, as a member of Legislative Assembly, does not gain one, unless one takes advantage of their position any kind of personal rewards. But the rewards that are gained, Mr. Speaker, and gained by those people who will reap the political rewards for standing up in opposition to this motion and standing up in opposition to the things that this government is doing and which are opposed by the people of the province, will be the gratitude and thanks of the people of this province for their efforts to preserve their right — not the right of members here in this parliament, but their right to participate as they did tonight by the hundreds in the community of Southey.

Mr. Speaker, those are rewards enough; those are rewards enough, Mr. Speaker. For when you stand up and speak out on behalf of the people, one does not need to go about and try to satisfy themselves with false rewards or false accomplishments. To speak for the people, Mr. Speaker, is the highest reward of all.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier on that there were members in this legislature who are going to pay a political price, and they are over on that side, because it won't be this side of the House. And I had earlier on begun an argument which I will now attempt to finish in the time left to me, although I don't know if there is going to be enough time left. Maybe we'll pick it up again tomorrow, but it's this, Mr. Speaker — that while those who make the decisions may or may not have to pay the kind of political price, may or may not have to reap the whirlwind of the wind that they have sown, that the other members of this Legislative Assembly on that side of the House, of the government side of the House, do not have to go through the kind of misery, political misery, which an extended debate on this motion implies.

But that, Mr. Speaker, that decision, Mr. Speaker, lies not in the hands of the opposition. That political decision which the members opposite have to make in terms of dealing with this motion lies in their hands. It lies in their hands in this sense, Mr. Speaker: they have the opportunity, and have had the opportunity over the last little while, to observe the events of the House, to reflect on the kinds of things that, while there have not been all that many speakers on this side of the House involved yet in the debate, other members will, and other members

will make points, I think, as salient and as pertinent to this debate as I certainly have made.

(2130)

And, Mr. Speaker, during that period of time the people of this province, as they did tonight in Southey, and as they're doing in the press gallery, and as they're doing in my constituency of Regina Rosemont, are asking themselves: why is it, why is it that they're doing what they're doing, and how can we stop it?

This is what must, Mr. Speaker, be going on in the minds of the members opposite. Is it . . . are enhancing us as political representatives of our party in, let's say, Shaunavon or in Shellbrook-Torch River or in Qu'Appelle or, I'll say, Moosomin? Is it enhancing our reputation as representatives of the people to be taking up the time — and we're at day 48, I noticed in the blues today — of the Assembly of the province?

Because, Mr. Speaker, while the government front-benchers are trying to peddle the line that it's the opposition which is somehow holding up the work of the House, as this debate gains increasing attention throughout the province, as evidently it is doing by the reports of tonight's meeting, then the whole way in which the Assembly functions will become a matter of common and public record.

And I for one, Mr. Speaker, say that that would be a good thing. I think that it is a good thing, not a bad thing, that people in Saskatchewan know that in this House the government, the government determines what the order of business is, and not the legislation . . . not the opposition. And that's how it functions. That's the political reality.

Because as long as members from this side of the House enter into this debate and are forced, because of the government's action, to debate this rule change which does nothing for the people of the province except muzzle them, as long as that occurs, Mr. Speaker, more and more people will be asking themselves: what the heck is going on in Regina? What are these folks up to?

And more and more the members of my party — and I don't mean just here in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, but the members of my party all across Saskatchewan, will be saying on coffee row, whether it's in Kinistino, whether it's in Shaunavon, whether it's in Melfort or Melville, whether it's in Kamsack, whether it's in Hoey, they will be saying, Mr. Speaker: it's because the government is trying to change the rules and the opposition won't let them.

Well how come they're trying to change the rules? Because they're trying to privatize SaskPower. Well that's kind of a waste of time, ain't it? Yes it is; yes it is; we agree. How come the government doesn't pass the farm debt Bill or all that farm debt legislation. I mean, that's reality. That is what's going to occur out there, Mr. Speaker.

Now that, Mr. Speaker, is another form of democracy. It's a form of democracy which I discussed earlier, and I have to discuss again, but it is the use of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, to inform the citizenry of this province. And if it

comes down to how the legislature operates, and people are interested in knowing how the legislature operates, the members of my party and the members of this caucus will tell the people of Saskatchewan precisely how it is; that on a day-by-day basis, yes, it's the government determine what's debated, and no, it's not the opposition; and yes, it's the government which has brought this motion forward, and no, it's not the opposition.

Now, Mr. Speaker, from the point of view . . . if you, sir, were sitting in one of those constituencies occupied by the back-benchers, I wonder, sir, wouldn't you be asking the same questions: is it worth the candle? Is this fight worth it? What political price are we going to pay?

Well first of all, Mr. Speaker, the question they would be asking themselves is this: can I sell the line that the opposition is debating this rule change because they control the legislature? Can I sell that line? Not a chance, Mr. Speaker, not a chance in seven breezes in Heaven will they be able to peddle that line, not to the press gallery here, not to the people who occupy the galleries, not to the people who watch on television; certainly not to the members of this opposition.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the 40,000-plus members of our political party are going to ensure that the government is not able to peddle that particular line that it's the opposition that wants to deal with the rules. We don't. I'd rather be dealing with agricultural estimates or anything else than standing here trying to defend democracy and the people of this province.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — I would rather be trying to deal with education, Mr. Speaker, dealing with the question of the school boards who are having to pay tens of thousands of dollars in interest because the government won't withdraw this motion and bring forward the real things of the province. They won't do it, Mr. Speaker, because they've got their own political agenda. They've got their own political agenda and they can grind away at it, and the school boards of Saskatchewan can — as the Swift Current **Sun** says — suffer because the government wants to damn well do as it pleases.

And we know. We look in the paper and we see the school boards are suffering because the government refuses to deal with the problems in education but instead wants to deal with its privatization agenda through the pushing forward of this motion. We say let's deal with the education problem right now, right here tonight.

If we would have a firm commitment by any member, any honest member of the government opposite, from the front bench, who would stand up and say: yes, we're going to withdraw this Bill and deal with . . . withdraw this motion and deal with the real problems, I will give up my place. Because every member on this side of the House wants to deal with education and the problems the school board's facing.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, I have many constituents in

the constituency of Regina Rosemont, including the former member of the legislature from Regina Rosemont, who have children who attend the Regina separate school board. We know what kind of financial difficulties the Regina separate school board are doing. Why aren't we dealing with an emergency cash injection to the Regina separate school board instead of dealing with this whole, this phoney boloney rules motion?

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Isn't that more important, Mr. Speaker? Isn't that more important, Mr. Member from Regina South? Isn't that more important to your parents and your families who attend the Regina separate school board? What's more important, dealing with the cash injection that they need, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, or, Mr. Minister, dealing with this silly rule thing? Which is more important?

Now, Mr. Speaker, the government is going to try to sell the line, to peddle the story to the people of Saskatchewan, that somehow the opposition's holding up the legislature. I want to ask, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the members here tonight from the government: do you want to deal with this rules motion from now till the cows come home, or do you want to deal with the problems and crises in education? Which do you want to deal with, members? Put your hands up. How many of you want to deal with the problems of education? Put your hands up. Go on, put your hands up. Come on, show a little bit of independence. None. None. None, Mr. Speaker, not one of those government members wants to deal with the problems of the Regina separate school board and every other school board in this province starved for educational funding.

They'd rather deal with the rules. They would rather deal with the rules which, for most people on a day-to-day basis, don't mean sweet tweet, as the birds would say, don't mean sweet tweet. They'd rather sit on their hands, act as the hallelujah chorus for the Premier who's made this political decision.

Well that's fine, Mr. Speaker. If that's what they want to do, then they had better not go around this province, they had better not go around this province trying to peddle a false story to the people of this province that the opposition is holding up this House.

We know why they're doing what they're doing, ramming this thing, trying to ram this motion through parliament so that they can privatize SaskPower, so they can privatize the potash corporation, so they can privatize SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). That's what's the number one priority is in their minds, not, Mr. Speaker, the problems of the kids who are going to St. Joan of Arc School or may have not have the same teacher or may be cut short of teachers next year because of the government's refusal to deal with some of the educational crises that are brewing in this province. They don't care about kids in that matter.

All they care about is selling off what we already own and ramming through rule changes that will enable them to do that and save face for the Premier of this province.

That's what all their interest is.

You know they talk about families a lot, Mr. Speaker, but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, when it comes down to the crunch, when it comes down to them determining what the priorities are, you just have to look at the choices that this government makes and you see very easily, Mr. Speaker, they choose privatization. They'll choose privatization over families and children any day of the week.

Now, Mr. Speaker, are they going to be able to peddle their story that somehow the opposition is holding up the legislature while they want to deal with important business. Only, Mr. Speaker, only those who would peddle the most bald-faced untruth, the most bald-faced hypocritical story, would attempt to peddle that line. And Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, no matter if they try to peddle that line, will not believe what they have to say about them on this issue.

Not one, Mr. Speaker, not one person who signed the 100,000 petitions opposing the privatization of SaskPower, not one of the thousands of people who attended the meetings around the province, not one of the tens of thousands of people including members of their own political party who question the wisdom, what they're doing, will believe that it's the opposition which is holding up the work of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. Not one, because, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly nobody believes them any more. Nobody believes a word they say. Nobody believes a word they say, Mr. Speaker, which is why they're trying to ram this rule change through the legislature so that they can carry on their phoney political agenda. Nobody, Mr. Speaker, nobody believes what they say.

You know, Mr. Speaker, maybe we need another demonstration for the members opposite of how the people of this province do not believe what they say.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Maybe we need another demonstration for them. So I want to suggest tonight, Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest tonight that those people who are watching this tonight, who know that the motion that's before this legislature is wrong, and who know that the political agenda of the government is wrong and shows, as the Swift Current *Sun* says, shows its contempt for the people of this province, I want them to contact a New Democratic Party member of the Legislative Assembly and ask for a petition. If they haven't signed one of those petitions, Mr. Speaker, it is not too late. It is by no means too late, Mr. Speaker, because this is a long struggle.

This struggle is not going to be over tomorrow; it's not going to be over a month from tomorrow, or it is not going to be over 6 or 8 or 12 or 14 months is it going to be over — maybe. This is not going to be over until we drive these people from the seats of power and put in place a government that people can believe.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — That put in place a government that people

can trust; that put in place a government that doesn't have these kind of headlines written about it: "Devine government shows its contempt."

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this — I want to say this: the day that it comes that the government that I hope to be a supporter of . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Part of, part of.

(2145)

**Mr. Lyons:** — Part of, Mr. Speaker, receives the kind of press that our friends give to us the same way their friends are giving to them, Mr. Speaker, I want to make this promise to you: I will look at my friends when they say that you are treating me with contempt, and I will resign, Mr. Speaker, from this Legislative Assembly.

Because, Mr. Speaker, what that says to me when my friends and my side of the political fence say to me: you show nothing but contempt for the people of the province; when my political advisers, as the Swift Current *Sun* has been to the Conservative party of Saskatchewan, says: you are not doing anything except damn well as you please; when my friends tell me that, Mr. Speaker, then I know it is pull . . . the quote.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is a quote . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — May 29.

**Mr. Lyons:** — May 29, the Swift Current *Sun* says, in short: it damn well does as it pleases — that's my friends. Mr. Speaker, that is the friends of that government saying that, the friends of the Tory government, the friends of the Premier saying that.

And why, Mr. Speaker? To get back to the point that I was making earlier on, and the point that I was making earlier on was that that is the kind of political price; that when one ignores the wishes of the people, that even the government with the biggest pockets and the most money-bags and the most largess to try to spread around, will fail and will be doomed, Mr. Speaker. Because when you have broken the trust of the people of this province, as the minister in charge of SaskPower did; when you have broken the trust of the people of this province that leads to editorials such as contained in the Swift Current *Sun*, and not just the Swift Current *Sun*, Mr. Speaker, paper after paper after paper — whether it's *The Rosetown Eagle*, whether it's the *Weyburn Review*, whether it's *The Globe and Mail*, the Swift Current . . . the *Moosomin World-Spectator*, whether it's the *Leader-Post* or the *Star-Phoenix*, the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, or the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* — it doesn't matter.

But when editor after editor after editor of the press in this province, many of whom are owned by out-of-province chains who receive their editorial directions from outside Saskatchewan, many . . . when you find that paper after paper says, what you're doing shows nothing but contempt for the people of this province. And I say, in this motion, Mr. Speaker, the same kind of contempt stinks through, because it shows the contempt for the history of this legislature and for each and every member, including

the government back-benchers.

When your friends say that, my friends I want to tell you, I want to tell you my friend from Pelly — you have earned a reputation as someone that is honest and fair to deal with in your business dealings, Mr. Speaker; you have earned a certain reputation, that member has, and no matter what a nice guy or fair guy he is, if he doesn't exhibit that niceness, that fairness, that integrity — if he does not exhibit it in this House, then he too shall pay the political price.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — It is not a question. Mr. Speaker, they will pay the political price, and no matter how Mr. nice guy you are, because you then become chained to, tainted, painted, cornered, clothed in the same cloth of those that are leading you down the path towards that kind of political oblivion.

Well maybe, maybe when you have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, those members have the opportunity to exhibit the kind of integrity that they exhibited — some of them exhibit in their personal life — they've got the opportunity to stand up. They don't have to do it publicly here. They can go to the Minister of Finance, who's obviously one of the machiavellian figures behind this rule, and the Minister of Justice and the Deputy Premier and the Premier and confront those front-benchers and say, this motion is wrong. It doesn't make any sense. Pull it.

The opposition has offered you a way out by setting up a committee to deal with rules changes, chaired by the Speaker of the House of the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan. We've made that offer publicly. We're doing it again tonight. You've got a way out of your conundrum. It's the right thing; it's tradition. It's the way that things are done in this province.

You know, what's wrong with that? What's wrong with that? That gives you an opportunity, my friend from Pelly and my friend from Canora, to stand up and show that kind of integrity that you show in your personal life. Okay? Because political integrity should not be separate; it's important.

Mr. Speaker, it's that kind of arrogance that has led to this motion. It's the kind of arrogance that we see today exhibited in this news release. It's called the Barber commission on SaskEnergy public participation.

Now we've had, Mr. Speaker . . . Those members want to talk about a waste of money. And at some point in time they will say, well, because the member of Rosemont has spoken for two or three weeks on this issue, he's wasting the money of the Legislative Assembly. Well, Mr. Speaker, the money that it takes to defend democracy, versus the money that it takes to sell off the heritage of this province, I would put up any day, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, this news announcement, the Barber commission on SaskEnergy public participation goes to say:

Dr. Lloyd Barber, chairman of the commission on SaskEnergy public participation today announced that the commission will begin public hearings on Wednesday, July 26, and will visit a total of eight Saskatchewan communities.

Eight Saskatchewan communities, eight Saskatchewan communities. We need, Mr. Speaker, another road show to try to sell off SaskPower like we need a hole in the head. The taxpayers of this province need to spend more taxpayers' money . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — For something they rejected?

**Mr. Lyons:** — . . . for something that's been rejected?

**An Hon. Member:** — How much are we paying him again?

**Mr. Lyons:** — Mr. Speaker, think: how much is this commission eating up in taxpayers' money a day? You know, Mr. Speaker, I know Dr. Barber announced that Gary Drummond, member of the legal firm of Wilson & Company, Barristers and Solicitors, has been appointed as legal counsel. What is he costing the people of this province?

Don't you dare, don't you dare members opposite, try to ever say to the people of Saskatchewan that the opposition has wasted one penny of their taxpayers' dollars when you go through and pay a Tory, or a lawyer and bagman like Gary Drummond, over a thousand dollars a day just because he's some high-priced Tory lawyer, legal beagle, because that's what you're doing.

Members of the commission are Dr. Lloyd Barber, a great believer in public enterprise, a great believer in the people of Saskatchewan, the people who can't . . . that person that has a hard job keeping his own university together, let alone the assets of the people of the province Saskatchewan.

Ken Sarsons, former chief executive officer, CSP Foods (Ltd) in Saskatoon; and Kathryn Ford, Saskatoon — Saskatoon family lawyer. Well, what family is Kathryn Ford a lawyer for? The only family that I know is the family of Tories that seem to have a million connections when it comes to robbing the public purse, Mr. Speaker.

The same Kathryn Ford who, if she is trying to parade her credentials as being unbiased, the people of this province had better know that this is the same Kathryn Ford that worked in the law firm and helped to draft — the law firm that helped to draft the sale of PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan) sell-off, the sale of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Lloyd Barber, a founder of the institute for privatization, that great non-biased person, and Kathryn Ford who helped sell off the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Right?

Now what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker, and how does this relate to the rules change? And I can see the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg getting a little itchy in his seat.

Well let me say this, Mr. Speaker. We've got this

commission set up that's going to go around and supposedly gather opinions from people in Saskatchewan — unbiased. And these people are going to try to claim they're unbiased. But when it get right down to it, they're basically a bunch of Tory hacks and its Tory front.

They're going to spend lots of money, taxpayers' money, so that when they bring their report back to this legislature sometime in the fall, if this motion goes through, which it won't, they will then have some kind of report which will say, go ahead, boys, go ahead and sell off the assets of this province so we got enough money to call a quick spring election and we'll try to buy the voters back because we've lost their confidence, given the nature of our political integrity. Or in other words, Mr. Speaker, to speak much more plainly, they're going to try to buy the election back, to try to fill the pockets of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan with their own money, supposedly because of their great economic acumen in selling off the assets of the province of Saskatchewan.

The trouble is, Mr. Speaker, the trouble that they've got — and the trouble that that government finds itself in, and the reason why the front bench won't help get themselves out of the pickle that the government finds itself in, in regards to this motion, is this, is that the people of the province do not believe them. They do not believe a word that is said by the member, for example, from Maple Creek, as she tries to hide the facts of the Gigagate scandal that's emerging as a major political issue in this province. They don't believe a word that member says.

And you think that they believe a word that the Minister of Justice says as he tries to rationalize why it is that this motion is before the Legislative Assembly? Do you think that they believe a word that that member says? No. No. They've got no credibility.

I mean, it's not just because he attacked Willard Lutz in order to hide up the incredibly damaging statement by the auditor. They don't believe his credibility because of actions like this motion which is before us. It doesn't make any sense. How can the Minister of Justice go to Kindersley and try to tell the farmers, who have got lots of problems in regards to farm debt in Kindersley, that the work of the legislature is best spent debating a rules change, as opposed to dealing with the agricultural Bill. That member from Kindersley, Mr. Speaker, can — has — the power, to bring forward Bill 41 to deal with the crisis in agriculture. He's got the power, not us on this side.

So how could he go to Kindersley, or how can the member from Melville go out and tromp around Main Street in Melville telling his constituents up there that, yes, they're better served, all those small-business men who are having the economic problems they are in Melville? Not even an implement dealer, because an implement dealer pulled out. And along with the implement dealer, other people pulled out, and I don't know whether it's because of the member of Melville or not.

But how is he going to tell Main Street; how is he going to tell the people in the automotive stores; how's he going to tell the people there in the television repair shops; how is

he going to tell people in the furniture and clothing stores in Melville that this House is better served by debating this motion than by dealing with the agricultural crisis? Because we all know, Mr. Speaker, that in Saskatchewan, when the farmer is better off, we're all better off. When the farmer is better off, we're all better off, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll tell you, the farmer would be better dealing with Bill 41 than dealing with this rules debate. I don't think there is any doubt, any doubt in anybody's mind in this province, that to deal with the agricultural credit corporation, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the agricultural credit corporation is more important to the farmers of Saskatchewan than to deal with the Bill about rules changes.

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

**Mr. Lyons:** — Let's deal with the farm crisis. Let's deal with the education crisis. Let's deal with the real problems that people face in this province. Let us not continue this silly debate. Take the deal that's been offered to you by the opposition, cut your losses, and get back onto essential legislative agenda, the business of . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — It being 10 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 10 p.m.