

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Tchorzewski:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce a large group of students from the city of Regina from Dr. George Ferguson School. There are 56 of them. They are in grades 3 and 4, and they are here for a visit and I believe are seated in the east gallery. They will be here for question period, and I'm going to be meeting with them for picture taking right after 2:30, as well as some drinks in room 218.

I want to ask members in the Assembly to join me in welcoming these students here today, wishing them a good educational and enjoyable time and a safe trip home.

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

**Mr. Martin:** — Mr. Speaker, I have two groups I'd like to introduce to you now. If you recall, the other day I introduced a group of grade 4 and grade 5 students from W. F. Ready School, a large number of them. Today I have a smaller group from W. F. Ready School, grade 5 students, and while they are not a large group, they are a good group, Mr. Speaker, because they asked some very good questions, and so a bright bunch of youngsters. They are grade 5, numbering 25, Mr. Speaker. They accompanied by Mrs. J. Weare and Mrs. Davies.

I've had an opportunity to talk to them, and I'm going to have a picture taken with them at 2:30. Please welcome the students from W.F. Ready School, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Martin:** — And, Mr. Speaker, the other day I had an opportunity to talk about the Dr. Paul Schwann survey, a fitness survey that's taking place over at the University of Regina, a physical activity study. We have three adults with us today in the Speaker's gallery. They will be attending the life-styles survey. And I'd like to introduce to you today Laura Black, Dick Chapin, and Cecil Sanderson in the Speaker's gallery, Mr. Speaker. Please welcome them to the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have two introductions today. Sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, there's six grade 10 and 11 students from Allan, Saskatchewan — Allan high school. I'll be meeting with them at 2:30 for drinks and questions, and I hope they enjoy question period. They're accompanied by their teacher, Ernie Melnyk. I ask all members to join with me in wishing them a good day and a safe journey home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Muirhead:** — And also, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to

introduce Ron Bakken, if you would stand up, Ron. Ron is a member of the Co-op insurance board. He's from my constituency. I ask all members to say welcome to Ron Bakken.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Operation of Community Clinics

**Ms. Simard:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, the monthly bulletin of the Community Health Services Association of Regina states that underfunding has not allowed the community clinic to operate to maximum potential. In particular it says:

There is no shortage of patients waiting access to services provided by the clinic, but without additional funding to expand these services we will not be able to continue to accommodate them.

Could you please tell us, Mr. Minister, what is the status of discussions between your department and the clinic? And are you actively pursuing a solution to this problem?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of the exact circumstances of the negotiations or if there are negotiations in fact going on or discussions between the two. I'd be pleased to take notice of the question and bring back an answer to the hon. member.

**Ms. Simard:** — A new question, Mr. Speaker. I should just point out, Mr. Minister, that in the bulletin they have stated that:

We have been unable to secure funding from government, to secure from government a commitment to provide support despite the need and despite our demonstrated ability to be able to deliver these services efficiently and cost-effectively.

Now, Mr. Minister, if you're concerned, if your department is concerned about the best value for our dollar in health care, I would suggest that if you are not pursuing discussions with the community clinics that you should do so immediately. And why are they getting short . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — Order. I waited for the hon. member's question, and it was related to the one she had asked to begin with. And as we said before, when the hon. member takes notice then you may seek further information, but you may not ask any further questions, as such, just to seek further information.

**An Hon. Member:** — It was just a little bit of a question.

**The Speaker:** — Well, if the hon. member wishes to answer it. But the point is . . . I'll make this point again,

and I won't allow ministers to respond in the future once they take notice and he wants further information. And that's the way question period has to run or else we don't have a quick question period.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised the question earlier. I took notice earlier. I will take notice of all such circumstances surrounding all of this and make note of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member is the guest speaker at the Regina health services. She's looking for information for her speech.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order.

**Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, a new question. Mr. Minister, some time ago . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. The member from Regina Elphinstone is speaking to the Chair, and that is not acceptable. And I just want to remind the member for Regina Elphinstone that if he continues to do this it will not be tolerated.

**Ms. Simard:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, I asked you about a report prepared for the Department of Health that showed that community clinics were the most cost-effective method of delivering health services in this province. To date we have not seen that report. You have not given that report to us so that we can examine it.

Will you undertake today to table that report in this legislature?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — The answer as it relates to today, Mr. Speaker, is no, but that's not to say that I won't supply it to the hon. member at some future date.

**Ms. Simard:** — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, when will you provide us with that information? At some future date is not good enough. I've asked you about it several times; when will we get the report?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Probably at some future date, Mr. Speaker.

### Storage of Dental Equipment

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct my question also to the Minister of Health. Mr. Minister, it has now been two years since your government cruelly fired 411 people in the school-based dental program and carted off all their equipment that had been built up by the clinics.

Can you tell this House, Mr. Minister, how much of that equipment is currently being stored at the Rolloflex building, 1260 8th Avenue, Regina, the dental warehouse, 3430 7th Avenue, Regina, and the Rolar building at 1202 17th Street West in Saskatoon?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member I think knows, the responsibility for warehousing and so on is with the property management corporation, but I'll take notice of that.

And I'm sure that the hon. member doesn't expect either myself or my colleague, the minister responsible for property management corporation, to have the exact address, the exact address of every piece of dental equipment.

**The Speaker:** — I once more remind the hon. minister that . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — You see how long you let him go already.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I once more remind the hon. minister that if he takes notice, that he can't make any further remarks, and the minister knows that.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a new question to the Minister of Health. There are a number of people interested in where this equipment is, or where the money is for the equipment, number one being the Provincial Auditor is interested in this equipment.

I want the minister to confirm that the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation has plans to soon sell off the dental equipment stored at the Rolloflex building for scrap. Can you tell this House, Mr. Minister, whether you, as the Minister of Health, concur in that decision?

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

**Hon. Mr. Taylor:** — As I reported to the House before on questions regarding the dental equipment, there's about \$700,000 of it has been sold. Some of the equipment has been transferred to other departments where it could be used, and there is some still in storage in various warehouses. The exact amount, I couldn't say at this point in time. But as the Minister of Health said, he'll take notice and report back.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a new question to the Minister of Health. If I was directing it to the minister in charge of the property management corporation, I'd ask what he did with the money, because the Provincial Auditor also wants to know what he did with the money.

My question to the Minister of Health is: can you explain why, Mr. Minister, if private dentists in the province are just clamouring to take over services provided by the school-based dental program of the past, and if they're being rushing to set up satellite clinics, and you have three warehouses full of unused dental equipment, why are you planning to sell off the equipment as scrap, Mr. Minister?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — First of all, and foremost, Mr. Speaker, the facts as presented by that member would probably be similar to the facts presented by his colleague on Friday, the fact that they are non-facts that are being

presented.

But, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about the clinics that were out, and what they call satellite clinics that were out in schools. And as I pointed out on Friday, and on many occasions in the past, dental chairs sitting in schools that would be visited by a therapist on one day, in many cases, one day out of a 52-week year — and he says that those pieces of equipment were in great use before, and so on. The fact that they sat right there and they were used one day — many of them were used one day out of a 52-week year.

Mr. Speaker, the system is working well that is there now. Rural Saskatchewan has excellent dental coverage, with the exception of about two areas where there's further afield, where people must travel a little further, the south-west part of the province being one of those.

Mr. Speaker, the facts as presented by the member, what he purports to be facts, are just not that.

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

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — I'd like to direct a further question to the Minister of Health, a new question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, will you assure this House that all of the unsold equipment that is being stored, is being stored under proper sanitary conditions, and that the investment of millions of dollars by the people of Saskatchewan is not being allowed to simply deteriorate in warehouses because of your government's half-baked plan to privatize the dental program without making provisions for program to replace the program that you cannibalized?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Well as the hon. member knows, Mr. Speaker, the equipment, disposal of equipment, storage of equipment, is under the jurisdiction of the property management corporation. The member well knows that, and that's the best place for him to direct his questions.

I can give him this assurance. The dental equipment that is in use in Saskatchewan, both rural and urban, is in use in sterile conditions.

**Mr. Brockelbank:** — Final question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health. We're talking about \$2.2 million worth of equipment which is being shipped over to the minister in charge of the property management corporation, which subsequently told us he sold off \$700,000 worth. Is it your position, Mr. Minister, that your privatized dental program has been such a dismal flop that you're unable to sell two-thirds to the available dental clinics, those wishing to set up private clinics? As a result, this equipment sits rusting in warehouses. Is that your position, Mr. Minister?

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — No.

#### D-Mail Services

**Mr. Anguish:** — My question is to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, you recently sent me a letter entitled "Dear Entrepreneur." You also sent it to several other business people in the province of Saskatchewan. And I was wondering if today, if you could confirm that you recently . . .

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — You sent me a letter, and it was also sent to a number of other small-business people in the province, entitled "Dear Entrepreneur." And I'm wondering if you could tell us, Mr. Minister, whether or not you've entered into a contract with one Dave Tkachuk, who's a former principal secretary to the Premier and well-known Tory worker and front man in the province, that his firm D-Mail (Services Inc.), sent out these letters to some 150,000 people in the province, talking about your achievements in government, and can you confirm that the contract cost your department somewhere in the neighbourhood of 75,000 to \$100,000.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously if the hon. member received a letter addressed to "Dear Entrepreneur," there is a big mistake in the mailing list, Mr. Speaker, and very much worthy of investigation on my part because we all know how little the hon. member knows about business.

And we also know how little the hon. member supports business in his own riding as he attacked Gainers and the Vanguard (mobile home) Manufacturing, and his attempts to utterly destroy the small-business community in the city of North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

So obviously if he got the letter, there was a tragic error made, Mr. Speaker, and I will endeavour to correct that. I will also endeavour, Mr. Speaker, to get the rest of the information for the hon. member, but I certainly will take a good hard look at our mailing list if there was such a big mistake made, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — New question to the same minister. I'm sure that small-business people in the province are very interested in what you said. I know that in our business in The Battlefords, if we don't make a profit and we continually lose money, then our business will go under. I see that you, as Minister of Finance, can make a billion dollar mistake on your budget and you still seem to exist till the next election.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — So aside from that, I don't think you should be throwing things like this letter in the face of small-business people in the province.

Maybe you'd tell us what's going on here. Did your friend Dave Tkachuk need the money, or are you afraid that you've failed so miserably in convincing people in the

province — that you haven't really accomplished anything at all; that you must send them out these little pieces of political propaganda as information from your department at taxpayers' expense?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have already admitted that if the hon. member did in fact get a copy, there was a big mistake made because we're all aware of what the chamber of commerce in North Battleford have said about the hon. member — that he is of no help to the small-business community in North Battleford. His own people are saying that.

He has been publicly attacking efforts of this government to try and diversify the economy in The Battlefords and North Battleford. He has been attacking, Mr. Speaker, all of our efforts to try and help the city of North Battleford. We know, as do the people of North Battleford, that the hon. member has been criticized by the chamber of commerce and his own . . .

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

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — Well, Mr. Minister . . . New question, same minister. Mr. Minister, I would invite you to come to The Battlefords and tour the business community with me. And we can start off by having . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The hon. member is also infringing on the rules and entering into debate, and would he get to his question.

**Mr. Anguish:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You see, we could have breakfast at a restaurant and . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Order. Would you please be seated. Second time I've brought the hon. member to attention not to continue in debate. Would you get to the question.

#### **Polling Services re Budget**

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Minister, new question. Can you confirm that about a month before you introduced your last budget that you had a company called Summerhill Research of Winnipeg, on a subcontract from your friends at Decima Research, to do a poll of people in this province on specific policies to be included in your last budget? And what was their reaction to that? And could you tell us how much the poll that Summerhill Research from Winnipeg cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan while you're groping around?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well I'm not aware, Mr. Speaker, of any such contract or any such polling. I will state, Mr. Speaker, that whatever the sources of the budget — and I will give all my colleagues full credit — it's interesting that it must have been successful because the NDP have not wanted to talk about it all through this session, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the NDP asked me, I don't think — what? — one question on the budget since it was brought in in March, Mr. Speaker. So whatever the sources of the budget, and I'm prepared to give the credit to, as I say, my colleagues in caucus and in cabinet for a very good budget, a budget that was well received by the people of this province.

I'm not aware of any such polling, Mr. Speaker, but let me tell the hon. member that it's taken you three or four months to screw up your courage to ask a question about the budget, so whatever the sources, it was obviously very successful.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — My question is very simply a new question to the Minister of Finance. Will you bring in the estimates this afternoon? We'll debate them here in this house today.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I have . . . I apologize to the House for not having responded to the hon. member when he invited me to tour North Battleford. I have two problems, Mr. Speaker. Having toured North Battleford for the business community, Mr. Speaker, if I went with the hon. member it would be like the kiss of death on me, Mr. Speaker, because I know it's a bit . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Next question.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — Mr. Speaker, new question to the minister. Will you bring in the estimates today in this House? We'll deal with it now, this afternoon, in the legislature — bring them in.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well I've been here long enough to know, and I hope the hon. member would begin to learn . . . I gather that there are some discussions, Mr. Speaker, and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to inflame the debate.

I will suggest for the hon. member that the people in North Battleford are going to be surprised by your sudden concern about business. It is something, Mr. Speaker, that has not existed before today. I think it'll be of rather short \_term nature.

But I gather the matter of the process of what goes before the House is being dealt with.

**Mr. Anguish:** — You're struggling as bad as the rest of the government, Mr. Minister.

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

**Mr. Anguish:** — New question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, you used taxpayers' money to ask people in Saskatchewan what you should put in your budget, and the population still rejects it. Then you used more

taxpayers' money to tell the business community you're doing a whole bunch of good things for them, and still the people don't trust you. Instead of spending all this money on political purposes and accomplishing nothing, why don't you accept some advice which comes free from the growing public opinion that you are incompetent and you should resign and call an election before you cause this province any more problems.

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well if public reaction is the criteria . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If public opinion was the criterion that the hon. member would go on, that the utter rejection by the business community of the hon. member in North Battleford should cause him to take the action that he urges.

Let me indicate to the hon. member that in our budget we have the first small-business tax rebate program to help small businesses with property taxes and business taxes, Mr. Speaker, something that the NDP refused to do.

Mr. Speaker, we have new programs through SEDCO and the department of small business and tourism which are designed, Mr. Speaker, to try and help small business.

We have five new programs, Mr. Speaker, in our budget to try and help bring some stability and viability to the smaller communities in this province, Mr. Speaker, and we've listed those over and over and over again.

Now I know, Mr. Speaker, that it has to be this government that takes the message of those programs to those affected because I don't expect the opposition to do it. The opposition are opposed to those very programs designed to help small business, help small communities, and help diversify this economy, Mr. Speaker. It has to be this government to get that message out because I don't expect the hon. members . . .

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

### Gambling Tax

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, I wish to raise with you another of your popular success stories, the gambling tax. Mr. Minister, that tax, according to your speech, was to come into effect at the end of this month. A lot of charities expressed concern about how it was going to operate. My question, Mr. Minister, is: what arrangement do you have in place with respect to the implementation of the gambling tax at the end of this month?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — All necessary arrangements.

**Mr. Shillington:** — Well, Mr. Minister, the time is . . . new question. Mr. Minister, the time is past due when you want to be a little more forthcoming, if not with the members of this Assembly, at least with those who have to pay the tax.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, I'm going to repeat my question. What are the arrangements? What arrangements have you entered into with the charities?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — I'm advised, Mr. Speaker, that the minister responsible for the gaming authority in Saskatchewan has been meeting with the appropriate charities and charitable institutions affected by the tax. And I'm informed, as well, that all the arrangements based on whether they be for a bingo licence or a casino licence or the straight lottery tickets — and I've indicated that that would be a 10 per cent tax; I said that in the budget — that those arrangements have very much all been completed to the best of my knowledge.

**An Hon. Member:** — Not true.

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — Well some say it's not true. I happen to be advised differently — with one exception, I'm advised, and that is the question of the taxing on the casinos, and there are some negotiations still going on with the appropriate exhibition authorities in that regard. So other than that there is the question, not as to the application of the tax, but in the city of Lloydminster and Flin Flon as to whether or not the tax would be collected in those two cities, given the border position. So to the best of my knowledge most of the other arrangements . . . all of the other arrangements have been made.

**Mr. Shillington:** — A new question. Mr. Minister, it's apparent from the lame fashion in which you answered that, that you've now realized what you were told initially, and that is this is going to be a very difficult tax to administer.

**An Hon. Member:** — And unpopular.

**Mr. Shillington:** — And equally unpopular.

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

**Mr. Shillington:** — Mr. Minister, do I take it from the fashion in which you groped for an answer the last time, that you're going to be unable to meet the June 30 deadline with respect to this tax? Do we now take it that the tax is going to be imposed some time in the future?

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

**Hon. Mr. Lane:** — No, the tax will be implemented on the date that we set out in the budget. I have told you now on two occasions today that all the necessary arrangements, except with the two exceptions that I've given you, that the systems will be in place, that discussions have been going on for some time with the appropriate charities, and provincial bodies in many cases, and that we are proceeding.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day I am pleased to . . .

I have a message from the Chief Electoral Officer.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to submit herewith, pursuant to section 222(1) of The Election Act, a report respecting annual fiscal returns of registered political parties for the fiscal year 1988. Chief Electoral Officer.

I now table this report.

## 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. Koenker:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with some disappointment that I return to this subject, the motion by the hon. member from Kindersley, that the rules and procedures of this Legislative Assembly be changed.

The public will know that in dealing with this particular item of business today it chooses not to deal with other items of public business — environmental legislation, child care legislation, and a host of other popular priorities of the people of Saskatchewan. This certainly couldn't be construed or termed a popular move by the government in any way, shape or form. It's beyond the bounds of imagination even to think of a rule to change the bell-ringing legislation of this Assembly to be an order of business that is high on the popular agenda.

Now we all know that when the government moved to introduce this bell-ringing legislation on May 8, it moved to prevent a recurrence of the kind of far-ranging public debate that took place in April and May of this spring with respect to the privatization of SaskPower. And that, quite simply, is the only reason that we have this motion before us today, is to squelch public participation in debate on public policy.

The public would recognize this move to be highly unusual. Never before in the history of this province, or of this country, in fact, have the bells rung so long. This is totally unprecedented, as we now know. And it's also, the public will realize, highly unlikely that the bells will ever ring to this extent again.

This kind of action, as unprecedented as it is, for an opposition to walk out of the Legislative Assembly in protest of government legislation, this kind of opposition that carries on for 17 days can only be sustained if there is a will in the public to sustain the kind of protest initiated and mounted by the opposition in walking out. Without public support, without public approval for a walk-out while the bells are ringing, such an initiative would never even get airborne. And in fact that's why we find that the bells ordinarily ring for maybe five minutes or 10 minutes

on most occasions to call the members to a vote.

But, Mr. Speaker, I say that when there is public business that's high on the public's priority, or high on the public's agenda — business such as the privatization of SaskPower — then the bells will ring for more than five or 10 minutes. The bells then will ring legitimately for 17 days.

And it's well then that there is a legislative mechanism to allow for such a procedure to happen. And I would argue that it's precisely the mechanism that we have right now in the rules and procedures book of the Legislative Assembly that allows for the democratic process to flourish and regenerate itself and sustain itself as public opinion is brought to bear on government decision.

And the point I want to make in this regard, Mr. Speaker, is that there is a built-in system of checks and balances when we talk about the existing provisions for the bells to ring in unlimited fashion. They simply won't ring for 17 days, or even for seven hours, unless there's a matter of equivalent consequence that sustains public approval for that duration of bell-ringing. If the issue is frivolous, if the issue is irrelevant to public consideration, the bells will not ring that long because no opposition can sustain that kind of frivolous action without incurring the wrath of the public.

The circumstances that we had here in this province though, this spring, were such that the ringing of the bells in accordance with the existing rules of the Assembly was sustained by public opinion. The bell-ringing might seem extreme, but the public deemed that there were extreme consequences to the government's action, extreme consequences for individual families in Saskatchewan if their public utility, SaskPower, was to be privatized without their approval — and I add that, Mr. Speaker, "without their approval."

Because clearly there was no consensus whatsoever; there was no attempt to secure any consultation with the public by the government prior to this privatization initiative. And well then did the bells ring. Because if the government had consulted the public prior to this decision to privatize SaskPower, if the government had gone . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order, order, order. The hon. member is setting forth an argument that unfortunately he has made several times. He's been speaking for some time, and he's had that opportunity. And I have indicated to him before that it's repetitious to repeat the same argument, and not acceptable, and I'd like the hon. member to move off that argument and move to a new original argument. It's not possible to keep repeating the same argument.

**Mr. Koenker:** — I said, Mr. Speaker, earlier, it is with a certain degree of disappointment that I have to return to this subject this afternoon, and so I will, on the strength of your advice, simply move on to what is now some new material, rather than to spend any time recapitulating what has already been said.

What we're talking about today is a limitation on

bell-ringing. We're talking about a limitation on public input into public policy. Now the government has decided that when it comes to the ringing of bells there will be a motion introduced, as we have before, that the bells will be allowed to ring for only one hour calling the members to vote on government legislation, and those bells will ring for only one hour — a limitation of bell-ringing which does not allow for public participation and public debate, public opinion, to be sounded and heard by members of this legislature.

And I say we see the exact parallel in the government's action when it comes to the Barber commission, limiting the commission to receiving written briefs. How can the public participate in an issue of public policy — all the public participate in far-reaching fashion — those people who don't have perhaps finely polished literary skills; how can these people participate in the formation of public policy if they can't appear before the Barber commission and speak their minds without having first submitted a written proposal or a written brief?

And I think . . . and the public of Saskatchewan has judged this government to be up to the business of limiting public input on issues of public policy, whether it has to do with bell-ringing in this Legislative Assembly or whether it has to do with their own commission travelling the province and putatively, allegedly, securing public opinion at the very time when it limits the expression of that opinion to written briefs only and appears in only eight communities, not even geographically distributed.

We know then that there are more adequate ways to ensure public opinion and public input into questions of public policy. When it comes to the issue of bell-ringing, one of the ways to do that is not to limit bell-ringing to one hour, to allow the bells to ring for as long as public opinion sustains that process.

And we think that similar moves or initiatives could be made when it comes to the Barber commission, that there ought to be full time status accorded to members of other than government appointees to this commission, to other groups and organizations interested in public policy. And that would foster and facilitate the democratic process. And that just as oral presentation and representation was made across this province while the bells rang in April and May of this spring, so ought there to be oral representation and presentation when the Barber panel holds public hearings.

In essence then, this opposition challenges the government to consult with the people for a change, challenges the government not to unilaterally impose its agenda on the public or to impose its understanding of what the public expression is and what the public wants, but we challenge this government to consult.

(1445)

And anyone who has teen-age children will know, or younger children for that matter, will know that when it comes to dealing with people, a consultative approach is far more productive and a forthright way of dealing with disagreement than an approach that does not consult, that strong-arms and is unilateral.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, we believe, on this side of the House, that this very motion before us to change the bell-ringing should be referred to a committee of the Legislative Assembly for consultation. Consultation ought to be at the top of the government's agenda, whether it's consultation with respect to privatizing SaskPower, or consultation with respect to this piece of legislation to amend the bell-ringing.

Why can't the government consult with the opposition on this matter? This has been the practice in this Legislative Assembly for years — years and years. In fact, the public should know that there has been no other way of securing amendment or change to legislative procedures and rules other than through a consultative process whereby the government and the opposition sit down face to face and start to communicate with each other and begin to compromise and communicate with each other.

What we don't need is a government — and let's be honest on this side of the House — what we don't need and what we don't want is a government that browbeats the public into submission, and the opposition into humiliation. And that's exactly what we see is behind this move with this motion to change the rule 33(2) and to limit the bell-ringing to not more than an hour.

As I say, anyone that raises children nowadays knows that you can get further with communication and consultation; that that's a far more constructive way to approach disagreement than to take unilateral strong-arm tactics. Those strong-arm tactics, the bulldozer mentality that we've seen from this government, may seem to get results in the short run, but in the long run it's counter-productive, we believe on this side of the House.

A government that determines its policy in secret as much as possible will not want to surround itself with public scrutiny or public discussion or public consultation beyond the walls of its own cabinet. And that's what's at stake in essence with this piece of legislation. Once the policy course has been set, this government puts its foot to the floor and wants to ram its will through, whether or not there's public consent for that will or not.

And the argument is made that because it's the government it can do that. But I say, Mr. Speaker, that in this democratic system, in this parliamentary system, while the government can do that, can put its foot to the floor and ram legislation through like it's driving a bulldozer, that's not in the interests of the democratic system.

It's allowed by virtue of the democratic system. It's allowed by virtue, the government says, of its democratically arrived at mandate. Political power for this government comes once every four or four and a half years, whenever it screws up its courage to call an election. If it had its way, it would be once every 50 years or 500 years, because fundamentally the democratic system doesn't mean much to them.

But once they secure political power through the democratic process, then between elections there's no opposition that is allowed, whether that's opposition

from the official opposition or opposition from the public at large. And isn't that what we saw this spring, and isn't that what we see right now with the proposal to amend the rules of this Assembly.

The electoral gun gives this government power, and that's all that they're interested in — not public opinion, but their own political power. And this particular motion is plain and simply a means of perpetuating this government's political power arrived at through its electoral gun that it gets a hold of every time it goes to the public during the course of an election.

But forbid going to the public outside of an election. Forbid public consultation. Forbid a procedure that allows for the bells to ring for 17 days or longer. Tighten the screws down on government. Put the lid on public opinion and the democratic expression, and limit bell-ringing to only one hour.

And that's why on this side of the House we say this government is wrong in introducing this motion by the member from Kindersley to limit the bell-ringing to an hour. It's wrong because it curtails the democratic process just as it's so accustomed to do, whether it has to do with cut-backs that have taken place in the spring of '87 to our dental program and our prescription drug program that took place without any consultation. So now when it comes to the privatization of SaskPower, major initiatives, don't allow the bells to ring; don't allow public opinion to be sounded or expressed.

This government really is afraid of the people. And it's not without reason then that we have to ask: what really is at stake? If in a democratic system, people — the many, the people, the *demos* — are to have authority or power or input or voice, what really is at stake with this sort of motion is a curtailment of the democratic process.

Now it's fair in this day and age, because of the size or the scale of the kinds of representative democracies that we have, not only on the national level but on a provincial level — even on a municipal level — it's difficult sometimes to allow the democratic process to flourish full face; in other words, with face-to-face democratic representation, with direct participation.

One has to admit that it is difficult to give particular or individual voice, democratic voice. In spite of the democratic system we like to assume that we have, it is difficult to give voice to that, given the nature or the reality of political structures in modern mass societies. Simply because of the size of our population, it's difficult to have direct representation.

And yet, given that kind of curtailment of the democratic process, simply because of the size of the state — some million people here in Saskatchewan — it still points to the need for vehicles to give what voice we can to individual participation, to direct, face-to-face, democratic input, participatory democracy. Any measures that we can add to our parliamentary or democratic system that give vent to that kind of expression ought to be kept in place and maintained and sustained.

And it's for that reason that I would argue that the motion to change the rules of this Assembly ill serves the very needs of the modern democratic system that we have now, where participatory democracy is not easily achieved because of the nature of a mass society. And here, with the existing provision in the rule book, we have an opportunity to sustain and perpetuate the democratic process. Even if it's used on rare occasions, so be it.

Let the rules stay. Let the democratic process flourish to the extent that people want to give voice to their public opinion and their particular concerns. Let that democratic system flourish. And if this particular rule that we now have — 33(2), the existing rule that allows for full and free participation, public participation — if that can serve the democratic process in a mass society of a million people in Saskatchewan today, so be it. Let it stay. And if it ill serves the democratic process, then I say, take it away.

Now the government will say that it should be taken away. I have here a letter from the Premier, dated May 3, 1989, and in this letter he talks about the freezing of the Legislative Assembly since April 21 when the New Democrats walked out to protest this sale of SaskPower. And in this letter it's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier himself says to the PC Party membership:

The real issue we are facing is the democratic process held hostage.

The Premier seems to believe that with the walk-out in the legislature that took place on April 21 that the real issue we are now facing is the democratic process held hostage, and goes on to talk about the NDP paralysing the democratic process.

I think the people of Saskatchewan can judge whether what took place in that 17-day walk-out . . . I will trust the people of Saskatchewan to hold judgement over whether that walk-out, whether those 17 days were a paralysis of the democratic process or an energizing of the democratic process.

The bell-ringing accomplished precisely an increase of democracy in this province during those days, facilitated and fostered an increase in democracy, not only in that opposition members went out for 17 days across the province and tried to convey their understanding of what was happening with the legislative process and to listen to public concern, but wonder of wonders, Mr. Speaker, the Premier himself calls on PC Party activists to go into their communities and begin to listen and communicate with their friends and neighbours regarding this issue. And I say then on both scores, the opposition going out to hear public opinion, and the government going out to hear public opinion, on both scores, Saskatchewan is richer for the bells having rung for 17 days and not for one hour.

The Premier says in this letter:

Thus it is critical that we stop the NDP attack on our democratic institutions and challenge their calculated dishonesty. All members of the PC Party must go into their communities and help their friends and neighbours understand what is



happening.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is precisely what the rule we have before us now allows for, is for the opposition to go out, and if the government has the will and the resolve and the courage to go out, to go out itself into the public and get a sounding of public opinion and try to explain their cause.

Now we know that there isn't too much of that that happened. We know that the government was much more inclined, this government, to go out and propagandize the people of Saskatchewan with advertising for the sale of SaskPower. That is not full democratic expression, that's bogus democratic expression, propagandizing as opposed to direct participatory democracy. Because it's one thing for members of this legislature to go out into Saskatchewan and stand in front of their constituents and listen and talk and have a cut and thrust of debate on public policy, and it's quite another thing for members of this Legislative Assembly to sit frozen in their seats in this place and to consign the democratic process to advertising firms and political hucksters — quite a difference.

(1500)

I'd say then, that contrary to the hijacking of democracy, the very role that we have in this Assembly, at this point in time, serves the democratic process fully and more capably than just about anything else we can imagine. We can't imagine using it on every particular occasion when an issue comes up. But if and when there are issues of public consequence, then we can see that this rule that exists now to allow full and free ringing of the bells, we can see that this does have its place and should not be removed from the legislative rule book.

Telemiracle uses the notion, Mr. Speaker, of ringing those bells; we all know that. Anyone who lives in Saskatchewan would be hard put not to recognize the origin of that phrase, "Ring those bells; ring those bells." Those bells call attention to the fact that they're trying to raise money for Telemiracle. It's an appeal for Saskatchewan people to get involved and to participate in the fund-raising exercise, and so when the call goes across the province to "ring those bells" with Telemiracle, there's a reason for it: it's to get people involved.

And when the bells ring here in the Legislative Assembly, it's similarly a call for the public to get involved . . . Well not on every occasion. If they ring for five minutes, calling the members to a vote, then the public is likely not even to know that the bells are ringing.

There's little at stake then, if the bells ring for only five or 10 minutes, or if the bells ring for an hour or so. Sometimes it's just a pure factor of inconvenience or deployment that the bells need to ring for 45 minutes or an hour or an hour and a half, simply because individual members — it could be the Premier himself — are not in the Legislative Assembly and want or need to be present for a particular vote to take place.

So that, in and of itself, the ringing of the bells in the Legislative Assembly is not the be-all and end-all of this place. It performs a purely functional sort of role in terms

of calling the members to vote. But if there are occasions when the bells need to ring to call Saskatchewan people to get involved with a particular issue, then they need to ring for more than one hour, as this particular motion to amend the rules would introduce.

Lately, this government seems to think that it can do anything it pleases, without public consent. It wants to play by its own rules and not by any of the rules of the Legislative Assembly. And if the rules of the Legislative Assembly don't suit its purposes, or its own rules, then change the rules as it will — unilaterally, without consultation.

The government likes to say that they do consult, that SaskEnergy has been travelling the province into 80 communities, looking into the question, explaining the privatization of SaskPower. But I would say that this was not occasioned out of the good will of the government's heart; rather, it was occasioned as a direct result of the bell-ringing episode itself.

And I would go further than this and say, consider the contrast — consider the contrast in which the government has SaskPower executives going to 80 communities, and the bell-ringing episode which sees members of this Legislative Assembly go into hundreds, literally hundreds of Saskatchewan communities with petitions opposing the privatization of SaskPower.

Bell-ringing, Mr. Speaker, could not have accomplished the almost infectious, contagious spread of public opinion on the SaskPower issue if it had been allowed to go for only one hour. The public of Saskatchewan needed to have an opportunity to reflect on the issue that this privatization move was not in the public issue, as the petition states; that it's the privatization or sell-off of a major public utility which serves all Saskatchewan people; and that the privatization of SaskPower will lead to higher utility rates for Saskatchewan people and will benefit only wealthy investors. And those are quotes from the petition itself.

And it's interesting to note, along the lines in the case I'm trying to make, that this is an exercise in participatory democracy; that the petitioners signed their names to the petition expressly so that it can be tabled in the Legislative Assembly and contribute directly in some measure to the parliamentary process, to the legislative process.

And I make the case again that in its blind ideological bent to privatize, this government will stop at nothing. It will steamroll over public opinion and it will even violate its own securities legislation; that with the moves to privatize SaskPower, SaskEnergy can release market-oriented information before a share issue prospectus has been released.

Now if a private company attempted to do this, the commission would almost certainly stop it, would sit it down and talk to it and say: this doesn't fly. And yet, when SaskPower can go out and send 400,000 letters explaining financial benefits to share offerings, this at the impetus of the government itself, that really is okay even though it flies in the face of this government's own securities legislation.

But that's really nothing new. We've seen the government fail to enforce its own investment contracts Act when annual reports for the Principal Group of companies were filed late in 1983, and it didn't make any difference; or when quarterly financial statements in 1985 were not even filed altogether — not even filed altogether. So much regard this government has for public opinions.

So if it wants a rule change on bell-ringing, it will ram it through. But it won't play by its own rules; whether it has to do with the share offering on SaskEnergy or enforcing its own investment contracts legislation for the benefit of the public, it bulldozes its own way forward and it violates the public interest in doing so.

What is particularly galling then, in all of this is, not only doesn't the government keep the rules but it doesn't keep faith with Saskatchewan people. And we could ask why was there such a strong public outpouring of opinion against the sell-off of SaskPower while the bells were ringing? Why was there such strong public support?

And on some reflection, Mr. Speaker, I've come to the conclusion it has to do with the fundamental fact that the government had promised that it would not sell off SaskPower or SaskTel or SGI, and then has gone ahead and changed its mind unilaterally without consultation and decided to do it. In fact we know, as has been amply indicated these last weeks, that the Premier told the *Leader-Post*, the Regina *Leader-Post*, on January 25, '88, quote:

All Crown corporations with the exception of such utility Crowns as SaskPower and Saskatchewan Telecommunications could be for sale if the price is right.

End quote. With the exception, the notable exception of SaskPower, the Premier saying that in January 25 of 1988, and then he goes ahead and introduces legislation to privatize it — well no wonder public opinion rears up in opposition.

So we have a situation in which the rule change before us is to curtail the bell-ringing, and we wonder, we have to wonder whether this isn't a move out of revenge that the government wants to curtail public expression, simply out of spite for what had taken place the previous 17 days.

It's a heavy-handed tactic, it's a bulldozer tactic, and it isn't likely to win much public approval. And that's why we stand opposed to such a motion that would simply increase the government's ability to bulldoze or, with heavy hand, hammer its way over the public will and not using tools of public consultation such as the existing provisions that we have in the rules of this Assembly, used rarely as they are, but on occasion very appropriate for the expression of public opinion.

There really is no pressing need to curtail the ringing of bells at this point — there's no pressing need. The 17 days have come and gone, and for better or for worse, they were 17 days. For the opposition, it looks like those 17 days were for the better. For the government, it looks as if those 17 days were for the worse.

But that's not to say, Mr. Speaker, that if we were to keep the existing rule on the books that allows for full and free democratic expression, that those circumstances might not be reversed at another time in another bell-ringing episode. When an opposition goes too far with the bell-ringing, then the opposition might incur the wrath of public opinion. It might work against an opposition and for a government. And in fact that was a potential implicit in this most recent bell-ringing episode.

But regardless of the winners and the losers in terms of government or opposition, if we stand back and look at the thrust of this proposed rule change, we have to say, I think, that the public will be the worse for this rule change; that the people of Saskatchewan will be the poorer in losing the opportunity to comment on critical issues, as any particular opposition gives them opportunity by use of the bell-ringing provision.

That can't happen in one hour; it can happen in five or 10 hours, in seven days. It can happen, as we saw, in 17 days of bell-ringing. And that's why there's a strong logic or rationale, there's a strong argument to keep this particular motion on the books the way it is, and not to change it.

(1515)

In this particular case of the 17-day bell-ringing, this legislative rule allowed the public to become more involved in democracy, not less involved. No one would argue that the public was involved less in the democratic legislative process as a result of this most recent bell-ringing episode. No one would argue that the public were involved less in the democratic process. And so if they weren't involved less in it, they were involved more in it and are the richer for it, and this province is the better for it. And we need to preserve and protect this particular rule of the Legislative Assembly as it has been in place for many a year now.

I'd like to share a quote from a well-known piece of political reflection by Henry David Thoreau, from his essay on civil disobedience. And he writes, Mr. Speaker:

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to, is still an impure one. To be strictly just it must have the sanction and consent of the governed; it can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it.

The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for individualism.

Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man?

There will never be a really free and enlightened state until the state comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power

from which all its own power and authority are derived, and which treats him accordingly.

Those are some of the very concluding thoughts of Henry David Thoreau on civil disobedience and the role of the individual person in a democratic society. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it's precisely those kinds of issues, consideration for the individual as a higher and independent power from which the state's own political power and authority are derived, that are implicit in the consideration of this motion to change the rules.

And having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would thank you for your attention to my remarks.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome the chance to enter this debate.

**An Hon. Member:** — Again.

**Mr. Trew:** — I hear someone saying "again," but this is my first opportunity to speak in this. You see, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the legislature, we're reduced these days to fighting amongst ourselves. And what we're fighting amongst ourselves for is who gets the opportunity to speak on this issue next. I won the fight finally, not much of a scrapper, but it is my turn to give my views on this bell-ringing motion, and indeed it's a privilege that I intend to do the best . . . to the best of my ability.

It's interesting that this bell-ringing motion is so important to government members. To the exclusion of all else, they must do away with the opposition's right to ring the bells on given issues — that right which in over seven years with New Democrats in opposition, in over seven years we've used the bell-ringing, to my knowledge, two times.

One was when one of our members in the first term was facing a million or a \$2 million lawsuit and his petty cash fund simply wasn't quite big enough to cover that. Indeed, knowing the member, as I know most of the members on this side, we could add all of our petty cash funds and most of our assets to get close to that \$2 million. So there was a relatively short bell-ringing days at that time for that reason. Subsequently, of course, we've had a 17-day bell-ringing session dealing with the SaskPower privatization.

As my colleague from Saskatoon Sutherland pointed out so capably, the 17-day bell-ringing session that I was a part of, and that indeed all Saskatchewan people were a part of recently, served democracy very well. We have collectively — not the 26 lonely socialists on this side of the legislature — but the people of Saskatchewan have collectively told the government, in no uncertain terms, that the privatization of SaskPower is not acceptable.

People have been telling me, and they continue to tell me: we have a government that has gone too far. They're asking us — not just asking, demanding — that on this side of the legislature we do everything we possibly can to stop a government that has gone rampant, a government that has totally lost touch with the people.

To bring that point home, Mr. Speaker, the government members claim that they are the government or the party that represents farm interests best — absolutely the party of the farm interest.

Despite that claim, we see on the blues, the orders of the legislature, that there are 42 Bills in second reading. Five Bills have passed in this legislature. Those five include such — well I was going to be factitious, but I won't be — they are non-controversial Bills. That's why they were passed. They included: The Residential Services Act; The Line Fence Act; The Public Trustee Act; The Municipal Board Act, and The Queen's Bench Act.

In that time we also passed one private Bill, and that was simply a name change for the hospital at Biggar.

There have been, I understand, two appropriation of funds came before this legislature. Both were passed, enabling the government to continue with its day-to-day funding of business.

But of the 42 Bills that have been . . . that are currently in second reading, Mr. Speaker, there is a grand total of two that deal with agriculture — two that deal in any meaningful way with the rural people of Saskatchewan — that from a government that has for some years now claimed they represent rural Saskatchewan Two Bills, at a time when agriculture is in a crisis unlike anything we have seen since the 1930s. The difference of course is this year we seem to be getting the rains, for the most part, throughout the province, and certainly on this side of the legislature we welcome those rains. It is most pleasing to see the green grass again where last year in some community pastures I saw dust rising off the pasture. This year I see luscious green grass.

I haven't figured out how we can take credit for that on this side of the Legislative Assembly yet, and I suspect we can't. That rain indeed has come from a much higher power than members on either side of this House, and we all recognize that.

But can you imagine, out of 42 Bills, only two of them dealing with agriculture. The legislature started sitting March 8, 1989 — March 8. Here we are, June 12, I believe. March 8, the legislature sat.

Were either of the two agricultural related Bills introduced in the first week? No. The second week? No. A little bit of a slow start, you might say. Were they introduced in the third or fourth weeks? No. Fifth, sixth, seventh? No. Eighth, ninth, tenth? No. It was at the end of 11 weeks — 11 weeks in this legislature — when Bill No. 41, An Act to amend The Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan Act was first introduced in this legislature. Eleven weeks! Many sessions, Mr. Speaker, are over in that time frame.

So here we are, now June 12, dealing with a change of the rules — a change of the rules when we could be dealing with Bills; we could be dealing with estimates; we could be dealing with any number of other important items.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, this motion was presented — this

motion that the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* be amended by adding the following after rule 33(1). And I don't propose to read it, but to say that it is the proposed rule change that will restrict bell-ringing to one hour only for ever more. That motion we have been . . . or has been before the legislature now in excess of one month — more than one month.

Isn't it interesting that a government that is a rural-based government, the voice of the farmer, finds that for a month the most important and pressing need is to amend a rule regarding bell-ringing — a rule that, to my knowledge, has been around . . . oppositions have had the right to ring the bells since 1905 when Saskatchewan became a province. It now being 1989 . . . what are we talking — 84 years? For 84 years we've had the right to ring the bells. Now in the past month that seems to be the only issue of any importance — that of ringing the bells.

What it really is, of course, is a grab of power from the opposition. It is an attempt to make opposition virtually meaningless. Because from our perspective, from our point of view, whether it's the Conservatives, who are in power now, or the New Democrats in the future, or the Liberals or perhaps some other completely brand-new party not in existence today, or some of the fringe parties that are in existence today — perhaps they will muster up enough support to one day become the government.

What we are arguing for is that when any government gets so out of touch with the people, so out of touch with reality, so far removed from daily life that they try and force changes, force their will on the people of Saskatchewan, then you need an opposition to have whatever powers it can. In this case, of course, we're talking about the power to ring the bells.

It's not something we take lightly. As I have mentioned earlier, it has been used two times in the past little more than seven years by New Democrats. Once was a fairly short bell-ringing session lasting a couple of days. The government realized that, indeed, the opposition of the day was bang on, and they removed the need for that bell-ringing episode.

The second one was when we determined that the people of Saskatchewan had had ample time to get involved with the sale of SaskPower. They'd had ample time to study the matter and sign some petitions, get involved with taking the petitions out to their neighbours, their friends, strangers — but people in their community. We determined that the organization or mobilization of Saskatchewan people was great enough, and we were still at that time convinced that the government hadn't so totally lost touch with the people of Saskatchewan.

(1530)

We genuinely thought that the government would give up on its privatization gone astray, would have decided that, yes, there are more important things. We should get on with estimates; we should get on so that we could pass the budget, so that the government could pay all of the bills in a very timely manner; we wanted to get on with the review of the various government departments; we wanted to get on with the review of the Crowns; we

wanted to get on with the review of the auditor's report.

Indeed, since this bell-ringing matter came to our attention a little over a month ago, we have been interrupted for five or six full days of debate regarding the Provincial Auditor's report. That necessitated because the member for Kindersley brought some scurrilous remarks against an officer of this legislature, and those remarks, of course, trying to portray that the Provincial Auditor, Willard Lutz, would somehow bargain away some authority or some power of the Provincial Auditor, all for the basis of a slightly improved pension.

The result of after that week, of course, we realized that to be patently untrue. We realized that the Provincial Auditor was entitled to his pension. It was just a question of whether that money was going to come directly out of the Provincial Auditor's funds, thus meaning he would have to perhaps lay off some staff, or whether there would be an appropriation more properly dealt with in the legislature. We have been saying that appropriation, Mr. Speaker, should be dealt with here, but we have to get off the bell-ringing; we have to get on with other business so that we can deal with those important matters.

I say we have been trying to get off of this bell-ringing. My colleague from Moose Jaw South, who's only too painfully aware that last week he tried to move an adjournment of this debate — the purpose of that adjournment was not so that my colleague from Moose Jaw South could take a break or could catch his wind or anything like that. Indeed he was in the opening remarks — he was in the opening remarks — just nicely getting warmed up; indeed I think he'd spoken at that stage for less than an hour, or somewhere in that neighbourhood, on this bell-ringing motion. He tried to move an adjournment though, Mr. Speaker, because we wanted the government to have every opportunity to move to other pressing business — every opportunity. And we have been trying that for some time now.

I refer you to June 9 — and I'm going to quote from *Hansard*, page 1781, where our House Leader, Mr. Lingenfelter, and I quote now:

Mr. Speaker, in the . . . spirit of co-operation which we obviously have here in the Assembly now, moving off of rules to debate an important issue, I want to move a motion, seconded by the member from Regina North East, that:

And the motion is:

I move that the next order of business be Bill 41, An Act to amend the Agricultural Credit Corporation Act of Saskatchewan.

And very interestingly, we see the yeas and the nays. There were all the yeas, all those wanting to move to Bill 41, An Act to amend The Agricultural Credit Corporation Act of Saskatchewan. All of the yeas were New Democrats, all on this side of the legislature. All of the nays happened to be Conservatives. All of the nays included the Premier and many, many others. There was 29 nays that day preventing us from dealing with what, on this side of the House, we think is a fairly important

matter.

We happen to agree that when this Bill No. 41 was brought before the Legislative Assembly, granted it took 11 weeks of legislature time to get it here, but we think it's very symbolic that that being the very first Bill dealing with agriculture, we should be dealing with it now. We shouldn't be into some democratic rights or bell-ringing change.

But you see, Mr. Speaker, if we give up, if we give up our democratic right to ring the bells, it is our . . . well we're firm in the knowledge that SaskPower gets brought back to this Legislative Assembly and gets rammed through by the majority that the government has. That, despite, as my colleague for Saskatoon Sutherland pointed out not very many minutes ago, pointed out the Premier is on record in the *Leader-Post*, quoted, saying that all Crown corporations, with the exception of Saskatchewan Power Corporation and SaskTel, could be sold if the price is right.

But with the exceptions — we have here the Premier's very word. We also have, at a time after that, we have the Deputy Premier stating in this legislature that . . . we asked whether SaskPower was being split into the SaskPower, the electrical side, and SaskEnergy, the natural gas side, we asked if it was being split to be privatized. We have the Deputy Premier's word in this legislature that that was not the case. So we have the two top honchos in the government, the two top people promising us that SaskEnergy, SaskPower would not be privatized.

Do you wonder why we have such a prolonged harangue over the bell-ringing? It is no wonder on this side. We know that if we give up the right to ring the bells, SaskPower will be privatized without fail. We know that we are then virtually powerless to prevent it — virtually powerless to prevent a government that has run amok, a government that on that issue has over 70 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan opposed to it.

Now of those 70 per cent of Saskatchewan people that are opposed to the privatization of SaskPower, I don't pretend that they are all New Democrats — I would love it if they were; it would be an amazing piece of politics. But the hard reality is that the New Democratic Party and the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) before us never, ever approached a 70 per cent vote.

Many of those people who are opposed to the privatization of SaskPower are opposed because of their good common sense. Many of them were around many, many years ago saw that a monopoly utility in private hands is nothing further than a licence to print money. They understand . . . I can't for the life of me understand, as I'm standing here, how government members can be so callous about it.

Many of those people who are opposed to the privatization of SaskPower are your own members, or were your own members. I suspect you're going to have a great deal of difficulty renewing them when the time comes to renew those memberships. I think you have turned your back on a huge portion of the Saskatchewan people, and they're not all going to be willing to forgive

and forget.

We welcome those people if they want to join us on this issue. If they want to join us on all issues, so much the better, but particularly on this issue we welcome those people joining our ranks. It's been most heartening to see that taking place.

That's the support that my leader, the member for Riversdale, the Leader of the Opposition has garnered in his travels around the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. People are telling him and demanding of him that we not give up SaskPower, and for that reason we are not prepared to give up the bell-ringing matter.

The minute we give up bell-ringing, we believe very firmly, we know that SaskEnergy, SaskPower, whatever you want to call it, is going to come back before the legislature and it will be gone. We're not prepared to accept that. We're not prepared to accept the losing of our right to ring the bells.

So we've been on and off, but mostly on, for a month now, dealing with this proposed rule change, all for one Bill. And that rule change is being proposed simply so that the government can ram that SaskPower Bill through.

My constituents, Mr. Speaker, did not elect me to deal just with SaskPower. They wanted us to deal with job creation. They wanted us to deal with fair taxation. They wanted us to deal with equal opportunities for everyone. I suspect your constituents also wanted similar things: jobs; fair taxation; opportunities for all; fairness; an open government; good services; good health care; good education at all levels; environmental protection is increasingly becoming a major concern; minimum wage increase, which is very much overdue, witness one measly, miserly 25 cent increase in the minimum wage . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. I've allowed a lot of latitude in this debate, but the member is bringing specifics into the debate that certainly don't relate to resolution 33(1) or the motion. So I'd ask him to make his comments on the motion that's before the Assembly.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to point out that we are dealing with this motion in the legislature to change the rules, at the exclusion of all other important items that any government should be dealing with. I mentioned minimum wage — perhaps that's a sore spot. I mentioned it very briefly and in passing. I will not persist on talking about that issue. I will be referring to this proposed rule change, that being the changes to rule 33(1) that is going to virtually eliminate the right of the opposition to ring the bells in any meaningful manner.

Mr. Speaker, the ringing of the bells is not something that we take lightly on this side. I've pointed out that we've used it two times in over seven years. If we were to indiscriminately ring the bells, we would risk the wrath of not only the general public, but all of us on this side of the House have a fair political membership, if you like, we have members of the New Democratic Party, people who pay annual dues, and in return they expect to get their MLA's ear.

We try very hard to provide that. We try very hard to be accessible. But I can assure you that if we were to indiscriminately ring the bells on very many issues — and it would be a very, very short list that we could ring the bells on — if we overstep that bound, not only would we have the public annoyed with us but indeed we would have our very own members annoyed with us.

So we would not enter into a bell-ringing harangue just for the sake of a good scrap. If I wanted that, I suspect I could go to almost any bar or, perhaps, dance hall in the province, and I suspect I could arrange a good scrap. I know that most of the time fights don't break out, but once you mix a few drinks, there's usually somebody around who's willing to take you on.

So it's not just for the sake of a good scrap that we enter into a bell-ringing debate, we enter into it on issues of fundamental importance to the people. We certainly don't enter into a bell-ringing with any sense of self-aggrandizement, or any of that, but we enter it when a government goes too far.

When a government has totally lost touch with the people, then we feel we have to bring them back to reality. The reality in Saskatchewan is people want SaskPower; they want it retained as a Crown corporation. They were promised that by the Premier and the Deputy Premier, and we are simply trying to hold them to that promise. So that's what this particular motion is all about, dealing with the bell-ringing.

(1545)

I mentioned that it is over a month since this motion was introduced. I'll be even more specific — Thursday, May 11. This motion to change the rules was introduced Thursday, May 11. It's now Monday, June 12, more than a month later. Here we are stuck on the bell-ringing motion. Here I am, certainly not our first speaker, as you can well appreciate.

In that ensuing month we've had quite a number of speakers and people wanting to address this very, very important issue, and I've heard from speaker after speaker on our side that we want the government to move to other agenda items. We've passed . . . or we've made motions that we deal with important Bills and items.

We have called for the estimates repeatedly, including asking questions in our valuable question period, question period, Mr. Speaker, being the time when the opposition can ask the burning questions of the day. It used to be a time when the opposition could expect answers; that seems to have largely gone by the way of the boards.

But here we are more than a month later dealing with the proposed limit to the bell-ringing, the proposal to cut off the opposition from speaking in any meaningful way. My colleague from Regina Rosemont spoke at some length, and I'm sure you appreciate why it took him that degree of time to come from nearly a millennium ago up to the current time. He spoke of the Long Parliament and many of the traditions that have led to bell-ringing being

allowed in houses of commons and legislatures throughout the Commonwealth.

It took my colleague a fair amount of time. I would have thought that members opposite would have paid a little bit of attention to the history. Because whether we like it or not, the length of any government is only short term. Even if it's a government that lasts the 20 years that the CCF Tommy Douglas government lasted, 20 years, Mr. Speaker, is short term — short term.

I remind you it was 2,000 . . . if this was 2,000 years earlier, Christ could be seated in one of these chairs and taking part in this discussion — 2,000 years, and that's not even a terribly long term. I understand that earth has been here for something like 14 billion years. It's a big number. It's hard to imagine. But you can put from the time Christ was walking, physically walking on earth till today, and you could include that in the 14 billion just an astronomical number of times.

So even if a government lasts 20 years — coming back to my point — it is still relatively short. If this government lasts for a total of eight or nine years, from 1982 to 1990 or 1991, those nine years are going to be an incredibly short period of time. It's short even in the history of Saskatchewan.

So why would any government want to be so short-sighted as to ram through a change in the rules that handcuffs oppositions? Why would any government want to do that? particularly when you look at this government and the very, very real possibility that they will not be the government after the next election, but they will be in the opposition.

It seems to me that at that time, many of the — I shouldn't say many — the handful of present government members who are re-elected will want to have the ability to ring the bells. If the New Democrats who are the government at that time, if we overstep our bounds, if we have made a solemn pledge to the people of Saskatchewan and we flop and turn against it for absolutely no apparent reason, then it seems to me that those small number of members would be well served by the right to ring the bells to draw attention to what it is that the government of the day is doing wrong.

The thought just occurred to me that perhaps they're not worried about that because they know that throughout history that the CCF and NDP have never, never made such a fundamental turn, have never said they would do one thing and then turned around and done the exact opposite. So I guess the bell-ringing would be restricted that way.

You can't ring the bells if you don't have an issue, and I guess the opposition understand that they're not going to . . . or the present government, future opposition, understand that they will not have a reason to ring the bells. So it makes very little difference if they lose that particular right.

But without the public support we couldn't begin to be ringing the bells for 17 days. Indeed 17 hours is a very, very long time if you are uncertain or unsure of public

support. Bell-ringing incidences do stop in a shorter time frame than that unless the government has, as they did in this case with SaskPower, said one thing and then turned around and done precisely the opposite and with no good reason, with nothing to change their activities.

In the federal House of Commons, New Democrats were opposed to the War Measures Act some years back and indeed voted against the implementation or the imposing of the War Measures Act on Canadians. At that time you will appreciate that the New Democrat MPs were very much out of step with public sentiment. People of Canada were very much of the mood that, well, you know, there's a problem in Quebec; let's get it cleared up; Canada has gone to the terrorists; let's get this problem cleared up.

What the federal MPs were doing was trying to point out that you don't put the armed forces in charge of a country. The armed forces are there to serve the country, not in any way to quell civil disobedience or to quell those problems. That's what we have the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for. That's what we have the various police departments . . . like the city of Regina has its own police department, the city of Saskatoon has its own, and there are a huge number of other police departments around the province. Those departments are to deal with those problems.

So we had a situation where the New Democrat MPs of the day stood proudly in opposition of the then Liberal government's imposition of the War Measures Act — stood proudly, because it was an issue that they believed very firmly in. But they didn't ring the bells over it, because that they knew that public sentiment wasn't with them. But they did everything they could within the House of Commons to prevent the War Measures Act from being imposed on the people of Canada. I'm quite proud of their actions. I'm not particularly saying that I agree or disagree with what they were doing and what they were saying, but it takes a very, very strong person to stand up day after day, making laws for our country, and to stand up and go against the public will, knowing firmly in their minds that they were right.

But the issue of that day, Mr. Speaker, was government power and abuse of the power, much like what we see going on in China today. China is teetering precipitously on the border of . . . I was going to say, civil disobedience, but there's been various reports coming, extending from the hundreds of Chinese people who have been murdered, to the thousands. I think from where I'm standing you can pick a number, any number, and you'd probably be more accurate than anything I could guess.

But certainly Chinese people in the hundreds, and I suspect thousands, have been murdered by an armed forces that is put in charge of the country, so to speak. We are trying to prevent that, or prevent any movement in that direction here by opposing this rule change.

If we maintain our democratic rights, the people will speak in an election. And I guess I can only speak for myself, Mr. Speaker, but I suspect it's a sentiment shared quite widely by members on both sides of the legislature — I do not look forward to being defeated at the ballot box. I don't think any of us look forward to that. We

would rather bow out gracefully when the time comes. But it is much, much more preferable to be defeated at the ballot box than to be defeated at the end of a gun.

We have democratic freedoms here in Canada, here in Saskatchewan, that we should be holding dearer to our hearts than we do. We tend to take them for granted. We say, oh well, Saskatchewan has almost always been that way. But Saskatchewan, despite the fact that Saskatchewan has a relatively long period of support for democracy, Saskatchewan's only been around for . . . since 1905 — 84 years as a province.

Eighty-four years pales — pales — in comparison to, for instance, the Ukrainian Catholic Church which just last year celebrated a millennium — a millennium being a thousand years. A thousand years. It's a very powerful organization to this very day, and I suspect will continue for another millennium, providing we don't blow up earth or pollute it so badly that it becomes uninhabitable. I expect that the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox . . . or Ukrainian Catholic Church, I should say, will be around another millennium, and will be very much involved with people and with their lives.

So our 84 years as a province is just like a drop in a bucket — a drop of sand in a bucket would be a more apt description. Saskatchewan should be around . . . Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I hope Saskatchewan is around for much more than just another millennium or just a thousand years. I hope that Saskatchewan . . . I hope that 500 years from now, people can look back to 1905 and say that yes, those men and women of vision and of courage did the right thing.

I hope that they can also look back to 1989 and say, yes, by gosh, the legislature finally came to its senses. They didn't fight democracy; they, rather, went with it. They voted for the people. They voted for the power to the people. They voted against this change to rule 33.

That's what my sincere hope is, Mr. Speaker, because if we change these rules and procedures as is being proposed here now, this unilateral ramming of the rule change down our throats, it is just bad news for democracy. It is horrible news for our province, and it's not something that I want to be able to talk to my children and, hopefully, grandchildren if and when they ever come. I don't want to have to tell them that we gave up some of the democracy.

(1600)

So that's why we are so adamantly opposed — more than a month after this motion was introduced, we are as adamantly opposed to it today as we were when it first was introduced.

But I just want to reiterate the one thing that I think is key to the last few minutes of my talk: that is, even though I don't ever want to be defeated at the ballot box, it is very much preferable that I should be beat at the ballot box rather than beat by force, beat by a gun, beat by a knife, beat by whatever other forcible means there is. I can accept a defeat at the ballot box, and indeed some day I may have to. I can accept that a lot more gracefully than I

can accept a . . . well, my murder, to put it as bluntly and as coldly as I know how.

So in the month that has gone by we've seen various things. I've talked about my colleague from Regina Rosemont discussing the Long Parliament in Great Britain. He talked at some length about the year 1215, and he brought us up to date. In fact, at that time, one of my colleagues who also teaches school, or taught school before he became an MLA, said, you know I teach that at school, or I used to teach that. He said: but I never was able to quite bring it up to date, quite make it so germane, so relevant to what is going on today as our colleague the member for Regina Rosemont did. Indeed it was a proud moment in our history as an opposition that we were able to do that.

But the other day we see the member for Moose Jaw South, who was cut off, moved a motion to adjourn debate. The motion was defeated by the government. My colleague, the member for Moose Jaw South stood on his feet, a government member was recognized, my colleague from Moose Jaw South lost his place.

In dealing with bell-ringing and this motion, we had in Ontario in recent days, we had a bell-ringing . . . what's the word I'm looking for . . . a bell-ringing . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Incident.

**Mr. Trew:** — . . . incident, thank you, that lasted for seven sitting days. It wound up with a cabinet minister resigning. The opposition was correct, I would venture to say, in the reasons it went out. If it was not correct, there would be no reason for a cabinet minister to resign.

There were two issues that were a part of that. In this case it was the Ontario Solicitor General, Joan Smith, who has resigned. She resigned because the opposition objected to her taking a personal interest, in the wee hours of the morning . . . I can't scan it fast enough, but in the wee hours of the morning she went down to a police station to inquire after a family friend. And the opposition is saying that as the Solicitor General, and being in charge of the police, she should not have been doing that. And of course the other matter was that of a drowning that took place in the Premier's swimming pool. So at the end of the day that cabinet minister resigned rather than face the music, rather than have a public inquiry.

But seven sitting days the bells rang in Ontario. So, as the government would have us believe, we are one of the last bastions of bell-ringing. If that's so, if that is accurate, that we are one of the last bastions of bell-ringing, then we should be proud of it. Because you look at Saskatchewan history, Mr. Speaker, and we have not rang the bells, throughout history, not for any length of time. Certainly the 17 days that we've witnessed recently is the longest bell-ringing, not only in Saskatchewan history but in Canadian history.

But is that a reason for the government to shoot the messenger, in this case the opposition? I think not. I submit to you, sir, that that longest bell-ringing in Canadian parliamentary history should be reason for the government to sit up and take notice. Why is it that an

opposition could ring the bells for 17 days and then move from a position where we were favoured by a majority of the Saskatchewan electorate into a position of near certainly forming the government. Our political strength, that is the number of people who feel closest aligned to the opposition, rose dramatically in those 17 days. The government should not be so much wanting to change the rule as they should be sitting up and taking notice. They should be just withdrawing their privatization plans. The people have spoken. The people have spoken and will continue to speak. There is, as I understand it, 92,000 . . . somewhere in that order, of names . . .

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

**Mr. Thompson:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like leave to introduce some students.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Thompson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce through you, and to the Assembly, a group of 11 students and their teacher and a chaperon from Stony Rapids. They are accompanied by their chaperon Lynda MacDonald, and Don Harding is the teacher and also the principal up in Stony Rapids.

Stony Rapids, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a small community just south of the Northwest Territories at the very east end of Lake Athabasca and right beside the famous Stony Rapids. This group of students had to fly from Stony Rapids to Saskatoon. They are now in Saskatchewan touring all the major cities and other points, and I would ask all members today to give the students and the teacher and the chaperon a warm welcome to Regina. Thank you very much.

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

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### MOTIONS

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to get into what the government's proposing in the rule change, and I want to get into what the motives are for what is, I think, the most important issue in this debate. I think the motive is very worthy of some fairly close examination, and I say that because it says a great deal about the arrogance of the government members opposite, a great deal about the arrogance. The rule change is simply a means of assuring that SaskPower and any other unpopular privatization can go ahead.

When you take from an opposition one of its tools, in this case the tool to be able to ring the bells and muster up whatever public support we can, when you take that away, our whole system loses, and the government loses too.



The government loses, and here's how you lose. No opposition would ring the bells for any length of time without public support. If an opposition can garner the public support in that bell-ringing incident, the government is better served by paying attention to that message than it is by shooting the messenger. A government that is at the mid-portion of its term, by paying attention to what the message is, they can adjust.

They can say, yes indeed, as the government did in the 1982-86 term when it introduced the 5 per cent E&H tax on used vehicles. You recall that the government lost the by-election in Regina North East massively, and it responded. The very next day the Premier had a news conference and he said, well, the people have spoken, and they have rightly spoken. We've made some mistakes. We think in the main we're doing the right things, but clearly we've made some mistakes; we've alienated some people. We lost a seat we had previously held; we lost it massively. Obviously the people are concerned.

The Premier heard the message. The very next day, gone was the E&H tax on used vehicles.

There was another matter that he changed then, and I'm not trying to simply not give the government good press; I simply . . . it simply escapes me what that other change was at the moment.

But there was two things changed, and the government said, we're going to try and listen to the people. We're going to try and respond in a more open fashion. And now we see, not the 1985 by-election, now we see some four years later, the year being 1989, a government mid-term, midway through its second mandate, a government given a message in the most clear and unequivocal terms of any message that any government in the history of Saskatchewan has ever received, and they choose to ignore it. And that's a shame.

This present government, led by the member for Estevan, is going to go down, not in a blaze of glory, but it is going to go down because it chose to ignore the message, and worse yet, chose to shoot the messenger.

To change this bell-ringing motion, Mr. Speaker, is going to be telling the nearly 100,000 people who have signed the petition opposing the sale of SaskPower that your opinion does not matter. It's going to be saying to the countless other people who have not had the opportunity to sign that petition: your opinion does not matter.

And I guess if you take very, very consistent public opinion polls that show opposition to the privatization of SaskPower running in excess of 70 per cent, the government is saying to seven out of 10 Saskatchewan people, we don't care what you say; we know what's best; we're going to go ahead with it; we're going to change this rule; we're going to limit the opposition's right to ring the bells; and we're going to ram SaskPower privatization down your throats — like it or lump it.

And the government is not going to be well served because those seven out of 10 Saskatchewan people,

those women and men throughout Saskatchewan are going to know that they have run into a brick wall. They are going to know they have run into an arrogant government that is determined that it knows best, the people be hanged. And that's what we're witnessing today.

In the opposition we are trying to help the process — not the process of hanging the government. The government, as I pointed out, can still respond to this. They can still grab a hold of the agenda. Very clearly they can, and they should. They were elected to govern, but they were elected with some very specific promises.

(1615)

I want to refer to some promises taken out of *Pocket Politics*, which I'm sure you are quite familiar with. On page 14 of this *Pocket Politics* it talks about the dismantling of Crown corporations. And I'm going to quote from it. It says:

Question: Is it true the Conservatives plan to dismantle the Crown corporations?

Answer: Absolutely not. That's a scare tactic the NDP is using. A PC government will revitalize and improve the Crown corporations of the province of Saskatchewan in such a manner as to provide the best possible service at the most reasonable cost to the public.

There were some suggestions from the Premier that Tory sympathizers were somehow anxiously waiting in the wings to swoop down and peck away at the entrails of dismantled Crown corporations following a Conservative win.

A few points are worthy of clarification in this regard. The first is that the Saskatchewan Progressive Conservative Party has not suggested dismantling Sask Power Corporation, nor for that matter have the PCs suggested the same for any other natural monopoly where the obvious advantages of scale and the confusion of added costs of competition dictate against duplication or government divestiture.

Well what a mouthful, coming out of *Pocket Politics*, the version coming prior to 1982, talking clearly about Saskatchewan Power Corporation, Mr. Speaker. And as I've pointed out, that is clearly why we are on this bell-ringing motion. We lose the bells, we lose SaskPower.

And I don't know how in the world any reasonable-minded individual could for two seconds believe that we are using scare tactics when we quote from Conservative literature, pre-1982, repeated again with variations prior to and during the 1986 election campaign, and repeated by the Premier in the January 1988 *Leader-Post*; repeated by the Deputy Premier here in this legislature in May 1988: SaskPower's not for sale. How can we believe anything put forward by the government when they campaigned saying one thing and then turn around and introduce privatization . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. The hon. member has information to give to the House about SaskPower, but I think he's spent considerable time at it, and it's not really directly related to the motion — maybe indirectly — however, you have certainly made that point. And I'd ask you now to move on.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is probably a very good ruling. As you can appreciate, I would like to have a little more latitude than what perhaps you in your capacity are willing to allow, but I recognize the ruling of the Chair and will endeavour to keep within those bounds.

So here we are dealing with the proposed changes to rule 33 dealing with the bell-ringing. Mr. Speaker, it is obvious, in light of the remarkable events that have taken place recently, that the government needs the rule change. Because without the rule change, without limiting our ability to ring the bells when a government has gone too far, without this proposed rule change proposed by the member for Kindersley, SaskPower is gone. As we know it today, SaskPower is gone, despite the promises. That's why more than a month after this proposed rule change was introduced, that's why we're standing firmly opposed to the changes. We are not willing to see democracy that poorly served.

We think that any opposition that rings the bells for no reason whatever is going to lose public support and as . . . I recognize you're not wanting to be drawn into the debate, Mr. Speaker, but as all MLAs understand — government MLAs and opposition MLAs — we must curry public favour. And that's very important that we not lose this bell-ringing motion — we lose the bells, we lose SaskPower.

But if we do not have the support of the public in any bell-ringing, we couldn't go out. We couldn't sustain a bell-ringing for a couple of days, much less a couple of weeks, or 17 days, as was the case in the most recent bell-ringing incident. And any government that ignores the message of the people does so at its own risk.

I want to refer to some of the things that have been said regarding transportation. The reason that I want to relay this, Mr. Speaker, is I want to tie in a bit of transportation to the importance of the bell-ringing where we have a promise from the government now that, well, let's just give us this bell-ringing and we're going to provide you with a good government. We'll do the things that we promised you we would do. We'll do the things that the people of the province want.

But it directly relates to some promises that the Conservative Party has made during elections and subsequently. The reason that I say it directly relates is the promises that we are hearing regarding this bell-ringing motion, sir, are: give us the bell-ringing and we will see that this Legislative Assembly works and works to the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan; that give us the bell-ringing motion and we'll make this place wonderful. We'll make everything well again.

But that's not been the case study. You needn't be a genius to be able to go through the various promises that have been made and broken repeatedly for over seven years now. We've dealt with the promise not to privatize SaskPower being broken.

With regards to transportation, and I again quote from *Pocket Politics*:

The Progressive Conservative Party believes that it is urgently necessary that a transportation policy encompassing all modes of travel in Saskatchewan be developed and co-ordinated.

This is not very long, Mr. Speaker, so if you'll bear with me.

The major distances between various areas of the province and the relatively low density population of Saskatchewan make an efficient transportation system imperative (very laudable). A Progressive Conservative government will (two things):

(1) promote a regional transportation policy which will be designed by the four provincial governments of western Canada for the benefit of western Canadians;

(2) allow purple gas to be used in all farm trucks.

And yet we see virtually nothing being done in the areas of transportation. We no longer have purple gas. We have everyone in the province paying the gas tax and then applying subsequently for a rebate for those gas bills that you have. We see nothing done by way of a regional co-ordination of transportation; certainly nothing between the four western provinces.

So the two bench-marks of a Progressive Conservative election campaign regarding transportation were nothing but smoke and mirrors. Nothing happened. And it's just so difficult to understand why we would accept this proposed rule change limiting the right, our right, to ring bells after we see example after example after example of Tory promises gone astray, forgotten.

We see a government dealing with whatever it wants to on a given day. We see a government that now, for in excess of a month, has told us that this proposed motion to change the rules is the most important agenda item, the most important issue facing Saskatchewan people today. And I ask the government members opposite to move on to other agenda items.

And I'll ask this fairly, I think, fairly simple question: what have you got to lose by simply, the next time we meet, instead of dealing with this rule to change the bell-ringing motion, why not try, bring forward some estimates or bring forward a Bill? Bring forward Bill 41, which is an Act to amend The Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan Act.

I suspect there are things in that Act that I disapprove of. Maybe there isn't. I don't know. But I can give a fairly reasonable assurance that I won't be in any way

obstructing that Bill. I may have some questions to ask about it. Indeed I have friends and relatives throughout rural Saskatchewan, have a great many people that would expect us to take a great deal of interest in that Bill. But why not just bring it forward?

The government says: until we get this rule change through, we can't trust the opposition. We are uncertain that they're going . . . The government is saying: we are unsure that if we move to other legislative agenda items, we're uncertain that the NDP won't walk out again. Well, I mean they were uncertain of that for 84 years. So we used it one time — one time in 84 years — and as soon as we use our democratic right to ring the bells, the government wants to eliminate that right. And I just can't, for the life of me, understand the logic to that.

If I have a friend who has stuck by me . . . indeed I have such a friend, who is my very best friend, sticks by me through thick and thin, believes in me, doesn't . . . I'm sure that Gary doesn't agree with everything I do, I'm sure of that, but we have a trust relationship. I know that he is a good person; he knows I'm a good person, and we will support one another to the best of our ability. But if the whole world suddenly were to turn against me, it wouldn't quite be the whole world, my family, I suspect most of them would still be with me, and certainly Gary would be.

But if on one given issue I did something that hurt Gary, I don't think he would turn against me or suddenly not trust me. Certainly it may take a little while for us to build that trust up again, but our friendship is firm enough and solid enough that I'm sure that we could work through those difficult times, as I'm sure that the government and the opposition can work through the difficult times that we're having right now.

I am convinced in my own mind that if the government would simply bring forward any other agenda item, other than the bell-ringing, other than SaskPower, other than the potash privatization, that we could deal fairly straightforwardly with the legislation. Not that the opposition would lay down and play dead. We would have questions, but the progress in the legislature would be marked and you would see it. And every day we would advance and do the work that we were elected . . . or do some of the work that we were elected to do.

(1630)

The reason I changed from do the work to do some of the work is, as all members are very much aware of, we're not paid simply to be in the legislature when the session is on. There is much, much more to being an MLA in Saskatchewan today than that.

So I thank you for allowing me that tie-in with transportation, Mr. Speaker. I very much am opposed to this motion that is going to be limiting our right to ring the bells. And I'm opposed because of the promises that are being made now, you know, give us the bell-ringing. The government says, give us the bell-ringing and we will make Saskatchewan work, we will make the legislature work. All this brought to us by the people who privatized highways equipment, selling off \$40 million worth of

highways equipment for less than 6 million, and privatized the coal-mine at Coronach, and many other things.

And they're telling us now, trust us on this motion. These are the people who sold the Prince Albert Pulp Company to Weyerhaeuser of Tacoma, Washington — gave it away, no money down, despite promises of much good things coming. The good things didn't come.

These are the people that sold off, despite promising not to sell SaskTel, they've sold the cable division of SaskTel, they've sold the directories of SaskTel, they've sold the computer operations of SaskTel. What's next?

This is not something that is being sold, but operator services right here in Regina, within 14 months we are going to have 133 fewer employees in SaskTel, because they're shutting down Regina's directory assistance and operator services division — 133 jobs gone. Those examples at a time when the government is promising us they're not going to privatize SaskTel. How can we believe them? I've listed three portions of SaskTel that have been privatized. The way the government goes about piecing off SaskTel, they may in fact . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. The hon. member is bringing forth issues that, if one was to even rule that they are relevant, they would be extremely on the edge of relevancy. I think that the hon. member should speak to the motion in a more direct fashion. A wide-ranging discussion of government policies and programs really, as I'm sure you realize, isn't really on the motion.

**Mr. Trew:** — So we've got a rule change, Mr. Speaker, that is designed to allow the government to ram down the throats of the people of Saskatchewan, and indeed of the opposition, literally any legislation they want — any legislation they want.

I hear what your ruling is regarding the relevancy. I will once again endeavour to stay within the bounds of the rule 33 change. But I think that all areas are indeed relevant. I'm not saying this by way of particularly arguing your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but because of the far-reaching effects of this rule change, literally all legislation in Saskatchewan is going to be affected by this proposed rule change.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I've listened to the member's remarks and yes, what he's saying is potentially correct. However, the discussion of each of these pieces of legislation is not relevant. That's the point I'm trying to make.

**Mr. Trew:** — Yes, I understood the . . . or let me check and make sure I understand, Mr. Speaker, because it is not my wish to challenge your rulings; it is rather my wish to participate as fully as I can in this debate.

You are saying, sir, that I may use very short examples if they tie in to the bell-ringing change, but that I cannot go off in a tangent regarding, for instance, Saskatchewan Transportation Company or SaskTel, but only as they relate to this proposed rule change. Is that . . .

**The Speaker:** — Well that's close. That's true. The hon. member is close, I believe. It's a good question.

I believe what I'm trying to put across to the hon. member . . . For example, I'm trying to find something in the blues that we can both refer to. If we just look at adjourned debates, for example, there are a good number of adjourned debates that one might say is in some way relevant, as an example.

But the discussion of adjourned debates themselves certainly wouldn't be relevant and here's your problem. I believe that you raise an issue and then you want to discuss it, and if the discussion of that issue . . . it isn't relevant, you know, in most cases. I'm not saying in every case. It depends how you put it.

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The action taken, Mr. Speaker, by this government in this unilateral rule change is unprecedented in this legislature, and the government knows it. The Minister of Justice has publicly admitted that this is the first time he is aware of the rules committee being passed by. And despite the fact that this is the first time that any of us are aware of in Saskatchewan history that the rules committee has been passed by, the Justice minister makes no apologies for it — no apologies whatsoever.

That's why we are on our feet debating. This matter should have been referred to the rules committee. Indeed, in the very early stages it looked like we had agreement to do that. From our side we had some agreement to try and negotiate on the matter, set up a rules committee to deal with this and a number of other items dealing with how the legislature operates.

My colleague, the member for Saskatoon Eastview, has outlined, I believe there was six proposed rule changes that he has been putting a huge amount of thought to, to try and make this legislature work more effectively for all — for the government and for the opposition. And despite those proposals that we have made, we saw that rules committee go by the boards. Instead we see us being reduced to debating here in the legislature.

When my colleague, the member for Saskatoon Sutherland was finished, I gave every opportunity for government members to speak. And indeed if one of the government members who are so busy speaking right now would have been speaking then, perhaps I wouldn't be on my feet at this particular moment. We would be listening to a government member.

When we returned to the House, Mr. Speaker, after the bell-ringing, the Premier stated publicly that the government would talk to the New Democrats about a possible change in the bell-ringing rules. The Premier's initial reaction was the correct one, in terms of parliamentary tradition in this legislature. So he was certainly within his bounds to be saying that — totally within his bounds. Nothing unreasonable about that. Whatever I may think of the change to the rule itself, the Premier had every right to say that, and obviously he did. And we take no quarrel with that.

But later the same day, the government served notice that

it was introducing the rule change without consulting the opposition — unilaterally introducing a rule change. That we take objection to. That is unprecedented in Saskatchewan parliamentary history and we take our precedent from other parliamentary jurisdictions. Saskatchewan having only been around as a province since 1905, the tradition, as I pointed out, only goes back 84 years. So we reach back into Canadian, both in the House of Commons and other provinces, as well as British parliamentary history for the precedent.

But I don't think there is a precedent for a government to unilaterally change the rules, as is the case here now where the government says, this is what we're going to do — tough. Like it, lump it, whatever you want to do, but this is the way it's going to be; this is the way it's going to be. That's what they're saying to us, and that's not acceptable. That's why we're fighting.

Throughout Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly history, Mr. Speaker, there have been many consultations, not only many, but much consultation, substantive as well as quantitative consultation on rule changes, and it's taken place with a mechanism that has all-party committees that are approved and given a mandate by all members of the Legislative Assembly.

The rule changes have happened with consensus and without division. Indeed, it is common for a government MLA to move a rule change once the rules committee has agreed, and for a member of the government . . . of the opposition, rather, to second it.

And if there . . . as in the case when there were three parties in the legislature, the third party would have someone speak in favour of that rule change, or speak to the rule change that . . . I recognize not always would everybody be jumping for joy when there's a rule change, but always we've had agreements in the past from all parties that this is the most workable solution. It's the most obvious way to keep the proceedings in the legislature happening, to keep things rolling along.

So this government has now proposed a single rule change which came about because of its difficulties after the 17-day bell-ringing, after its difficulties regarding privatization. So we're saying it's somewhat cynical, certainly undemocratic; it's without precedent that the rules would be unilaterally changed in this Legislative Assembly.

So we've got a government that changes, flies in the face of tradition, both in Saskatchewan, throughout Canada, throughout the British Commonwealth — flies in the face of that tradition. And why? Why would a government be so underhanded? Simply because they got into such a jackpot with the people of Saskatchewan. Now they're looking for anything to deflect interest away from SaskPower.

I think they've chosen the wrong issue to deflect the attention to the rules change because the two are so intertwined — lose the rules, we lose SaskPower. We can't accept that. If we were to lay down and accept this unilateral rule change imposed upon us, Mr. Speaker, that would be as much as us admitting that our 17-day

walk-out was for nothing other than political grandstanding, and I can assure you, sir, that was not what we were about to do.

(1645)

Some other things that the government has done regarding their undemocratic ways are trying to privatize many of the Crowns. Many of them have been privatized to varying extents, and we're not prepared to see it go on indiscriminately.

People are telling me that we should be opposing this rule change. People are telling me that we should be opposing the ongoing privatization plans of a government that has gone too far. And they're demanding — not just telling me to stand up and speak out — they're demanding that we do so. And that's why, on this side of the legislature, we're reduced to fighting to see who gets to speak next, to fight to see who gets to speak next — not a fight to see who gets to speak, but who gets to speak next. And I know that there's a number of my colleagues that are working on their speeches at this very moment, and I can assure you that some of those speeches will be very, very good.

We see, Mr. Speaker, that the government has introduced changes, re-working The Electoral Boundaries (Commission) Act. We see that Morse, there's going to be 7,757 voters, compared to 11,734 in Humboldt. We think it's very much unfair that there would be a 50 per cent discrepancy. And I take 50 per cent of 7,757 and you come up with 3,878. So you add 50 per cent to Morse and it still comes up with 11,635 voters, which is short of the proposal that Humboldt have 11,734 electors.

This at a time when we've even gone so far as to change the discrepancy from one constituency to another. It used to be 10 per cent; now they're proposing 25 per cent. Even with that additional, this still doesn't fall within the bounds because it's not a 25 per cent discrepancy; it's rather a 50 per cent discrepancy from a Tory seat with the lowest number to a New Democrat seat with the highest number. And we're hard-pressed to agree to a change in the rules limiting our bell-ringing rights when we see other undemocratic actions taken and forced upon us by the government.

I have used the example of Morse and Humboldt. I now want to point out that Morse is proposed to have 7,757 voters and Saskatoon Greystone is proposed to have 12,567 voters. The member for Weyburn made some comment about Roy's radicals. I guess I'm pretty radical. I guess I'm pretty radical. I always thought it was a matter of talking common sense. But this discrepancy between a rural constituency of Morse and an urban seat of Saskatoon Greystone is unacceptable. And I wonder, do we get less valuable as we move to the city from the farm? Do we lose our sense of fairness or our understanding of rural concerns?

My grandfather who farmed for a huge number of years, did he suddenly lose all his common sense, all his knowledge, just because he moved to the city? I think not. I don't think my parents lost any of their values when they moved to the city; when the farm was sold and they moved to the city, I don't think they lost it. I very much

appreciate the values that I learned growing up in rural Saskatchewan.

We see rule changes being forced upon us. We see a situation where we will no longer be able to ring the bells on important issues. And why that is important as it relates to the electoral boundaries is we see an electoral boundaries Act that has been changed, much to the detriment, I would argue, of the people of Saskatchewan. We see electoral boundary changes proposed by the government that are anti-democratic. That's one example. We see the other example . . .

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to stay on track on this very important motion, not to be detracted by the member from Weyburn or from Regina Wascana or from Rosthern for that matter, but to stick with this issue before us, which is the issue of bell-ringing.

And it's the issue of the democracy as we have come to understand it here in Saskatchewan. And I'm using now the example of the changes in The Electoral Boundaries Act which are detracting from the democracy in Saskatchewan, as is this proposal to change the bell-ringing rule, because no longer would we have the right under this rule change to ring the bells. Now with the right, Mr. Speaker, comes a certain amount of responsibility too. I'm sure you're aware of that. There is . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Could you answer that one question . . .

**Mr. Trew:** — I can't recall the member for Weyburn having spoken on this issue.

**An Hon. Member:** — Never from his feet.

**Mr. Trew:** — . . . (inaudible) . . . from his seat. And I very much look forward to the time when I sit down, and hopefully the member for Weyburn will care to share some of his jewels of wisdom, pearls of wisdom with us.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — So we have the proposal to restrict our right to ring the bells. Then we have the proposal to change the legislation regarding the electoral system; then we have the ward system having been changed. Despite the fact that the huge majority of people in the cities favour retention of the ward system, we went away from the ward system.

**An Hon. Member:** — How do you feel about the store hours?

**Mr. Trew:** — The member for Regina Wascana asks how I feel about store hours. Mr. Speaker, I suspect you will rule me out of order if I were to tell him because it's not really germane to this. But I will say something that is germane to this particular motion, Mr. Speaker, and that is, if the member for Regina Wascana would get his colleagues in the government to move from this issue we could be

dealing with urban issues, or we could be dealing with rural issues, or we could be dealing with estimates.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Just every day the government gets to bring the agenda items forward. At the start of every day, Mr. Speaker, we hear item number one, and they'll read what it is. And we hear government members say, stand, which means pass over it for the day — stand. Then they go to the next item, and it is read by the Clerk, and the government members say, stand. So we pass over that. Then you go to the next agenda item and the same story is repeated until you hit agenda item number 14, on the proposed motion of the member for Kindersley:

That the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* be amended by adding the following . . .

And then it's the rule change that we're debating. Item number 14, every day, every day the government is sending clear messages that this is the most important agenda item. It is not. It is absolutely not the most important agenda item.

We welcome the opportunity to deal with many, almost any of the other legislative agenda items. We would welcome the opportunity to deal with estimates. We also recognize that very shortly, I think, the government is going to have to move off of this and onto an interim supply Bill yet again, and simply because of an unwillingness on the part of the government to just try moving to something else.

If we were to ring the bells again, and particularly if we were to ring the bells on an issue that was less important, we would lose the support that we have gained in recent weeks and months. We would lose that support. And I can assure the government members that we are not at all interested in giving up any of the support that we have gained in recent weeks and months just for the sake of frivolously ringing the bells on some less . . . some issue of lesser importance.

So the government's really got nothing to lose if they were to move, as we proposed Friday — indeed, we proposed it in a motion — if they were to move to Bill No. 41 — An Act to amend the Agricultural Credit Corporation, or any of the other 37 Bills that there are on the order paper — 37 Bills on the order paper — 37 Bills to choose from, and yet we get no movement whatever on the part of the government. And that's a shame.

I can't believe, Mr. Speaker, that as the government maintains, they are the party that represents rural Saskatchewan. I can't believe that the number one issue on the minds of farmers and their families throughout Saskatchewan — the number one issue, bar none — is to change the rules in the Legislative Assembly.

**An Hon. Member:** — Well it is. You go into any coffee shop — that's all they talk about. That's what they want.

**Mr. Trew:** — One of my colleagues says, if you go into any coffee shop, that's all they talk about. Of course he says it in jest, and you of course would know it.

What we do here is seemingly more and more and more irrelevant because we spent over a month dealing with the number one issue in the province, that of changing the bell-ringing motion. Isn't that absurd? Alice-in-Wonderland was never, never as insane as this place has become. Alice-in-Wonderland is a fairly decent piece of literature. It's kind of interesting to read. But what's going on here is not very interesting to read unless you're a direct participant.

We would like to make the legislature relevant again to the people of Saskatchewan. We want this place to work. Because recognize, Mr. Speaker, those of us on this side of the House in a few — I don't know — months or years will be the government, and we want this place to work. We want to be able to turn Saskatchewan right side up again. We want to be able to put people of this province to work; we want to be able to virtually eliminate hospital waiting lists; we want to improve our highways; we want to improve our education system; we want to provide jobs for people; we want fair taxation for everyone, not just ad hoc programs, a touch here and a touch there and a touch somewhere else. We want to put Saskatchewan on its feet — the three engines of growth: the public sector, the private sector, and the co-operative sector working in harmony together to make this province as great as it truly can be.

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

**Mr. Trew:** — So we need this . . .

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

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.

**CORRIGENDUM**

On page 1724 of the *Hansard* No. 53A Thursday, June 8, 1989,  
2 p.m., almost half way down the left-hand column the quote:

Legislation will be introduced to allow a tax on  
environmentally unsafe projects.

should read

Legislation will be introduced to allow a tax on  
environmentally unsafe products.

We apologize for the error.

[NOTE: The online version has been corrected.]