

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with considerable pleasure that I introduce today 10 guests sitting in your gallery. They are part of a course called "English as a Second Language." These are, almost without exception, people who come to this country from various parts of the world — sometimes western Europe, but more likely eastern Europe or Asia — and they're learning English. It's always interesting to visit with them and to discuss with them the traditions of this institution.

They're accompanied by their teacher, Elsa Turek. After the question period is over, Mr. Speaker, I'll look forward to meeting with them and discussing what they've seen. I know all members will want to join with me in welcoming these people to the legislature and to this great country of ours.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Regina Centre in welcoming our special guests to the Assembly.

And I would like as well, Mr. Speaker, to have all members welcome to the Assembly some 20 grade 4 students from the Lumsden Elementary School in Lumsden. And they are seated, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery, sir. They are accompanied by their teacher, Carol Youck-Cousins; chaperons Anne Cockman and John Holman.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all hon. members to join with me in welcoming the students, their chaperons and teachers to the Legislative Assembly. Welcome.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, some friends and guests of our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Goodhand.

And seated in your gallery we have Mr. and Mrs. Premi from England, who are visiting Saskatchewan for one week; and accompanying them is Mr. Agit Kapoor from Melfort, Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join with me in recognizing these guests from England and from Melfort.

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

**Mr. Martin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the others in wishing those in the Speaker's gallery who are involved in the English as a Second Language program, welcome. Hope you enjoy the proceedings here this afternoon.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is a great deal of pleasure for me to introduce, in the west gallery, 28 students from Wilfrid Walker public school in the constituency of Regina Wascana. They are accompanied by Jill Hockin, Elaine Smith, and Bev Jeggo. I'll have an opportunity to meet with them at 2:30 for pictures and, I hope, an opportunity to have a chance to talk to them over drinks.

Mr. Speaker, would you and the others please welcome the students from Wilfrid Walker School in Regina.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, it's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Steve Bobiash, who is the president of the Saskatchewan Young New Democrats, an organization with some 1,600 young people ages 13 to 25. Steve has his own business; he runs the family farm. And the Young New Democrats have written a position paper that Steve will be releasing the recommendations of tomorrow on the economy and employment, and I'm sure the government will be very interested in those important ideas.

I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Steve here today.

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

**Negotiations with Guy Montpetit**

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Deputy Premier and it concerns the GigaText scandal. Last week, Mr. Minister, the minister from SEDCO indicated that you would be bringing some answers to some questions that we asked. We haven't seen those yet, so I will ask you today: will you confirm that sometime in the early fall of '88, in September or October, you met with Mr. Montpetit for a three-day meeting in his office in a Montreal suburb, with a Mr. Leier and with three of Mr. Montpetit's associates? And would you confirm, as well, that the purpose of the meeting was to negotiate a further Government of Saskatchewan investment of \$125 million with Montpetit — on what Montpetit refers to in court documents as the GigaMos project, a semi-conductor manufacturing venture — and that you were on the verge of signing the deal until the lawsuit blew it up in your face. Will you confirm that?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, none of his allegations are correct. I have met with Mr. Montpetit in Montreal on two occasions. I think on each occasion the longest occasion would be no more than one afternoon, certainly not three days.

As it relates to the deal that he's talking about, Mr. Speaker, there was a proposal brought forward by Mr. Guy Montpetit and some of his associates. And it dealt, Mr. Speaker, with the possibility of building a foundry for the manufacture of computer chips. The proposal brought forward, Mr. Speaker, was a rather interesting proposal, to say the least. And if, Mr. Speaker ... (inaudible interjection) ... I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that they're interested in the answer. But if, Mr. Speaker, the

proposal proved out to be a possibility, it would provide lots of opportunity in the high-tech field in Saskatchewan, something that I would think at least the members of Saskatoon would be interested in, Mr. Speaker.

But before this proposal could receive any support from this government, three things had to happen, Mr. Speaker. First, the technology had to have scientific verification. That still isn't done, Mr. Speaker. We're working on it, but it still isn't done. Secondly, markets had to have verification. The commercial viability had to be verified. That still isn't done, Mr. Speaker. And only after those first two steps are taken do you take the third. And the third step, Mr. Speaker, would be to put together a financial package.

We have done this, Mr. Speaker, in many other instances. And on this particular one, there was interest by investors from United States, from Canada, from offshore, from public, from private, Mr. Speaker. And part of my job, Mr. Speaker, is to bring economic development and investment to Saskatchewan, and I've looked at lots and lots of them. Every one of them, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to take full credit for when they work, and full responsibility for when they don't.

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

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. Mr. Minister, your responsibility is to protect the taxpayers of Saskatchewan from unscrupulous operators like Montpetit.

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

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — This guy, at the time you were negotiating, this guy at the same time you were negotiating, has already done away with \$4 million of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money, and that's where you've got a problem.

Now I want to ask you, Mr. Deputy Premier, can you tell us who picked up your expenses for the government trip . . . or for the Montreal trip? Was it Montpetit, was it GigaText, or the government? And if it was the government, will you submit the travel and the expense vouchers in this House today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, as a member of Executive Council and minister responsible in Saskatchewan for western diversification thrust, I naturally, as reasonable and fair-minded people would already know, I would naturally be travelling at cost to the government, Mr. Speaker. That's my job. Will I table the vouchers today? Of course not, Mr. Speaker. I don't carry them around on an ongoing basis, and I think that's unreasonable to even suggest that.

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

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — New question to the Deputy Premier. Mr. Minister, Mr. Montpetit has testified that on at least one occasion you and Mr. Leier flew in his personal jet for a meeting regarding your dealing with

him. Can you tell this House if that was a trip to Boston, or was it another trip? And can you tell us who accompanied you on that trip, the duration of the meeting, and the subject of the meeting?

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't remember the date, but I do remember being in Montreal meeting with Mr. Montpetit on one occasion. The following . . . no, that very evening, in fact, he was leaving Montreal for Regina, Mr. Speaker, for a board of directors meeting of GigaText.

I did have an Air Canada ticket, Mr. Speaker, and I don't recall what it cost to fly from Montreal to Regina, but I thought it would be appropriate in the circumstances, since the plane was coming from Montreal to Regina in any event — in any event — to fill up one of the empty seats, Mr. Speaker, and save the taxpayers of Saskatchewan the fare from Montreal to Regina.

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

**Mr. Lautermilch:** — Another question to the Deputy. How convenient, Mr. Minister. Mr. Minister, a helicopter was apparently chartered last year to fly over Saskatoon to view possible sites for Mr. Montpetit's plant. The helicopter, according to Mr. Montpetit, contained him, his pilot and Mr. Leier. Can you tell us if it was the government of Saskatchewan which chartered that helicopter, and what was the cost?

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Obviously, Mr. Speaker, I can't tell him that today. I'll undertake to find out, Mr. Speaker. And you know, from time to time when we are developing the economy in Saskatchewan, it's important, Mr. Speaker, to do some site selection.

I remember once, not many years ago, Mr. Speaker, when the member for Athabasca and I took a helicopter over to the Clearwater park, Mr. Speaker, and took a pretty good look at that, and he persuaded me, Mr. Speaker, that it would be a good site for a wilderness park. We do that from time to time, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — I can't believe how you so blatantly defy democracy and people in the province of Saskatchewan. The minister of SEDCO, last week in this House, took notice of a lot of these same questions. She said you'd be back here last week, instead of hiding, to answer the questions. You still can't answer them. You shouldn't be taking notice on them.

What I'd like to ask you now is that Mr. Montpetit, he's testified in Montreal that your government commissioned a feasibility study on the GigaText project and the study was carried out by Dr. Fabian of Toronto who was at the meeting with you in Montreal; that again under testimony, Mr. Montpetit said, lasted for three days. Will you tell us today in this House how much that study cost, and will you table the study in this House so we can see how extensively you looked into whether or not GigaText

could actually translate?

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — First, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell all hon. members where I was hiding last week. Mr. Speaker, I left town on . . . I don't remember the date, but I went, Mr. Speaker, up to Uranium City and Camsell Portage and Fond-du-Lac, Mr. Speaker, Black Lake, Camsell Portage — I already mentioned that one — Wollaston Post, and Hatchet Lake, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the people that I was talking to up there were very, very pleased with the fact that they now have unlimited, uninterrupted electricity, Mr. Speaker, at five and a half cents as compared to 29 cents . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. We are getting into debate. And as sometimes happens when the individual asks the question, introduces a new topic as well. So I don't think members should cast aspersions back and forth; it was part of the question. No doubt the minister took too long to answer it, and I'd like to get him to his answer now.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — The people from the Athabasca region appreciated it very much, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to respect for the democratic process, Mr. Speaker. And he raised that question; I didn't. He raised that question.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't me that hijacked this place for 17 days. Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, documents tabled at the court case in Montreal clearly show that on October 31 of 1988 GigaText had not one red cent left in the bank. In less than six months it had run through the taxpayers' \$4 million and failed to produce one single statute of this legislature. Yet at about the same time you were in a Montreal suburb meeting with Guy Montpetit, and according to his sworn testimony you were on the verge of committing another 125 million of taxpayers' money to the operation.

Were you so caught up in jet-setting around and helicopter tours and trips to Boston that you couldn't even see the forest for the trees? And were you so interested in playing a high roller with the taxpayers' money that you had no concept of what was really happening with our taxpayers' dollars in the province of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a moment about a question raised by the members opposite, and I think it can best be characterized as the NDP style of justice. And we shouldn't be surprised. I've been subjected to it before in here, Mr. Speaker, and we shouldn't be surprised that they would do it again. It's the nature of them, Mr. Speaker. But they're prepared to hang this guy and this project without any test of fairness, without any test of fairness.

Let's take a look at the timing of what's going on here, Mr. Speaker. We have a civil trial going on in Montreal. They're not prepared to wait for the outcome of that trial. We have, Mr. Speaker, right here in this House, indicated to members opposite that the deadline for the technology to be proven and up and running — and remember, Mr. Speaker, it's been over some rocky roads because of the civil trial in Montreal — and the deadline is June 17. And they're not prepared to wait to see if the technology works. And if it doesn't work, Mr. Speaker, they will rub their hands with glee and we will have lost an excellent opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, they are not prepared to wait for the tabling or the conclusion of the report from the RCMP, the investigation called for by this government, Mr. Speaker, the very minute that that civil action began in Montreal. That, Mr. Speaker, is the NDP style of justice — hang them, then give them a fair trial.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. It's your incompetence that's under question here today — not court cases, not RCMP investigations, but your waste of taxpayers' dollars in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — Now this new question is to you. We look at sworn testimony in Montreal that contradicts what you say in this legislature. Who do you think we should believe there, Mr. Deputy Premier? In his sworn testimony, Montpetit on December 20, 1988 said, and I quote:

When I speak of government, I say Mr. Eric Berntson is the deputy prime minister. He is not the latest arrival in government. He is the head for all practical purposes. It is he who directs the government, the Premier being the one who directs the caucus. As I understand it, it is Mr. Berntson who is the key person in the grand projects of this Government of Saskatchewan.

An interesting assertion that I would wonder if you've shared with your seat mate, the Premier of this province.

Could you tell us what you did to give Mr. Montpetit the clear impression that you were able to visit Montreal and cut a deal for \$125 million without checking back with your government or without the need for any further authorization? What gave you that authority?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm flattered by Mr. Montpetit's assessment of the kind of clout that I have around here. I'm also confused, Mr. Speaker, because at the same time, Mr. Speaker, they're calling him a crook and a credible witness, and I don't know how that works, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how that works.

Now I haven't read the transcripts of the civil action going on in Montreal, Mr. Speaker, in either language. Mr. Speaker, it has been made known to me that there are certain other allegations that have been made too, brought in by the other side to the case. There are two

sides to every case.

One, Mr. Speaker, there is the suggestion filed in evidence, I'm told, in Montreal that this is not a civil action as to whether Mr. Montpetit improperly spent this guy's money from Japan; it is . . . in fact it could well be an action designed, Mr. Speaker, for a technology grab — a technology grab — one, Mr. Speaker, that those people, those people would take great delight in, they would take great delight in.

Mr. Speaker, they have fought against every economic activity we have ever brought to this province — ever. They fought Weyerhaeuser, they fought the Meadow Lake project, they fought the Co-op upgrader, they fought Phillips Cable, they fought Babcock & Wilcox, Mr. Speaker, and they rubbed their hands with glee that they got the Rafferty project shut down.

Mr. Speaker, I question the very motives of every one of them.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — New question, Mr. Speaker. It's answers like that, Mr. Deputy Premier, that make the people in the province of Saskatchewan question your motives, sir, not the motives of the official opposition in this legislature.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — When translations of the statutes were first announced in the province of Saskatchewan, going to GigaText to translate them, there was no talk of research and development; there was no talk about new technology; it was \$4 million to translate the statutes. That is no question, Mr. Deputy Premier.

We would like to ask you when you will stop wasting taxpayers' dollars in the province of Saskatchewan? Come clean; call an election over the many important issues. You won't proceed with business, you hijack the people in the province, you're anti-democratic. Will you call an election, Mr. Deputy Premier?

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order. Order. Order. Order!

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm a little reluctant to even answer the question because I'm afraid that I might get into talking a little about hijacking. He raised hijacking, and those members know something of hijacking this place, Mr. Speaker, for 17 days a short time ago.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, that member has now put himself in the same category as Mr. Montpetit. He's asking me to call an election. Well only him and Mr. Montpetit would suggest that I have that kind of power. The member, my seat mate, Mr. Speaker, gets to do that. And I think in the previous administration, I don't think the deputy premier of that day called too many elections

either, although I do recall when the premier was out of town one time you called a by-election, as I recall, yes. Now . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And he flew to Hawaii, right. That's where the premier was, I believe, when you called that by-election.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, he talks about: when are we going to stop the waste and mismanagement of economic development in the province. Mr. Speaker, that member, that member, Mr. Speaker, was so critical of us because of Gainers in his home town, so critical of us because of Bondar's in his home town, so critical of us because of High R Doors in his home town. Mr. Speaker, he wouldn't recognize positive economic activity in this province if he tripped over it.

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

### **Barber Commission on SaskEnergy, Public Participation**

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier, but it's on a new subject matter because as I understand it, his colleague, the minister in charge of SEDCO, has undertaken on your behalf to provide answers, specific answers to a number of questions which were raised last week on the question of GigaText, and you've not done so today. I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, when I preface my question, that we'll be expecting those answers from the Deputy Premier or the Premier tomorrow, because it's now a week since notice has been taken of those questions.

However, my question to the Deputy Premier, Mr. Speaker, is on a new line and it has to do with the SaskEnergy hearings, privatization, and the Barber commission.

The Deputy Premier is no doubt aware that Dr. Barber has indicated in statements made to the press that notwithstanding \$1,100 a day and several other thousands of dollars for legal fees and advertising and associated expenses for the Barber commission hearings, he doesn't view it his mandate to make any decision with respect to whether or not the privatization of SaskEnergy goes ahead or not goes ahead.

In the light of this statement by Dr. Barber, one might even say absolving of any responsibility by himself of this whole exercise, what in the world does the Deputy Premier see as the purpose of this inquiry, other than to act as a whitewash for the government's ill-timed and ill-planned-out move in the first place?

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Two things, Mr. Speaker. Number one, I'll be happy to come into question period tomorrow or the next day or the next day, or whenever they want, and get up, Mr. Speaker, and to the extent that I can, answer every question that has been put by members opposite, providing, Mr. Speaker, they don't sit there and holler and scream because we're taking up question period.

We took notice of it, Mr. Speaker, and I would . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — A week ago.

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Well I wasn't here; I got here this morning. I got here this morning. And as I say, Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to answer the questions, but it may take up their precious little question period to do it, Mr. Speaker.

On the second question, on the second question, Mr. Speaker, these people, Mr. Speaker, last week accused the RCMP investigation of being a whitewash. Now they are accusing very credible people like Dr. Lloyd Barber of being used as a vehicle for a whitewash. I think that is totally incredible, totally unfair, and not becoming of that member, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Deputy Premier. I don't believe anybody on this side accuses the Royal Canadian Mounted Police of having a whitewash. I have confidence in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

**An Hon. Member:** — You didn't last week.

**Mr. Romanow:** — And we did last week too. What we want to do is to make sure that your accountability as minister on this GigaText affair is fully out in the open.

I come back to the question that I direct to you, Mr. Deputy Premier, which you so conveniently side-stepped. The question I give to you is this: what in the world are the terms of reference of the Barber Commission? The Barber Commission says itself, as a result of the newspaper reports a few days ago, that it won't have the task of determining whether or not — or recommending to you whether or not privatization of SaskEnergy should go ahead.

What in the world do the terms of reference mean? What in the world are we paying all this money for this commission to do? What other logical conclusion can be made except that it's a whitewash? You give me a good answer to that.

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

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — Obviously, Mr. Speaker, members opposite come to this with a bit of a bias. I'm told that the member . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — And you don't?

**Hon. Mr. Berntson:** — I have a bias, I have a bias, and I'd like to see this public offering done. Because of expressions of concern by you and others, we implemented the Barber Commission to provide for public input. And they are looking at just that. They are looking at just that, Mr. Speaker.

The members of the commission are Dr. Lloyd Barber, right . . . and look, this is the bias I am talking about. One of your members, the member for Regina Rosemont, in this House the other night said, " . . . a great believer in public enterprise." He's talking about Dr. Lloyd Barber, "

... a great believer in public enterprise; a great believer in the people of Saskatchewan; that person that has a hard time keeping his own university together."

Now that's what I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker. You guys, you know nothing of fairness or reason, just personal attack — hang them . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Situation in People's Republic of China

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a statement. I've forwarded a copy to the House Leader of the Opposition. The statement is as follows.

The Government of Saskatchewan deplores the violent suppression of peaceful demonstrators calling for increased democracy within the People's Republic of China. The Government of Saskatchewan extends its deepest sympathy to the families of those killed and injured and asks that the Chinese military refrain from further violence against the citizens and urges the government to demonstrate tolerance and openness.

The Government of Saskatchewan has been in contact with the federal government. We support the response of the federal government, on behalf of all Canadians, to this tragic situation, and we will continue to be in close contact with the Government of Canada to ensure an effective and co-ordinated response to the situation.

We are presently trying with the Government of Canada to find ways to maintain lines of communication between people here in Canada and their families in China. We have been assured at this point by the Government of Canada that Canadians in the People's Republic of China are safe.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Mitchell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not at all clear what the purpose of the minister's statement was in saying the things that he has said to this House. Certainly everyone is concerned about events in China as they developed over the weekend and watched with great concern the news reports as to what had happened in the city of Beijing, and we will all, I know, continue to watch those with great care.

It's of particular significance to us in the province of Saskatchewan because of the trading links that we have with the People's Republic of China, not only with respect to our grain but with respect to our potash and a good deal of our technology, and we're all watching with great concern on account of the important relationship that China and Saskatchewan enjoy as we witnessed in this legislature and in this province with the visit of Mr. Wan Li in the very recent past.

So we on this side of the House share the minister's concern, as we share their sympathy for the people who

were killed and injured in the events, and we certainly hope that, in some way or other, the situation in China will resolve itself in a way that is satisfactory to the people of China and, indeed, to the human rights and human betterment in all respects.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I think hon. members should just tone down so that the House can hear the order of business that's going on. It's not becoming to this House that when we're going through these motions we have a lot of hollering and you can't even hear what's going on. Now we're on government motions, and I would appreciate if we could hear what the Clerk is saying.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTIONS

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

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to take part in the debate on rules and procedures of the Legislative Assembly, and namely rule 33(1), the method that is used to call in the members, and that is the bell-ringing.

Mr. Speaker, here we are today, getting close to 50 days in the legislature, the 49th day debating, the 50th day, Mr. Speaker, debating rules changes, namely the bell-ringing. And I think that the citizens of Saskatchewan would far sooner see us in here debating the problems that we face out in the province of unemployment and stuff like that . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And I'm sure that the member from Rosthern, he'll have his chance to get up and speak when the time comes. I sincerely hope that all the members will get up.

What we see today now is a government that is totally out of touch with reality, Mr. Speaker. They really don't know or understand what has been happening in the province, especially in the last three to four weeks, Mr. Speaker. They just haven't learned their lesson. The government thinks that the problem is that the opposition has delayed their plans, their plans to privatize SaskPower. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the citizens of Saskatchewan most certainly are totally opposed to the privatization of SaskPower, and that is one of the main reasons that we're in here debating this bell-ringing rule change today.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — The public thinks the problem is that the government proposed this plan in the first place. To understand what has really been happening in this province the last four weeks, you have to understand a fundamental concept of the parliamentary democracy,

and that is a mandate.

Governments are elected, and thereby have a mandate to undertake the policy and programs they promised the voters that they would implement. That is a trust relationship between the public and the elected government. Trust is the basis of any elected government mandate. To the very best of a government's ability, it must work to implement the programs and policies which it promised the voters that it would. When that trust relationship is violated, the mandate of any government comes in question.

Changing of the rules — and this is not something new to Conservative governments, Mr. Speaker. This has also happened back in 1912 when we had a federal Conservative prime minister of Michael (Arthur) Meighen.

And this happened in 1912 when closure was first brought into the parliaments of Canada and the legislatures, and what they brought closure in for was a money Bill. They wanted to pass a money Bill so that they could buy ships for the Royal Navy in England. And that's when closure was first used, and this is what . . . the tactic that's being used here today as we see in our legislature.

Of course, I'm not talking about unforeseen circumstances. A Supreme Court ruling, a major economic or agriculture crisis — these unforeseen circumstances require every government to govern to the best of their ability and to sometimes change their promises to the public because of these changed circumstances. And, Mr. Speaker, this is not the case here.

If a government takes the time to explain those changed circumstances and to justify them to the public, the public can accept those changes and be very understanding, and the government's mandate to act is still intact. And this was not a promise by the government, that they were going to sell off SaskPower, and that's really why we're in here debating the bell-ringing is because of an ideology that this government has. And they are going down one trail, and that alone is to sell off the assets of Saskatchewan and namely the Saskatchewan Power Corporation.

However, what no elected government can do and expect to get support from the public is to consciously and deliberately betray the people of a fundamental issue. That's what happened in the case of SaskPower, Mr. Speaker. The government misled the people of this province and it said one thing and did exactly the opposite. That's a fundamental betrayal. The people saw it as such, and more than half of the population told Angus Reid that it was an important enough issue to require an election in this province.

In short, the Conservative government didn't have a mandate from the public to proceed. Our efforts were to bring the government to its senses to prevent this betrayal from moving forward when the large majority of the public totally opposed it, and that's why the bell-ringing took place in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. And the public's voice was heard, Mr. Speaker. It was heard loud

and clear. And the government reacted. It created a review panel and pulled the legislation.

And if we didn't have access to bell-ringing, Mr. Speaker . . . and that's why this Bill has been pulled. That's why it's not being rammed through the legislature at this time, because we used that rule of calling in the members and ringing the bells.

The government wants to pass this Bill so that it can sell off Saskatchewan assets — SaskPower and Sask potash. And as you can see, Mr. Speaker, the government has withdrawn that legislation. And if we did not have access to the bell-ringing and to call in the members to fight this type of legislation, then probably by now you would see the assets of our province, namely the natural gas side of SaskPower, would have been in a legal position to privatize and sell it off.

Hopefully this tactic that we have used and the rules of bell-ringing — calling in the members — will bring the government to its senses and they will not go ahead with the sale of Saskatchewan's assets, especially a major asset such as SaskPower.

(1445)

But now the government with the tone of this debate seems to be showing that it is totally oblivious to what has transpired. It doesn't seem to understand that the issue here is not the bell-ringing but their betrayal of a major promise to the people of this province. We feel that perhaps this issue should be sent to an all-party committee of the legislature for study. Mr. Speaker, we feel that if you're going to make such major changes as what we're making to bringing in the members and the bell-ringing, that it should be put before an all-party committee to discuss and implement rule changes.

But what is taking place right now, Mr. Speaker, is we have a government that is going totally against parliamentary tradition. Instead of making the changes with an all-party committee, they are doing this by themselves. And that goes against parliamentary tradition, Mr. Speaker, and we totally oppose that. An all-party committee to make any rule changes — and there could be many changes made — that's where the process belongs.

The motive of the government opposite in proposing rule changes before us is undoubtedly the most important issue in this debate. This motive is worthy of close examination because it says a great deal about the arrogance of the government opposite. This rule change is a means of ensuring the success of future SaskPower and other unpopular privatization legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just say to you that we are going to oppose this with all our power. We most certainly don't want to have a rule taken away that gives us access, the only access we have right now as an opposition, to stop what is taking place in Saskatchewan, namely the privatization of our assets and loss of control.

It is quite obvious in light of the remarkable recent events, that the government need this rule change to privatize

SaskPower against the clearly expressed wishes of the people of Saskatchewan. It is a sad day for our province when vindictive rule changes have become necessary for the Conservatives to ram through their extreme right-wing ideology legislative agenda.

And there's many that has taken place, Mr. Speaker. SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation); the potash; our forestry; highways is gone; the dental program is gone. And you just have to take a look at the results that have happened in this province because of the privatization that has taken place. And this is why we're using this method to try and bring the government to its senses, to try and stop them from selling off these major assets such as the Green Lake . . . Silver Lake farm in Green Lake.

And I say to the minister of privatization, and I sincerely hope he'll take this seriously, that if he is going to privatize it, that he will give the same opportunity to the citizens of Green Lake as he gave to Weyerhaeuser and Peter Pocklington. Because those folks up in Green Lake deserve that right, and this is what we're in here fighting for. We're in here fighting for a fundamental rule change . . . to stop a fundamental rule change that gives us the powers to stop this type of privatization and the outflow of our assets to Alberta and other parts of Canada and the United States.

And you can see, Mr. Speaker, what has taken place since privatization. We just have to take a look at the debt that we have in this province. In 1982 we had \$139 million in the bank when the Conservatives took over; today we have an operating budget of \$4 billion. And that is what privatization is doing to this province. It is literally destroying the province and sending it into complete bankruptcy. And we need these tools. We have to use the bell-ringing process so that we can bring this government to its senses and try and stop the massive sell-off of our assets that's taken place.

**An Hon. Member:** — Something which they promised they wouldn't do.

**Mr. Thompson:** — And that's right. This is what they promised, when they went around campaigning in 1986, that they would not do this, and particularly indicated they would not sell off a major utility, especially a major utility such as SaskPower.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if they go through with this and they sell off the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and they end up selling off SMDC, we are losing assets that is going to continually drive this province further and further in debt. We need these powers and we need these rules to try and stop this, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the main reasons why we're debating the bell-ringing rule today.

Mr. Speaker, it must not be forgotten that 67 per cent of Saskatchewan residents surveyed by Angus Reid oppose the Saskatchewan government's plans to privatize SaskEnergy — 65 per cent of them oppose the sell-off of SaskEnergy. The citizens of the province clearly reject the Conservative government's visions of the future, blatant privatization, which is to dismantle everything which

Saskatchewan people have built and give away the benefits to foreign investors and a few wealthy friends.

And as I indicated before to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is what has taken place. It's not only taken place with the Silver Lake farm in Green Lake; they want to sell off the potash; they've privatized the dental program in this province, taken away a good program and destroyed over 400 young women in the process of doing it.

And they're selling off our assets to wealthy friends. One only has to take a look at what's happening to the potash. If they sell off the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, which made \$106 million profit this year, and I believe it made over \$400 million in the years between 1982 and 1986, this is an asset that we need. We need it to build hospitals and schools and nursing homes and the like. Now what they want to do is sell off SaskEnergy, which is a profitable side of SaskPower, and we just have to put a stop to that.

The people have rejected the privatization of the power corporation and the breakup of a major utility. They have resoundingly rejected a return to the 1940's, when private utility companies gouged the people of the province and refused to provide adequate services.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, had Tommy Douglas not created the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, and we still had the private individuals who were using diesel power in our smaller communities to provide power at high cost, we would never, ever have seen rural Saskatchewan lit up. We never, ever would have seen Northern Saskatchewan lit up under the private entrepreneurs.

SaskPower is a good corporation. It's provided the services to the rural areas and to the smaller communities. It's provided power to northern Saskatchewan. You can go into any community in northern Saskatchewan and they all have power. That's through SaskPower. And now they want to dismantle it and sell it. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that we have to put a stop to this, and that's what we are trying to do right now.

We will continue to fight to bring the government to its senses. We'll continue to fight this type of a rule change that gives us the only tool that we have right now to stop the type of privatization and the destruction of this province.

The government, however, clearly intends to ignore the public wishes not to proceed with the sale of SaskEnergy. The minister of privatization has publicly stated that the Bills will be reintroduced when the review panel has completed its work. And what he's doing right there is prejudging what that review panel is bringing in. I suggest what may be brought in and what the people of this province are going to say to that commission is, we don't want to sell off the assets of SaskEnergy and to SaskPower.

And I sincerely hope that when that report comes in, that that commission will be listening to the citizens of this province and will bring in a report that will completely stop the ideology of this government to sell off our assets, and in this particular case, SaskEnergy.

This rule change is very instrumental to the government in ramming its unpopular privatization plans down the throats of the public. They want clear sailing, their time is short, and they want no delays. And I say that in all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, that this government's time is short. And what they want to do, they want to finish off what they have started, and that was to destroy everything that was built up by successive CCF and NDP governments in this province — to sell off those assets. And that is the agenda of this Conservative government.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the citizens of this province will not tolerate it. Once the writ is issued and an election is called 28 days later, this Conservative government will be gone, and there will be a New Democratic government in this province, and there will be breath of fresh air over this province. And I know . . .

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — And I know that the member of Saltcoats, he sits in his seat and he chatters, but I want to say to you, Mr. Speaker, the member from Saltcoats will not be seeking re-election in this province again. I say that to you in all sincerity. He will not seek re-election again; he knows that, and that's why he's not getting up and speaking in this debate. He knows that it's wrong. He knows full well that the folks out in Saltcoats are opposed to the sale of SaskEnergy.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — And he also knows that the folks out in Saltcoats support the tactic that we have been using in ringing the bells in here to try and bring this government to its senses. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that that's why, that when the nomination for the Conservative candidate comes up in Saltcoats, the present member will not be seeking the nomination because he will not be running again. He falls into the category of the 23 or 24 that will never seek re-election in this province again. And he falls into that category.

But I ask him to get up and give his side of the story if he sincerely believes that we should be selling off SaskEnergy, if he thinks that we should not have the ability to bring in our members by the rule of ringing the bells. If he's opposed to that, then I urge him to stand up and speak.

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

That's the agenda of the Tory government. That's their agenda. They don't want this rule in here. They want to limit the bell-ringing to one hour, so that the opposition can't get up and fight the sell-off of these assets, and to do what the majority of the citizens of this province want. And I think it's incumbent upon those members over there to listen to their constituents, because there's many,



many members over there that have . . . should have a long political career ahead of them. Many of them have just been elected for the first time. And I think that what they should be doing is listening to their constituents, getting up and speaking on this debate, and most certainly in your caucus, trying to stop the sell-off of the assets that we have in this province and the destruction of not only your political lives but the destruction of our province. I say, stand up and speak.

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

(1500)

**Mr. Thompson:** — The members opposite will try to justify this heavy-handed, unilateral change of the rules of the House by claiming that the opposition would use the tactics of the bells on any issue in the future, and could in fact paralyse the government. As an aside, the PC government has paralysed the operations of the government for over seven years, Mr. Speaker. We see the destruction that has taken place in this province and we have to put a stop to it.

We use the bell-ringing, Mr. Speaker, only when our province has been put in jeopardy. And I say to you in all sincerity, and I say it to the members opposite — and I see the member from Saltcoats is continually chirping from his seat; it will be interesting to see what he has to say when he stands up in this debate — I say to you that the province is being put in jeopardy if we're going to sell off all these assets and, in particular, a major utility such as SaskEnergy.

And the only way that we have to fight back, and I say that in all sincerity to the member from Saltcoats, is the bell-ringing rule. And we're using that and I think it's been successful, and I sincerely hope that some of the other members will take up the challenge and get in this battle to maintain those assets for Saskatchewan people.

I say to you, this government doesn't yet understand why this whole situation came about. It did not happen because the opposition was prepared to take that sort of unwarranted action. It happened because something in the order of 70 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan were opposed to the government's intention to privatize SaskPower — and I indicated to you before, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of the citizens in this province are totally opposed to the sell-off of our assets — and because the people have understood that this issue will determine what future direction this province will take for generations to come. This government does not yet understand the magnitude of the grass roots public opposing their privatization madness.

And I think that that speaks for itself, Mr. Speaker, when you see all the hundreds of thousands of individuals around this province who are signing petitions, who are answering calls when they are polled, and they indicate clearly that they are opposed to the selling off of the assets, and they fully support the rule that we are debating here right now, and that is the bell-ringing rule.

The public of Saskatchewan would never have tolerated the actions of the opposition if it were not for the fact that

they believed that this government was totally wrong-headed in its approach. It was on a course that was so inappropriate for the needs of Saskatchewan at this time and place in our history that they would tolerate almost any actions being taken with the rules to try and stop a majority government forcing its will in a totally unacceptable manner on the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the province . . . the people of the province were given the opportunity to express their will through petitions, their letter-writing, public meetings, and other democratic means. The use of the bells was acceptable to most of this province because they want the government stopped, because it is proceeding on an ill-considered course without having first found out what the public believes and what the public wants to see happen in this province.

And that is the reason, Mr. Speaker, why we're in here debating this rule change, the ringing of the bells. And one only has to take a look at the meetings that have been held around this province, Mr. Speaker, and the support that we have been getting for the stand that we have taken on this rule change.

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

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

And this was March 18, 1982, Mr. Speaker. The government may not like the message which the people of this province have sent to it on the privatization of SaskPower, but it ignores that message and proceeds with unilateral changes at its own peril. The residents of Saskatchewan do not appreciate being misled. And this Premier and this Deputy Premier, they said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a major utility would never be privatized, and now they turn around and do the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the action taken by the government in proposing this unilateral rule change is totally unprecedented in this legislature, and the government knows this. The Minister of Justice has admitted publicly that this is the first time that he is aware of the rules committee being passed by, and he makes no apologies — I repeat, and he makes no apologies. He does not believe in an all-party committee. And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that in doing that, he does not believe in democracy.

When the opposition returned to the House, the Premier stated publicly that the government would talk to the New Democrats about a possible change in the bell-ringing rules. And that's what should have been done, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There should have been an all-party committee of Conservative government members and opposition members to discuss this rule,

and the Premier indicated that that was going to take place.

Obviously the Premier's initial reaction was the correct one in terms of the parliamentary traditions of this House. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, shortly afterwards, on the same day, the government served notice it was introducing the rule change without consulting the opposition — a blatant breach of democracy, I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Until now, the Saskatchewan legislature has had a long tradition of consultation and co-operation in rule changes, of all-party consent on rules. This has been the strength of our system, that the majority does not ram through procedures without minority input and the approval of all concerned in the House.

Throughout the history of this Assembly, substantial consultation on rule changes has taken place through the mechanism of an all-party committee which are given a mandate by the Assembly. Rule changes have for the most part been accomplished through consensus and without division, and examples are in 1975 and 1981 and 1986, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there are many examples.

And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these all-party committees have undertaken comprehensive reviews of the rules and have brought forward legitimate proposals for reform. This government proposes a single rule change which has come about because of extreme difficulties with its own privatization program. This could only be seen as the action of a cynical and undemocratic government with one goal in mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker: to destroy Saskatchewan by selling off our assets and selling off a major asset right now, I say, in SaskPower.

Clearly the tradition in this House has been not to unilaterally tinker with the very important rules and procedures of the Assembly. As an institution, this House has withstood major and extremely polarized debates, debates with very high stakes, and governments of the past have not unilaterally altered the rules to suit their immediate purposes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to place on the record that in the past, consensus has always been sought on rule changes. Never, ever have we taken this method before. In the future I would hope that the consensus would always be sought.

But this government is setting a precedent, a precedent that we are not unmindful of, that says that if the rules are not in accordance with the wishes and desires of the government, you go ahead and change them for your own purpose. And that, I don't believe is healthy or democratic, and will come back to haunt this Conservative government. I say to you in all sincerity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this is rammed through, it will come back to haunt your government.

Unfortunately, this motion is yet another in a wide range of anti-democratic actions by this government. I would like to review some of those, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they paint a scary trend leading towards a tyranny.

To begin, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was fundamentally undemocratic of the government to introduce the SaskPower privatization Bills, to propose such a major change without a mandate from the people of the province. And that's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're in here discussing this rule change today. We used the method that we had at our disposal, and that is the ringing of the bells, and if that rule change is taken away, then we lose that.

Such a major change, without a mandate from the people of this province and with no prior consultation on the sell-off of a major public utility. The Finance minister has admitted the absence of the public consultation by the government on this crucial issue. In a stand of unbelievable arrogance and defiance of democracy, this government still plans to forge ahead with their privatization plans.

They say the only problem is that they have to do a bigger and better selling job to the people of Saskatchewan. Not enough people have been conned into believing their lines yet. And they never will. And they never will. More and more are turning against the government, especially when they use the tactics that they are using today, to muzzle the only way that we have as a government to change the rules of the legislature, especially the rule where the bell-ringing is involved.

The government's commitment to parliamentary tradition and respect for the democratic process is highly circumspect. The list of undemocratic actions and practices by this government is staggering, Mr. Speaker. The latest reworking of Saskatchewan's constituencies, which will apply to the next election if passed by the legislature, represents an unacceptable deviation from the democratic principle of one person, one vote.

This is most evident by comparing the ridings of Morse and Humboldt, both rural constituencies. In the Morse riding there are 7,757 voters, compared with 11,734 in Humboldt. It is blatantly unfair to allow variations of up to 4,000 votes between some ridings, and the B. C. Supreme Court ruling in April made this abundantly clear.

And I say that when you bring before this legislature legislation to change the rules in this House without using an all-party committee of the legislature, and especially when we're dealing with such a major change as the ringing of the bells in this legislature, I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this cannot be tolerated and should not be tolerated by this legislature, nor by the citizens of this province.

It must be remembered that the present government changed the boundary rules before boundaries were re-drawn. They serve to ensure the present electoral boundary outcome. The commission's hands were tied before they even began a blatant partisan move by a desperate and unpopular government. In 1971, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Ross Thatcher found out that the people of Saskatchewan believe in fairness, and the Premier's government will not get away with this gerrymander. It will backfire. And I say that when we debate the rule changes in this House, brought forward without an

all-party commission, that this will come back to haunt this government also.

And the same happened with the ward system, Mr. Speaker. We've seen what happened in that. Again in the municipal elections of last fall, urban voters endorsed the ward system concept and asked for its reinstatement. The Urban Affairs minister continues to maintain that he, and he alone, is right about this issue. And the only reason that he goes around and states that is because the wards were created by a New Democratic government. Another Conservative ideology, to tear down what has been built up by this government, exactly the same way as they're trying to ram this rule change through the legislature today.

(1515)

One of the most significant undemocratic acts of this provincial government was their failure to disclose to the people of Saskatchewan the actual deficit in 1986. Instead, after a provincial election campaign, the Finance minister presented a budget which revealed that his deficit forecasting had been miscalculated by some \$800 million.

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

**Mr. McLaren:** — I would ask for leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. McLaren:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the hon. member for allowing me to interrupt his speech to introduce some guests.

They are a group of 34 grade 3 and 4 students from Fairview School in the city of Yorkton, and they're sitting in the Speaker's gallery. And they are accompanied today by two teachers, Sally Struthers and Mary Beth Kolhert, and chaperones, Millie Sharp and Mrs. Tate, and bus driver, Bradley Westerhaug. We want to welcome you here to the Assembly today.

You're witnessing the debate on Bill No. 33. The member from Athabasca is speaking at the present time. And we hope you enjoy your stay at the Assembly this afternoon, and that you enjoy your tours that you have through the building. And I will meet with you at 4 o'clock for refreshments and a question and answer period, if that's what you wish, out on the lawn.

And I would ask all members to please welcome the students from Fairview School here to the Assembly today.

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

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTIONS

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I said before I sat down, prior to 1986, the Minister of Finance, in calculating his budget, was out \$800 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what he was.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The relevance of bringing this into the debate, I don't see it as being relevant. The question before the Assembly is the changing of rule 33(1), and the process is certainly relevant, and any processes that were done before, but no specifics are relevant to this debate.

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will try and speak to the motion and not get off track.

I was only using these examples, as I have done throughout my speech, to indicate that the opposition needs this type of a rule. We need the bell-ringing rule so that we can fight the type of privatization and the situations that are taking place in this province. And I respect your ruling and I will not refer to the budget again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But this is why we are here today. We are debating a rule change, a rule change that I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will muzzle the opposition. It does not give us the opportunity to be able to ring the bells so that we can call in our members when we want to vote on an important issue, whether that issue be the privatization of SaskPower or whatever it may be.

This is what we need. We have to have this rule, and that's why I'm here today debating the fact that we have to have that rule in there, and that rule is bell-ringing which allows us to call in our members, and should not be limited to one hour. And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is what we are doing.

If we did not have that tool at our disposal, we would not be able to fight such legislation that the people of Saskatchewan totally oppose, and the polls have shown that. Citizens in this province have spoken out, and they have come in, they have signed petitions, they have answered polls. And as Angus Reid says, that over 80 per cent of the population in this province are opposed to the sell-off of SaskPower, and over 80 per cent of the population in this province agree with the tactics that we are using, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in using the rule that we have at our disposal to ring the bells.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a parliamentary tradition, and if it is ever going to be changed, it should never be changed unilaterally by a government that is desperate to ram through legislation that is unpopular.

If we want to change the bell-ringing rule or any other rules of the legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then what we should be doing is getting an all-party committee together, and the government, the opposition, should sit down, discuss what the rule change is going to be. Like the Premier indicated when he came back into the

House, he indicated that there should be a change and that we have to take a look at the rules of bell-ringing.

But then they changed their mind, brought in legislation without any consultation with the opposition. And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is why we are here today, and that is why we are debating this rule change. And we will continue to debate this rule change, we will continue to fight so that we can have access to the rule that states clearly that we can call in the members, and there is no time limit as to when we bring them in to fight the type of legislation that 80 per cent of the population of this province want us to stand up and fight for.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — We have to have this access, and I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . .

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — . . . if that fundamental democratic right is taken away from us, I don't see how we can operate as an opposition. If this rule change goes through, it just clearly gives the member from Yorkton, who is pointing his finger at me, an opportunity to continue on the type of destruction that he has been involved in, a member of that Conservative government, in the sell-off of our assets. And this bell-ringing change in the rules came about because of the stand that the New Democratic Party took, especially on the sell-off of SaskPower. That's why we're in here debating it.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — And one can go back, and you can look at the statements of the member from Yorkton who used to be the minister in charge of one of our great assets, and that's the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. And he was a member who always stood up in this House and supported it and said it was good for Saskatchewan. We own 100 per cent of it, but now he is a party to that and wants to sell off the potash corporation to 45 per cent foreign, 55 per cent Canadian.

And I say to the member from Yorkton, if you proceed, and this government proceeds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the citizens of Saskatchewan, who now own 100 per cent of that corporation, will literally lose control and will lose all that asset to foreign and other parts of Canadian investors. We won't own it and we own it now. And I think, Mr. Member from Yorkton, you should stand up in this House and you should fight back. And you probably will never seek re-election in this province again either.

And I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this an important rule change. It's a rule change that takes democracy out of this legislature, and we cannot allow that to happen. We want to continue this debate; we've started on it; we want continue debating this rule change, and we will continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say many more words on this Bill, but at this time I would beg leave to adjourn the debate.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate. Is it agreed?

Leave not granted.

**Mr. Thompson:** — I think one can see here, when we're debating this rule change, what is more important to the Conservative government of this province. Is it the business at hand, the unemployment rate that we have, the out-migration of our young men and women in this province? No, it's a rule change that they want to ram down the throats of the opposition so that they can continue to sell off the assets of this province.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — That is the only reason. I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that's the ulterior motive of this government, is to pass this legislation to muzzle the opposition so we cannot call in our members to the bell-ringing process, so that they can continue to sell off our assets such as SaskPower, the potash corporation, SMDC, and many others.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — There's very few members that are even prepared, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to get up and debate this. It's cut and dried. They want to ram it down our throats, and that's the way they want to go. And they're headed down that trail, and I say they're headed down the trail of destruction for that Conservative Party in the next election. And I tell you, if you keep this up, that election's going to come a lot quicker than you think.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — This is going against democracy, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in closing off I just want to say that we here today are debating a very important change in the rules of this legislature. And when the Minister of Urban Affairs got up and he was speaking here the other day, and he said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we will be judged, the Conservative Party would be judged on this rule change, I say to you, and through you to those members, yes, they will be judged, and they will be judged severely in the next election.

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — I sincerely hope, I sincerely hope, Mr. Speaker, that the remarks I have made today on the rule changes regarding bell-ringing will challenge some of these members to get up and speak. And I sincerely hope that they will take this legislation and take it back and forget about it and then bring in an all-party commission if they want to make rule changes. But let's get on to running this province, creating jobs, and maintaining the assets we have. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — It's with pleasure that I rise today to speak,

and to speak to all members of this House and to the members opposite. I'm not afraid to speak, and I'm glad to be here to be able to speak, and I'm glad that the members are back so that we can speak.

I support the motion. And I support the motion to make the changes to rule 33 because I'm proud to speak, I'm proud to be here, I'm proud to hear the members opposite, and I'm proud to hear the members on this side of the House. This is the place to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected to this legislature in December, and I must say that the experiences of this spring have been second to none, and they've been very disappointing — very disappointing. Very disappointing to hear that the members opposite are afraid to speak. Very disappointing to hear that the members opposite are afraid to debate, to debate here in the House.

I believe in democracy.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — I believe in democracy and I believe in this House and I have faith in members on both sides of this Assembly. I'm glad to hear them speak. I'm glad to hear all members speak, and I'm glad to hear them speak here in this House.

I've heard many, many things this spring, and some of those things come to mind, Mr. Speaker. They come to mind at this time. I want to remind the members opposite; I want to remind them of a few things that they've said, and I'd just like them to hear them.

(1530)

I'd possibly like to remind the members why they are here and just who they represent and what they represent. I was sworn in and remember hearing an allegiance to Her Majesty, Mr. Speaker. I remember being told who I represent. I remember being told that I represent the people of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and I represent this province. And I'm proud, I'm proud to be here and I'm proud to be given that honour, Mr. Speaker.

I just ask everybody here, I ask everybody here to remember just who they are and who they represent and what they represent and what this House represents, Mr. Speaker. This is what makes this House so special, Mr. Speaker. We are truly privileged people, and that privilege, Mr. Speaker, is to be here and to speak, Mr. Speaker — it's to be here and it's to speak.

The word "parliament," Mr. Speaker, means "to speak." Parliament bases its power on the fundamental right of freedom of speech. The members are speaking to and for the people. The people give us the power we have, and we have a right and a responsibility to speak for those people, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — And that right and privilege is to be in this House and to speak for the people we represent, and to speak for those people here in this House — not in on the

streets, but here in this House. This House is the place to speak, Mr. Speaker, this House is the place for debate.

And the bells are rung for one reason and one reason alone, and that's to summon members here to this House to vote, and to speak for the people that we represent, Mr. Speaker. The bells are not rung to give us the opportunity to leave and prevent debate. What have they to fear? Debate? Free speech? I ask you. They are rung to call us here, and if we truly understand the rules, we know that, Mr. Speaker, and that is right, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I'm proud to be here and I'm proud to speak today.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — I want to refer briefly to the Leader of the Opposition's welcoming comments to me when I came to this House, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank him. I want to thank him very much for his welcome, because I truly believe he meant what he said. And I quote from *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker:

And I really think I speak now to all of the members, notwithstanding our differences and our partisanship and sometimes the heated nature of our debates, to serve in this Assembly is indeed a rare and high privilege.

In a sense, it is a trust — a trust we have to honour as best as we can. And I don't say this by way of a lecture; I just simply say that this is, in my judgement, a club, an exclusive club that you've joined.

And I thank him again for that welcome, and I thank him for welcoming me to this exclusive club. Note the Hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to serving in this Assembly, and he talked about this exclusive club.

And I'm proud to serve in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to be able to speak here and support the kinds of things that this House represents. And I'm proud to be part of this debate, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud to be part of this debate.

I'd also like to comment on a few of the other things that the Leader of the Opposition has said. The member from Riversdale talked about a mandate; he talked about a mandate. What is this government's mandate? What is the opposition's mandate? What is my mandate, Mr. Speaker? I was elected in December. I sought a mandate and I got one. I laid out my plan. I laid out my vision and I laid out my mandate. And I got it.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — I ask the members opposite: did I talk about diversification; did I talk about health care; did I talk about tourism, mineral resources, and economic development? You bet I did, Mr. Speaker. I sought a mandate and I got it.

I'm pursuing that mandate, Mr. Speaker, and I truly feel betrayed. I feel betrayed by the members opposite for their obstruction, for their obstructionist tactics to make this government and this province ungovernable.

Mr. Speaker, it's truly an honour to be here, it's truly an honour to be free to speak, and I feel that this is really history in the making. Passage of this motion is essential — it's essential if we are to protect and preserve our democratic freedoms. We aren't restricting speech, Mr. Speaker, we're encouraging it, and we're enshrining it for all, for all members of this House.

This is the place to debate, not on the streets of Saskatchewan, here in this House. We aren't scared of debate. We're here and we're here for a reason.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — Mr. Speaker, we are not new-found democrats, we are representatives of the people of this province. We are representatives of this province, and as such we have an enormous responsibility. And I think that responsibility has been forgotten by the members opposite, and I think it's time that somebody reminded them just who they are and what they represent and why they're here.

That responsibility goes beyond all party lines, Mr. Speaker — it goes beyond all party lines, and we must never forget that. This is not the time for cynicism and sarcastic remarks. It's a time for leadership and it's a time for co-operation. It's a time to speak; it's also a time to listen.

Prolonged bell-ringing is clearly an abuse of our parliamentary system. It's a threat to that system, and it challenges democracy itself. It's a tactic used to avoid debate, not ensure debate. To refuse to vote on first reading of a Bill, to refuse to vote on a Bill, to hold the government and the Saskatchewan people at ransom shows nothing but contempt — contempt for democracy and the democratic process.

The bells are rung in this legislature for one reason, Mr. Speaker, and I want to remind the members opposite again, they are rung for one reason and one reason alone. They're rung to call the duly elected members of this Assembly to vote. They're rung to call them here to debate, to speak. They're rung to call the representatives of Saskatchewan people to come and exercise their rights under the democratic system. They're rung to call all representatives to come forward, to come forward and express that privilege that they've been so honoured with, to come forward and speak, and speak here in this Assembly. By limiting bell-ringing, by adding those rules, we will go another step towards protecting this fine democratic system of ours. We'll protect it because we believe in it. We're not scared to speak, Mr. Speaker. We're not scared to speak.

Look at what happens when we allow the legislature to be taken hostage, Mr. Speaker. Look at what happened. The House couldn't function; we couldn't speak; the members opposite couldn't speak. We weren't afraid to debate; we weren't scared to see the facts. The members opposite were. Because you know why? Because they knew they'd lose the debate.

The debate moves into the media where the public is no

longer sure of what to believe, of who to believe. When the debate is confined to the legislature, the people of Saskatchewan can make their own judgements because all the facts are available to them — all the facts, not just the ones that the members opposite want to give the public.

But when the legislature is closed to debate, Saskatchewan people are no longer given a clear understanding of the issues. They aren't given the facts. They couldn't see them. The members opposite haven't seen the facts, and yet they felt free to go about this province and talk about something they hadn't even seen.

Witness what happened during those couple of weeks when the legislature was down and when the bells rang. The debate was taken out of the Assembly before first reading of the Bill, before the elected representatives could see the Bill. The NDP packed their bags and left. And do you know why they packed their bags and left? Because they were afraid to speak. They were afraid to speak for the people that they represent.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — They started talking about something that they knew nothing about, Mr. Speaker, and they knew nothing about it because they wouldn't let the people of this province see the Bill. Shame on the members opposite. Who do they represent? Just who do they represent and what do they represent?

They did not have the facts, Mr. Speaker, and I can only assume that they did not want those facts to be known. They didn't want them to be known to the people that they represent. They didn't want those facts to be known to the public.

They were wrong. They were very wrong, and they know that they're wrong because I believe they're afraid to debate. I believe they are afraid to debate the Bill. They are afraid to debate here today and debate the issues. Instead, they want to go around. They talk about everything except what this House is all about, and that's the freedom of speech, the freedom to be here, to represent the people that elected you, to be here, to talk. We know the facts, and we're prepared to debate those facts at any time, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Saskatchewan know better also. The people of Saskatchewan deserve better, Mr. Speaker. They deserve better. And I am sure that they will deal with the members opposite at the appropriate time, when the facts are known.

They deserve to know the truth, Mr. Speaker. They deserve better than being misled by a group of members opposite who were afraid to see the facts, to deal with the issues as they stand and for the issues as they are, Mr. Speaker.

We could not supply the people of Saskatchewan with the facts. We respect democracy and we respect the privileges of this House, Mr. Speaker — the privilege that's been given to us. We want to let all members and all members of this House see the facts first, and then they

can debate on the facts — not about things that they haven't seen, Mr. Speaker.

We could not talk about it, Mr. Speaker, because the NDP disrupted the democratic system. They left and the details of the Bill were laid here without anyone seeing them. They weren't dealing with the facts, Mr. Speaker, they were dealing with fear and the attempt to spread fear throughout this province.

By doing this the NDP made it impossible for a government to effectively present a Bill which will benefit all the people of this province — the people that they represent, the people that we represent, the people that put you here, the people that put us here. We're not scared to debate the Bill. This Bill has a whole lot to offer, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. The question before the Assembly is the rule change on rule 33(1). I would ask the member not to bring other specifics into the debate. Order. The process of rule change or the specific rule, the rule 33(1), is certainly relevant, but other issues or grievances before this House should be debated at another time.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was wandering. I was wandering because I just wanted to remind the members opposite of why they were here and why I feel that this rule change is very important.

The rule change involves many things, and they're going to benefit us all. And I think the members opposite truly know that. They know in their hearts. They really know in their hearts, and that's why it hurts so much.

At any rate, what happened in those two weeks when the members opposite were missing was nothing less than anarchy, Mr. Speaker. It was truly sad, and it's a sad day for this province; it's a sad day for all members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, we must make these rule changes so the government will no longer be prevented from fulfilling its day-to-day obligations to the people of this province, the people that the members opposite represent, and the people that we represent as government, Mr. Speaker.

We set an agenda, Mr. Speaker, and the opposition cannot continue to obstruct this agenda. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about potash; let's talk about it. Let's talk about SaskEnergy. Let's talk about agriculture. Let's move ahead. Let's move ahead. Let's vote. Let's vote. Let's move on.

This legislature can't be held at ransom, Mr. Speaker. We know that. Our agenda was laid out in the throne speech, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that cares. This is a government that truly cares, but it also acts. The agenda has been laid before us and it's been held at ransom, Mr. Speaker, and this is very wrong.

And the members opposite know that. The opposition

fears debate. It fears debate, Mr. Speaker, or why won't it debate the issues at hand, Mr. Speaker? Why won't it debate the issues at hand? Instead it chose to silence this House, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I feel that this rule change is so important. This is wrong, and they know it's wrong, and this is why they don't wish to debate. And this is why they won't resolve the issue at hand, Mr. Speaker. They're afraid of debate.

They suggest we move on to other things, Mr. Speaker, and why? Why might they do that, Mr. Speaker? Why that, Mr. Speaker? I suggest it's for one reason, Mr. Speaker, and one reason alone. They've just forgotten who they are, and they've forgotten who they represent, and they've forgotten just what they represent. Think of China, and think of China today, and think of democracy and think of what those people would have to say about the members opposite. I don't think that they would be very pleased.

The members opposite fear debate. They fear freedom of speech, or they would debate. They wouldn't leave this House and leave it hijacked for 17 days.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — They would sooner silence speech. They would sooner silence speech than speak, and speak for those people that represent . . . that they represent and the people that elected them, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I feel that these changes to the bell-ringing motion are so important to us all — for all of us, for this province.

We have to share in the responsibility, Mr. Speaker. We've all got to share in this responsibility. We must not allow Saskatchewan people to be threatened. We owe it to democracy; we owe it to ourselves and the people that we represent. We owe it to our past and we owe it to our future, Mr. Speaker. Our duty is to serve Saskatchewan people, not put their well-being at risk, Mr. Speaker. We must add to these rules. This motion protects our parliamentary system and our democratic traditions. It enshrines our past and it preserves our future. It guarantees free speech. It protects Saskatchewan people from being abused by their own representatives. And all representatives, all representatives should be truly proud in providing protection for what this motion represents, Mr. Speaker.

(1545)

It ensures Saskatchewan people that when they elect a member to this legislature, that the member will be required to debate these issues democratically here in this House where the debate should be. This motion will assure Saskatchewan people that the democratic freedoms, which their forefathers fought for, will be preserved in this province. The place for debate is here in this House, Mr. Speaker. The place to debate the issues is here in this House, and that's what democracy is all about.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — When Bills are debated in this House, Mr. Speaker, and I remind everyone, all the facts on both sides

of this Assembly can be heard. The issue can be discussed and debated freely here. When the motion is forcibly closed and debate is moved outside, the public can see only part of the story. The most recent episode did not even allow that, Mr. Speaker. The opposition didn't even allow themselves the privilege of seeing the Bill. We've been elected to debate these issues in this House, and we should debate on the facts, Mr. Speaker, not on hearsay, and not in the media.

The Saskatchewan people have placed in our hands the responsibility to uphold and protect our democracy and our parliamentary system. By making these rule changes we will honour that responsibility. By making these rule changes we will ensure that the business of governing this province will be carried out, where the principles of democracy can be upheld.

I urge all members of this Assembly to search in their hearts and do what is right for the people of Saskatchewan, the people that they represent, the people that we represent. Do what's right for Saskatchewan. Please do it.

I urge them to take this step forward in protecting our democratic system by supporting this motion. I urge them to participate in this great opportunity to stand up and say that they support democracy, that we respect our forefathers and their sacrifices, and that we would like to preserve the tremendous rights and these rights for our children — our future and theirs.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to once again remind the Leader of the Opposition of his words to us when he first addressed this issue, and I quote him again only as a reminder of the words that he said to this Assembly on May 11. What did the member from Riversdale say?

I think therefore the suggestion of the Minister of Justice bears further, very serious consideration. And I'll undertake to him, as Leader of the Opposition, that we will get back to him within the next . . . I would hope the government would at least give us over the weekend — tomorrow is Friday . . . to caucus and to consider what he said — I missed part of his remarks; read the written transcript, and to get back to him by, say, Monday at the latest as to what we would suggest in response to his suggestion which, if I may say so and I don't mean to be argumentative here, I would have liked the government to have done before it introduced the motion unilaterally. But that's water under the bridge. Let's not look at the past; let's look at the future.

I think we'll take up that suggestion and take an example of it for the next two or three days and consider it carefully, and get back to the government proponent of the mover, the Minister of Justice.

And I just bring that to your attention, because I really feel that the Leader of the Opposition is an honourable man, and I truly respect the comments that he made both in welcoming me here and in addressing this motion when it was first introduced. That was May 11, Mr. Speaker.

Today is June 5.

I'd also like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members, and particularly myself, to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition. Recently the member from Riversdale was awarded the Ukrainian World Congress medal of honour for outstanding contributions in the area of constitutional rights. And I truly want to congratulate him for receiving that medal for his work in the 1981-82 constitutional debate, as I understand it.

I ask the members opposite to think deeply about this issue and think deeply in their own hearts about it, to take control of his caucus, to step forward into the future and do what's right. All members know what's right.

This is not a partisan issue, it's a fundamental issue of democracy. Stop the debate; ask the question; ask the question and vote with your conscience. Vote in favour of this motion.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — After that last speech from the member from really, really glad and really, really proud, I think it's necessary to begin by reading the motion. No one, Mr. Speaker, who listened to that last speech would have any idea of what was being discussed.

The speaker is . . . oh, Mr. Speaker, that member's speech was so inspiring, so brilliant, I think I've memorized every word of it.

**An Hon. Member:** — Really, really glad and really, really happy.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Yes, that's right, the Bobby McFerrin . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I intend to. For members opposite who want to hear the truth, you're in great luck. This is your lucky day, because that's all you're going to hear.

I want to begin by reading the motion again. As I say, one would have no idea what was being discussed after listening to that speech.

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

When the Speaker or the chairman of Committee of the Whole, or Committee of Finance, has put the question on a motion and a recorded division is requested under rule 33(1), the bells to call in the members . . .

I didn't hear the member opposite.

. . . the bells to call in the members shall be sounded for not more than one hour, provided that while the members are being called in, either the government or official opposition member serving as House Leader, Acting House Leader, chief whip, or deputy whip, may approach the Speaker



(or chairman) to request that the division be deferred . . .

That in substance, Mr. Speaker, is the motion we are debating and have been debating for some time. The pith and substance of the motion and the change it would really effect is that it would limit the right of an opposition — and I suppose a government too — to ring the bells for more than one hour.

I want to read a short quotation by a former member of the federal House — a cabinet minister, Speaker of the House, and Governor General, I think in those orders — and, I might add, a distinguished broadcaster in Montreal before she became a member of parliament.

I refer, of course, to Jeanne Sauvé. She said, after the bell-ringing incident by the Conservatives in 1982, she said:

I may point out that obstructive tactics are allowed by the rules; however, the use must be regulated so as to safeguard: (1) the government's right to have the House consider its order of business, and the equally important right of the opposition to criticize, oppose, and even obstruct a government measure.

Mr. Speaker, it's worth while to consider what purpose the bell-ringing serves. Why do we have that? The bell-ringing . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, I suggest to the members opposite . . . The member from Yorkton, I think, made that contribution. No, I suggest to the member from Yorkton that it serves a broader purpose than simply to summon members. It serves as a legitimate tool in an opposition . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I don't know that the member from Weyburn would see any difference. I'm surprised that you don't find those one and the same.

The bell-ringing is more than just a means of summoning members for a vote. That could be done, Mr. Speaker, by any number of methods. The opposition has a legitimate right to obstruct. That is a part of what an opposition may do, and has been so since the beginning of parliaments.

Mr. Speaker, bell-ringing goes to the manner in which a legislature operates. It is worthwhile therefore, I think, to consider for a minute what the function of a legislature is.

I want to, before doing so, I want to deal with the comments of the member from "glad and proud". He stated that his side want debate, and they say we are afraid to debate. As I shall point out, Mr. Speaker, we're not afraid to debate. We are afraid that the government's not listening, and were afraid the government's not listening. Indeed, it's worthy of note that the member opposite spoke a great deal about talking and debating. I did not hear the word "listen" said once. It is far more important that elected members listen than they talk. Indeed, I think that's what, throughout this entire affair . . . the member from Melville's counting, to see whether or not he may leave. It seems you can, Mr. Member.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's out of order.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Yes, perhaps that was out of order.

**An Hon. Member:** — Resign, resign.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want me to resign over that. I'll consider that in the course of my comments and give it earnest consideration. The comment comes from the member from Maple Creek, and I've not heard her make a suggestion which wasn't wise and sound so . . .

The member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg spoke a great deal about listening, spoke a great deal about debating — never once mentioned the word "listen". That is a far more important function. It is far more important that members listen than they speak. I don't recall the public ever criticizing any politician for not speaking. I have often heard members criticized for not listening. Indeed, the most common criticism one has of the current government, with respect to this and such a large number of other issues, is that they are not listening.

Someone said that the good Lord gave us two ears and one mouth, and did so for a good reason. I suggest to the members opposite that if they had a reputation for listening, the bell-ringing incident would never have taken place. It was in fact the reputation this government has established for being intransigent, out of touch and arrogant, which brought all of this on . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Thunder Creek seeks my advice on how they might have listened to the debate which has not been introduced.

In fact, the contents of that Bill were well-known. It came, Mr. Speaker, as no surprise when we saw the Bill some three weeks later . . . ten days later. It came as no surprise. We knew what was in the Bill; so did the public. The public knew precisely what was in the Bill. They didn't want it at that point in time, Mr. Speaker; they don't want it now, Mr. Speaker. We haven't changed our view after seeing the Bill, and in fact neither has the public.

This government has developed a reputation for not listening, for being intransigent, stubborn, arrogant, aloof, and insensitive. If we had felt, Mr. Speaker, that this government was amenable to debate and rational logic, all this would never have happened. It happened because of this government's approach, which is sort of: my way, or no way. It happened because this is a government which has grown to an arrogance which leads them to disregard the rules. If they can't be disregarded, they change them. But they do not, Mr. Speaker, play within the rules.

(1600)

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the bell-ringing goes to the manner in which a legislature functions. It's worthwhile to consider for a moment what the function of this legislature is. To listen to the member opposite, the member who spoke for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, or for that matter the Premier in his comments in the press, one would suspect that they believe that this is a debating society. It is not, of course, a debating society.

As one who was active in a debating society in years gone

by, I have some understanding of how they function. The audience is not, of course, the other participants in the debate, but a third party altogether.

Our audience, in part here, is members opposite, and if they aren't listening, then this place doesn't function very well. It is in part a debating society; it's in part a place where we seek by rational argument, by logic, to persuade others to our point of view. And with a different government in office, that sometimes happens. I think it's accurate to say that with this government in office there is not a single example of any suggestion ever being made by the opposition which actually found its way into legislation. I don't think there's an exception to that since this government has taken office. Even relatively . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Is this going to be an hour?

**An Hon. Member:** — It may take a while.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Oh it may take a while. If the member has to leave the Chamber for any purpose, you may feel free to do so. You don't need to raise your hand to leave, at least from my vantage point.

It is partially a debating society; it partially serves that function. We seek to persuade others through logic, but it's more than that. A legislature or parliament is something infinitely more complex than a simple debating society.

But to listen to the comments of the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and the Premier on occasion, you'd think that's all it was. You'd think the function of this place was to serve as a forum for debate which would rage on, and then lights would go on and they'd do what they always intended to, which is really the effect of a debating club. It may serve some entertainment, often serves as a training for the participants, but rarely changes many views and rarely affects things. I suggest that the Premier does take the view that this a debating society, with little practical effect on his affairs and no control over it.

The legislature, as I said, is much more than that. And that brings me, in part, to the way in which the bells operate. Bells are more than simply a means of summoning members to the Assembly. They are a part of the tactics which an opposition might use to call the government to account.

**An Hon. Member:** — Who said that, Ned?

**Mr. Shillington:** — Oh, well I just finished. The member from Thunder Creek wants to know who said that. I just finished, and I thought it was very well said indeed. I'm surprised that the member from Thunder Creek would look for any higher authority.

The members of the legislature are not a part of government, and that's also relevant to the way in which we behave. I've spent many years in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, understanding that. I thought when I was first elected that — and I was elected to a party in office — I thought when I was first elected that what we would do in this Assembly and in this Chamber was play a role in drawing up Bills; we would play a role in striking the

budget. I thought I would do all of those things.

I found out, Mr. Speaker, that this legislature does not operate in that fashion, nor do any other. That, in a sense, is a congressional form of government. This would never happen in a congressional form of government because members of the Congress are, in fact, a part of government. They play a role in passing the laws, in drawing up the budget. They're an integral part of the government itself.

As I say, I spent some years in discovering that we're not. Members of the opposition are not in any sense a part of the government. We play no role . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Thank goodness.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, the member for Maple Creek says, thank goodness. That may or may not be. Each system of government has its advantages and its disadvantages. We are not a part of government; we don't play any role in passing the laws, in the budget. Not a single, solitary one of the suggestions that has ever been made by members of this side of the House has ever been taken into effect. I think that's accurate. If members opposite can think of a single suggestion the opposition ever made which was ever acted upon, then I stand corrected, but I think that's true of this government.

This government has regarded the opposition as some sort of a nuisance. As I say, the Premier regards us as a debating club with about as little effect on his actions as a debating club at a university might have.

It is different, of course, in the American system, the congressional system. There, members are a part of government. They pass the laws. Their suggestions are heeded. A bell-ringing would never make any sense in their form of government because the members there are a part of government.

Our function is much less than that, and in some ways much more. Our function, our purpose at one level is to call the government to account. We do that each day in question period. We attempt to bring to public attention, through question period, those things which should be brought to public attention.

I may say, lately in this session there has been no shortage of items which need to be brought to public attention. Mr. Speaker, I don't know that I've ever sat through a session in which a government made such a concerted effort to assist the opposition with question period. This spring has really been one of a kind.

Our function as well is to offer an alternative to the government in office. We have a role in preparing ourselves for government, in giving to the people an alternative when an election comes.

Finally, Mr. Speaker — and this is not a function which this legislature exercises very often, but this legislature also serves as a check on the government. It provides what is virtually the only check on a government in a parliamentary system.

Mr. Speaker, the bell-ringing and that sort of tactic is virtually the only way that an opposition can do that. Parliaments have changed very, very dramatically over the last hundred years. Let us just recount for a moment what this government has done to anger and outrage the Saskatchewan people over the last six months. Let's just do a quick tour of what's happened.

During the by-election and the federal election, which were held in the latter part of 1988, the farmers of Saskatchewan were promised drought assistance of \$45 an acre, but they didn't . . . but the farmers and rural people did not elect very many federal Conservatives. Indeed it is fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP is the voice of rural Saskatchewan in the federal House of Commons, and it is fair to say that after the next election, I believe that the NDP will be the voice of rural Saskatchewan in the provincial legislature.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — And if your interpretation, Mr. Speaker, of those polls is any different than mine, I'd be interested in hearing it.

Mr. Speaker, after the election, after the election . . . what led up to the bell-ringing was a boiling over of public frustration with this government. In a sense, it was not us who spoke, but it was the public who spoke.

Mr. Speaker, let's just review briefly what caused the degree of public frustration. I may say, and I will, I think, say so more than once in this speech, we would never have done what we did if we hadn't had solid public support. If members hadn't been besieged at every street corner by people saying, keep those bells ringing, as we were, we would never have done it. I had that said to me by people who have never voted NDP, and I don't think ever will, but who were outraged at the way that this government has behaved this spring.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want me to use names. One of the reputations that this government has developed is a reputation for being very, very vindictive and mean spirited with its enemies. This government is as intolerant as any administration in the recent history of Canada. This government has a reputation which really prohibits anyone from using any names, because of course the person would be singled out. The members opposite would check out their affairs, find out if there were some soft underbelly — they might have a brother or sister working for the government somewhere.

Mr. Speaker, we would never have done what we did without solid public support. And they rang for 17 days, not because we initially set out to do that, but because public opinion continued to urge us to keep those bells ringing.

**An Hon. Member:** — Why'd you come back in then?

**Mr. Shillington:** — Why did we come back in? The member wants to know why did we come back in. Just stay tuned and I'll get to that in a moment. I don't mind answering the questions of members opposite, but I'd just as soon the member from Arm River didn't craft this

speech for me. He's never shown any ability to give a speech or write one, and I'd just as soon he didn't structure mine. So I thank the member for his intense interest, but I think I'll get back to my own comments. But if you stay tuned, I will answer that question. I assure the member from Arm River, your curiosity will not go unsated.

**An Hon. Member:** — Thank you very much.

**Mr. Shillington:** — You're welcome . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I don't think there will be any need to sit on the edge of his chair. He's obviously fascinated by my comments and that's why he's shown an element of native shrewdness in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, we had the deficiency payment, a promise made during an election in the most cynical, conceivable fashion . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order, order. I think the hon. member is going to have to convince the Chair that that's related to the topic under discussion, and so far he hasn't.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Let me tell you what . . . Let me describe that, in summary form, the point that I was making. I was making the point, Mr. Speaker, that what happened with respect to the bell-ringing was a . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Lloydminster has never shown respect for anything; I don't know why he should begin with the Speaker of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I was making the point that, in supporting us, the public had acted out of a spring of utter frustration. The deficiency payment, oats taken off the wheat board after a clear undertaking during the federal election that free trade wouldn't affect the marketing of grains — another promise made, another promise which Conservative members felt perfectly free to break just as soon as it became convenient for them.

Then comes March and we . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Souris-Cannington is becoming impatient. I ask the member to listen.

Then we had the Rafferty shemozzle — a government in too much of a hurry to do things properly, a government that barrelled ahead, cut corners, and presented the public of Saskatchewan with a \$250 million hole — a pile of excavation and steel in southern Saskatchewan.

Then after that came a sale of SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation), something they had clearly undertaken not to do, and public frustration simply boiled over.

(1615)

Mr. Speaker, had this happened a century ago in England, there's no question, I think, that the government would have fallen. And that's how parliaments used to operate. A government which tested public opinion too much was defeated in a motion of non-confidence. There are any number of examples of that. Winston Churchill's father, Lord Randolph, changed parties two or three times;

Winston Churchill changed parties from Liberal to Conservative. That's how things operated a century ago.

But parliaments have changed very, very dramatically in the last century. Party discipline has become very, very tight. It is almost unknown for members to vote against the government. I don't know of any example of any member opposite voting against the government on any issue. It happened occasionally when we were in office, and I always admired the courage of those who did. But it doesn't happen very often. It happens very, very rarely.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, as parliaments have developed in this century, once elected they have a very, very free hand in what they do, and there's virtually no check over them. That, Mr. Speaker, occasionally creates some serious problems and occasionally provides a government which is arrogant, insensitive, and unconcerned to do things that should not be possible in a democracy.

No one is suggesting that government ought to be slavishly tied to the latest public opinion poll. I'm not suggesting that to members opposite. Indeed, I've been critical of the government opposite in times gone by for being too slavishly tied to public opinion polls. I've often felt that they try to run a government by watching the latest public opinion poll. It's been compared, Mr. Speaker, to trying to drive a car by watching through the rear-view mirror.

But in this instance, Mr. Speaker, the government has erred in the opposite extreme. The government has flatly refused to pay heed to public opinion on a vital issue which I think is fairly well understood. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the public opinion has a fair grasp of what was at stake with respect to privatization. Mr. Speaker, this government promised during the election that they would never privatize a utility, never do that. Why did they do that? Well they did that because they knew it was utterly unacceptable.

The member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg's back in his seat. The member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg stated that he got . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . It isn't any of my business what seat he's in. The member from Maple Creek made a reference . . .

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

**Mr. Hopfner:** — I'd like to ask the Assembly if I could have leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Hopfner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to introduce, through you and to members of this Assembly, some 17 students from Shoal Lake Collegiate in Shoal Lake, Manitoba — grade 10 and 11 students, I believe. Is that right?

And I would like to say they're accompanied here today by their teachers, Dennis Schoonbaert and Les Grills; and also chaperons, Jan Wilson and Bessie Stewart. Their bus driver, I believe, is Tom Sedgewick. I hope I pronounced

all the names correctly. And I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Saskatchewan and ask all members to show a warm welcome.

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

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTIONS

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to also welcome the students from out of town. We are in a debate which is of fundamental importance. It concerns the rights with which members operate and the manner in which this place functions. In a way, you're fortunate to be here during this period.

Mr. Speaker, as legislatures are now structured, it's very, very difficult to control an executive. An executive, which is the cabinet in this case, virtually do whatever they want, given the current level of party discipline.

As I say, I can recall some examples of members on this side of the House, members of my party, I guess I should say, voting against the government when we were in office — didn't happen often, but it happened. But I've never seen it happen . . . members opposite, like so many trained sheep, they applaud when requested, vote when requested, and appear to give very little thought to the substance of what they're doing.

Thus, the function of a legislature in maintaining a check and balance against the government is very, very difficult given the way the legislature's developed. In this respect, it's very different than the congressional system south of the border where the Congress can impeach people, plays a part in passing laws and drafting the budget, where budgets are drafted in large part by committees and dealt with in the House. That isn't our function, Mr. Speaker; we don't play a part in that. And that I guess is the nature of a parliamentary government in the 1980s.

So the checks and balances have become much more difficult. Nothing illustrates that more than this government during this spring. I know Mr. Speaker cautioned me about getting into extraneous topics, but I think this spring illustrates how difficult it is for a legislature to exercise any control over government. Bell-ringing is one way that could be done, but there aren't many ways of doing it.

This is a government, Mr. Speaker, which promised a \$45 deficiency payment, produced a small fraction of that, and there was little the legislature could do. This is a government which assured western people that free trade would not affect marketing of grains. Shortly after the election, it did. It took oats off the wheat board, and once again there was not much we could do except criticize.

The member from Meadow Lake thinks that breaking the commitment to farmers to maintain the present grains under the wheat board is a trivial thing. All I can say, Mr. Minister, is you're badly out of touch if you think that's

not an issue. It is indeed an issue.

Well I think we have done that, Mr. Speaker, and the marketing of oats is an issue. It is an issue in your riding as much as it is everywhere else. And, Mr. Minister, if you don't know that the marketing of oats is an issue, then all I can say is I hope for your sake you have kept your teaching certificate valid because you're going to need it after the next election.

Mr. Speaker, the government felt free to break its promise with respect to deficiency payment. There was not much the legislature could do. It felt free to break its promise with respect to oats, and there was not much we could do.

We knew, Mr. Speaker — Elizabeth May told us that the government was short-changing with the environmental process on the Rafferty dam. There wasn't much the legislature could do. I suggest to you that none of that would have happened in a house of representatives south of the border where the members are a part of government and have some very real means of keeping a government within the bounds of what's acceptable.

One of the reasons why bell-ringing has come into vogue here is because parliaments really have lost that ability. We have lost the ability to keep a government in check. This is an example. Mr. Speaker, this debate, this is by and large part of a privatization package. I think no one is deceived about why members opposite are so stubborn with respect to the bell-ringing, for two reasons, I guess — one, because they're angry, bitter; secondly, Mr. Speaker, because they want to pass the privatization Bills. They want to bring back potash . . . privatization of the potash corporation. They want to bring back the . . . what is I guess called SGI. I note, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the privatization of SGI, this obscenely lavish annual report. Mr. Speaker, I was informed that the printing of this annual report cost \$75,000 . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member from Regina Centre fully realizes, I'm sure, that he's certainly straying from the topic under discussion. He's been given wide latitude and is seeking further latitude. I'd just like to remind the hon. member that, following his course of debate, the issue could really wander off into almost any area, and that's really not what he wants to do, I'm sure. And I think he should direct his remarks more specifically to the issue under discussion, which is rule 33(1).

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I will, as requested, leave the subject, except to say that this government is intent upon privatization. Our only sure means of preventing that is bell-ringing. You think they don't want — and I'll make the point very quickly and get off it — you think they don't want to privatize SGI? Why on earth would they print such an obscenely expensive annual report? It certainly isn't needed for anything that's done in this legislature.

That annual report had a \$20 million profit, which they show, is carefully engineered to make SGI attractive. The public have said with crystal clarity, they don't want that. They don't want SPC privatized, they do not want Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan privatized, and they don't want SGI privatized.

What is our response to that? Well that's one of the difficulties with legislatures as they've developed in this century, as we don't have much of a means of dealing with that. Given the party discipline that has developed, we have only a very few tools left at our disposal to prevent the kind of outrage — and I think that's not too strong a term — the kind of outrage that occurred with respect to the SaskPower. And the privatization of SaskPower is nothing short of an outrage.

(1630)

This government promised not to privatize it, said so with clarity. The member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg stated that he got elected and got elected with a mandate for — and he listed several things. I note the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg never stated he got elected with a mandate to privatize SPC (Saskatchewan Power Corporation), because if he'd have sought such a mandate he'd have run a distant third. If he'd sought such a mandate he'd have run a distant third.

There is no question that members opposite know they're flying in the face of public opinion. And we then have to ask ourselves: what is our response? Is the Premier right? Is this a debating society? Do we simply debate it for two weeks, then the government goes merrily on its way? We said no; we said we have a broader function and a more important purpose than to simply sound off. We said the legislature still retains its primary function of keeping the executive arm in check.

And there aren't very many means left for us to do that. Many of the things that would have been done in days gone by have in fact been lost. We no longer have the means that we once did. Parliaments were developed, one should remember . . . The British trace their constitutional history to the Magna Carta. It should be remembered that what the nobility was attempting to do with King John was not very different than what we were attempting to do with this government. We were attempting to rein in a government which was flying in the face of popular opinion. That is what the nobility did with respect to King John, and he signed the Magna Carta, the great charter.

British people trace their constitutional history to that. I've actually tried to read the Magna Carta; it's very difficult reading. It says nothing about bell-ringing. It may surprise members opposite, but that was not the import of the document.

What it was, within the institutions of the day . . . and one has to remember they were extremely crude. This was the Middle Ages, and not the most sophisticated part of Europe either. Within the institutions of the day, the Magna Carta was an attempt to place some limits on the executive arm of government, then embodied entirely within the royalty.

Mr. Speaker, the Magna Carta is obviously of more symbolic importance than actual importance. Parliaments did meet sometime later, again with that express purpose of keeping a check on the executive power. They sought to impose some limits within which

an executive might operate. That's what we were doing. We were doing in the bell-ringing nothing very different than what the nobility had done with King John.

They sought not to replace him, in spite of the fact that he . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Yorkton doesn't like the . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . but I'm sorely disappointed. I was just so certain that the member from Yorkton would find this appealing.

Notwithstanding a clear victory at the meadow called Runnymede, the nobles never sought to replace King John; it was never suggested he abdicate. They simply wanted to place some limits on the manner in which he acted. That's all we sought to do with the bell-ringing. We simply sought to place some outside limits on the way in which a government can function.

As parliaments developed and began to meet a few centuries later, they again served the same purpose. With respect to school children who come and go, I feel an obligation to remind them that Canada is a child of both England and France, and our culture comes from both, but our institutions of government very much are British. The French system, of course, is quite different. The French National Assembly was the government. They made the laws, passed them, drew up the budget, as do the Americans, but that was not the function of the British parliament at all. The function of the British parliament was to receive what we would now call budgets, to say yea or nay, but not to draw them up themselves.

Parliaments have always been an attempt to impose some effective limits on the fashion in which an executive operates, and they have never been more than that. In attempting to impose, I could, Mr. Speaker, refer to the Plantagenet kings and the struggles with parliament. Parliament sought, not to replace them but to impose some limits; to say there are some limits beyond which you shall not go.

And later, at the time of the Seven Years War with France and the American Revolution, during the period of Robert Peel and Sir Robert Walpole, in effect at a time when monarchs were German and foreign, some of them unable to speak the English language, executive power moved from the hands of the royalty. The Tudor kings had exercised it with considerable skill. Executive power moved from the hands of the royalty, as the Tudor kings had exercised it, to a prime minister and a cabinet.

Once again, parliament retained that function. It sought not to pass the laws, to pass the budget; parliament was simply an attempt to provide some check and balances, an attempt to say to the executive: you may govern within reasonable limits, but there are some limits. And thus parliament continued, and does to this day in England, and does to this day in Canada, serve to provide some checks and balances. That's all we were doing with respect to the bell-ringing.

Mr. Speaker, this issue, the bell-ringing, grew out of the SaskPower issue. Members opposite say you ought to come and debate it. You ought to come and speak to the issue. You should come in here and debate it. You must be afraid to debate it. We're not afraid to debate it, nor

afraid — as members I think have discovered, we're not afraid to debate this motion.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are afraid of a government opposite which has shown itself to be very, very irresponsible. What is one to do with a government which is as irresponsible as this? The examples of the irresponsibility continue to . . . new examples continue to be seen every day.

I won't get into this in detail, Mr. Speaker, but I think we're to be forgiven for not trusting a government which gives \$4 million to what turned out to be a high roller, ignored . . . and we don't criticize them for a bad investment. Everybody's made . . . nobody who has invested money has . . . everybody who's invested money has made a bad investment. That's a common experience.

What we criticize them for is being irresponsible, not observing the ordinary, well understood principles of protecting public funds, such as having two signing officers. We criticize them for being irresponsible. How are we to trust members opposite who will behave in such a fashion?

I have had some conversation with members opposite. You say, oh surely you don't think we would bring back the SPC privatization. Oh surely you don't think we'd use closure. Oh surely you don't think we'd do that.

I say to members opposite and to Mr. Speaker, we don't trust you. Neither do the public of Saskatchewan; the public of Saskatchewan, by and large, think you people have taken leave of your senses, and they don't trust you to operate in a fashion which is fair and reasonable, and we don't trust them to operate in a fashion which is fair and reasonable.

If there were some evidence that members opposite had some respect for the rules with which governments traditionally operate, if there was some evidence that the government opposite had some respect for public money, for public funds, we might feel differently about this. But, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with what I fairly believe to be the most irresponsible, to be the most lawless, to be the most arrogant, insensitive, and out-of-touch government in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, if members opposite behaved as other governments do — other governments simply don't do this — if members opposite behaved as other governments do, if members opposite were to play by the rules — and you don't.

And I will . . . well I'm apparently irritating the member from Shellbrook-Torch River. I intend to get on in a moment, Mr. Member, to illustrate how little regard this government has for the rules of fair play. That's really what we're talking about here, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about fair play. This government opposite has shown no capacity for fair play, no capacity for respect for public property, no capacity for keeping promises.

In order for us to vote for this motion or to let it pass, we'd have to have some degree of confidence in their sense of

fair play, in their integrity. And, Mr. Speaker, we have absolutely none. This government has a history of broken promises, of the most irresponsible use of public property; a government which makes it impossible to deal with them on any ordinary basis.

Mr. Speaker, in a couple of weeks I will have completed my 14th year in this legislature. I've seen other governments come and go. I may say that this one behaves very differently than others. This government has behaved in such a fashion that no one can believe what they say. No one can trust their sense of fair play.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen a day in this legislature when a person's word was their bond; it was never broken. However inconvenient, however ill thought out, and however ill considered, the undertaking it gave or the promise you made, if it was made to a member of this Assembly, you kept it.

This bunch of scoundrels, Mr. Speaker, members opposite, have no respect. Nothing they say can be relied upon for longer than 10 minutes; they feel perfectly free to break undertakings to us and do so regularly.

Mr. Speaker, we never used to get undertakings in writing. We didn't get them, and we didn't give them; that just wasn't done. A member's word was respected. These people, if it isn't in writing, it doesn't exist. They will break their word within five minutes, just whatever's convenient.

So when members opposite say, but it has been abolished in other provinces, my response to that is, but in other provinces we don't put up with the sort of scoundrels, they don't put up with the kind of scoundrels that we do here.

**The Speaker:** — I would ask the hon. member to refrain from . . . to watch the language like that.

(1645)

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, I'll refrain from provocative language. I've certainly not tried to be provocative.

Just some good old Regina water, nothing else in it.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot function without some assurance, some assurances that members opposite will not run roughshod over us. The ordinary trust which would exist between members is completely lacking, and I may say has got a whole lot worse this year. Members opposite have proceeded this year as if they were a law unto themselves. One would think that they were a government in office in South America. They behave as if they can do whatever they want, as if they can do whatever they like, and we are simply critics.

But we say we're more than that. We say if you want to behave in such a fashion, if you insist on breaking your promises on everything, if you insist on squandering public funds in an extravagant fashion — and I won't get into the subject of the Rafferty dam — but how could one trust a government which wastes money as extravagantly as they do. They obviously feel no sense of responsibility

to the public, and obviously have no sense of integrity. Mr. Speaker, the bell-ringing is an essential check on a government which has as little sense of fair play as this.

Mr. Speaker, we think this province is different. We think the public in this province . . . first of all, Mr. Speaker, the public in this province, I think, to some extent agree with this. I was interested to note, Mr. Speaker, that during the bell-ringing incident, the support which we got from people of all parties. I had people who, as I say, have never voted NDP and probably never will. There's getting to be a far smaller . . . that group is getting far smaller as this government proceeds in office. But there's still some of them who (a) were outraged at the government's behaviour; (b) signed the petition; and (c) said when they were leaving, keep those bells ringing.

These were people who I know have never voted for me and never will. They were simply outraged at the way this government had behaved this spring. It was an outrage in part borne of the SPC issue, but the frustrations went much deeper than that. They said to us in effect, not in so many words, but they said to us in effect, how else can you deal with such a bunch except to let the bells ring?

**An Hon. Member:** — You meant scoundrels.

**Mr. Shillington:** — I may have meant it; I didn't say it though. I may have meant it, but I didn't say it.

They said to us, how else can you deal with such people? They've no respect for anything. They make promises for \$45 an acre during the election; when the people don't vote for them, they break it. They said that they . . . during the last election produced a budget of 500 million; in fact bring in a \$1.3 billion . . . a budget with a deficit of 5 billion . . . in fact, bring in a budget with a deficit of 1.3 billion.

They said to us, as we stood with the petitions in the Cornwall Centre, or the corner of Main and Hochelaga in Moose Jaw — or wherever the Moose Jaw members stood, and wherever Moose Jaw people stood with them — they said to us: how else can you deal with such a bunch? This is not a normal group of people that you're dealing with.

This is a government which shows a flagrant irresponsibility when dealing with public money. The \$4 million in GigaText is the most recent example of a government which cannot be trusted, but it's by no means the only one. This government, from the very beginning, has taken the position that seems to have proceeded with the view that they have no responsibility and there's no onus on them to be responsible of public money.

They were elected in '82, campaigning on a promise to abolish the sales tax — nothing to substitute for it, no programs cut; so you run up a huge deficit, so what? That's the attitude of the members opposite — so what?

The public said to us as we stood with the petitions: keep those bells ringing. What they were saying in effect is: how else can you deal with such a group of people?

This is a government whose approach to the management

of public affairs is very, very different than any other. The members opposite . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — It's a very kind way of putting it.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well I'm not being provocative. The members opposite have disregarded the principles which have governed democratic government during the three-quarters of a century, the 80 years . . . 84 years that this province has been in existence.

This government, Mr. Speaker, is like none other. No other government came in . . . You would be hard put to find such an irresponsible campaign as 1982. You would be hard put to find as blatant a deception as the 1986 budget. You'd be hard put to find a government which has as blatantly broken its promises as this government did with respect to SPC, and have supported the federal government in their broken promises.

So when we met the people on the . . . when I met the public on the corner of . . . in front of the Cornwall Centre, or the member from Saskatoon met the public at the co-op centre or at the shopping mall in Moose Jaw, as the case may be, people didn't say to us, sure don't like those bells ringing; sure don't like that tactic.

Their response was exactly the opposite. Their response was, in all cases, keep those bells ringing. What were they saying? What they were saying, Mr. Speaker, was that it is the only way you can deal with a group of people such as this who have an almost complete lack of integrity, and certainly have a complete lack of a sense of responsibility with respect to public property.

Members opposite believe, Mr. Speaker, that public property exists for only one purpose, and that's to get their re-election. This arose out of a move to privatize SPC. If, Mr. Speaker, they were going to use the money from SPC to pay down some of the debt, one could be a little more forgiving. That at least would be an honest choice.

But what did they say they were going to do with the money from SPC? They're going to lower power rates; that will obviously work for a while. I think everyone knows that you can sell a quarter section and you can spend the money, which is really capital, on operating, but you can't do it for long. How does it relate to bell-ringing? Well if the member had listened throughout the speech, you would know that what I have said to members opposite, what I have said to Mr. Speaker and to members opposite is that the reason why the public said to us — and it was universal — keep those bells ringing, is because they believe there's no other way of dealing with you. And indeed, having watched this government for seven years, having sat in virtually the same seat for seven years, that's accurate; there isn't any other way of dealing with this government.

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

**An Hon. Member:** — . . . for years and that's why I'm here.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Speaker, I must say I'm pleased to hear that. I have never been able to figure out why the

member is where he is. I have always been confused about that.

Mr. Speaker, the atmosphere in this House, in this Legislative Assembly, is deteriorated to a point which I have never seen . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Wilkie is saying it's just on that side. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why that has happened is because this government approached this session with the view that they can do whatever they want. They will proceed with whatever they want, when they want. And their view is, we really don't play a part in it at all — oh, sure, it's a nuisance; we've got to put up with all the noise, and they'll argue and debate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we say the legislature is more than that. We say this legislature is more than just a debating society. We say that where we have solid public support, where the public are adamantly opposed to what the members opposite are doing, this legislature should have some means of bringing public will to bear on the issues of the day. That's what the bell-ringing was all about. The bell-ringing was not so much our mechanism, it was really the people who used the mechanism.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what . . . I know, Mr. Speaker, that I was nervous, as I always am, about letting the bells ring very long. I may say that was my first reaction to it, was that we shouldn't do it for too long. But, Mr. Speaker, when I actually got out of this place and met the public and began to listen to the public, who said to me, keep those bells ringing; and when I thought about why they were saying that; when I asked myself, why are they supporting a move which in a way prevents the legislature from functioning; why are they doing that; why do they feel that way? I came to the conclusion that the public had come to the same conclusion we had, and that is that there's simply no other way of dealing with a group such as this. They don't listen to reason. They are absolutely impervious to any logic. They don't have a sense of fair play. Members opposite, in one sense, have no tradition here, and that may be why they lack a sense of fair play. That's really what lies at the bottom of the bell-ringing, is a lack of a sense of fair play.

Bell-ringing, in a sense, is a sign that things are not working as they should. If things were working as they should, such a tactic would not be necessary. But they're not. This government solemnly promised at every turn of the road that they wouldn't privatize a public utility, and then go ahead and do it anyway.

So we think, Mr. Speaker, that bell-ringing — we think bell-ringing plays a legitimate part in this legislature. We think by and large, if you look in past instances, we think by and large it has not been abused.

Mr. Speaker, bell-ringing was first used in 1978, I believe, by a Conservative party in Ottawa which was outraged at the behaviour of the federal Liberals. And I frankly didn't blame them. Mr. Speaker, the federal Liberals brought in a Bill with respect to . . . an energy Bill, but encompassed in the same Bill four different pieces of legislation — they called it an omnibus Bill — made it virtually impossible for the Conservatives to deal with. In a mood of frustration, they let the bells ring. Public opinion



supported the opposition all of the way, and eventually after some 11 days, if my memory serves me correctly, the government relented. The government split the Bill up into four different Bills, and the Parliament of Canada went on to consider them — something it really could not have done in any sort of a fashion; it really could not have done in any sort of a fashion if it . . .

**The Speaker:** — It being 5 o'clock, the House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.