

The Assembly met at 8 a.m.

Prayers

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

#### Time Allocation

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, having given the required notice two days ago, to speak today on the motion of time allocation. Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that this motion, this motion comes after, firstly, a considerable length of time sitting in this legislature. I believe, Mr. Speaker, this legislature opened some more than four months ago. I say, Mr. Speaker, that this legislative session has not been the most productive in terms of quality of debate and in terms of work accomplished.

And, Mr. Speaker, I say to you that specifically, specifically this time allocation motion deals with the subject of Bill No. 20 respecting the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. I say, Mr. Speaker, that this motion that I speak on today comes after a considerable amount of planning a discussion, discussion and talk by 38 duly elected members of a government, and, Mr. Speaker, this motion does deal with what a duly elected government should be able to perform.

Mr. Speaker, I say that this motion does deal with a very fundamental principle, and that principle is the principle of the right to govern.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't think there are many people in Saskatchewan that would oppose that principle, that would be opposed to the principle that a government should be able to govern. I say, Mr. Speaker, that there may be members opposite who do disagree with that, and I say that, Mr. Speaker, for some very specific reasons.

I say it, Mr. Speaker, after some statements made by members opposite, and I will refer to you, Mr. Speaker, of statements made by the Leader of the Opposition. And admittedly, Mr. Speaker, it was at a time, it was at a point in time when I would say the opposition was, as the common terminology goes today, "on a bit of a roll" — on a bit of a roll with respect to SaskEnergy.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — But, Mr. Speaker, as every fair-minded person knows, as every gambler, if you like, knows, rolls only last so long. And in the height of that role what did the Leader of the Opposition say? The Leader of the Opposition said, and say unduly so, unduly so: there shall not be another privatization Bill passed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is an example, that is an example of how quickly, how quickly opposition members can become arrogant — how quickly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — And I say, Mr. Speaker, it tells something very, very important. It tells me and it tells the people of Saskatchewan that the members opposite did not learn the lesson that they should have in 1982, because that was precisely the attitude that they displayed back in the dying days of the NDP. They quickly became arrogant. Here on a bit of a roll with a very difficult issue facing the people of Saskatchewan, nothing more will pass if we say so as the opposition.

I say, Mr. Speaker, who is the duly elected government of this province? I say, Mr. Speaker, it is the Progressive Conservative Party. I say that, not arrogantly, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I say, Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition have said they are going to throw sand in the eyes of the government. I say, Mr. Speaker, that too was an irresponsible statement.

Mr. Speaker, I want to get directly, directly to the point. Mr. Speaker, this potash debate has gone on . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd say let's talk, let's talk a little bit about the current debate on Bill No. 20. How long has it gone on? Well, Mr. Speaker, it has gone on now some 80 hours, some 80 hours of debate on second reading on this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, this motion that we have before us today will allow with, I believe, fairness and reason, that this Bill will be debated some 120 hours. And I suppose, Mr. Speaker, the question is: how long is long enough? Surely, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill, being debated more time . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I'd just like to call the hon. members' attention to the fact that I think we're going to have to try to contain ourselves. Obviously we're into an issue that's going to raise emotions. However, having said that, there will be more than one speaker, and we'll have to pay them the courtesy of allowing them to speak without constant interruption or we'll have a very, very difficult time.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Surely, Mr. Speaker, a motion that will allow for more hours than the past debate back in 1975, or 1976, is a fair motion. Surely, Mr. Speaker, a motion that allows for more months than the previous debate should be a fair motion.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the potash Bill was first brought forward — I believe it was on April 19. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition spoke on April 19 or April 20. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition concluded his remarks on the subject at that time. And I'd say, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed significant, indeed significant that the Leader of the Opposition has not partook in the debate since that time in any sense of the word.

I say, Mr. Speaker, in fact where has the Leader of the Opposition been with respect to this debate? If it was that important, if he was that dedicated to the real root cause of this debate, where has he been, Mr. Speaker? I'd say, Mr. Speaker, instead . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Instead, Mr. Speaker, he has been noticed by his absence in this debate. Instead, Mr. Speaker, he has allowed his members, his members to speak. And the real question, Mr. Speaker, did they speak with substance? I have spoken to you already, I have spoken to you already . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — . . . already about the time that is spent. And, Mr. Speaker, that is only one argument, and perhaps not even the most critical argument. The most critical argument, Mr. Speaker, is this: is there any real depth to the NDP on this issue?

Mr. Speaker, I'd say there is no depth, Mr. Speaker. I'd say the arguments presented thus far, Mr. Speaker, are as shallow as any wading pool in this city. Mr. Speaker, they have no depth, they have no real firm conviction on this issue. And, Mr. Speaker, one only has to examine, examine the quality of debate on this issue. Mr. Speaker, one only has to examine the press reports that have come out after some 30-some days of debate on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, and it bears asking: is there anything real about the NDP on this issue? I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that no, there isn't. And the reason being, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP know full well that at a point in time before their demise, they as well had plans to offer public shares in the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Indeed they did.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Indeed they did. And, Mr. Speaker, that is significant. Have members opposite, have one . . . has one member opposite stood up and talked a little bit about their document, their plan to privatize the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan? Why haven't we heard something about that, Mr. Speaker? All we have heard is an awful lot of talk, Mr. Speaker. We have not heard much debate at all.

Mr. Speaker, why not? We have heard about romper rooms and we've heard about girl-friends, and we've heard about the history in the state of Texas, but, Mr. Speaker, has there been any real debate by members opposite on, for instance, what this Bill would mean to the employees of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, I have not heard very much at all from members opposite. Mr. Speaker, it is time members opposite stood up and took a stance on behalf of the employees of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

It is time, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I need to once more call

the hon. members to order. Continued interruptions are interfering with the debate to a great degree, and I think the hon. member should have the right to speak. And as I said earlier, we're going to have, I anticipate, more than one speaker, and I don't think we will want to see this performance each time a speaker rises.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, I was saying that the members opposite have not addressed in their speeches the real impact on the employees on the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and I would say that that is totally unfair. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that that shows beyond a question of a doubt the lack of real compassion and understanding for those employees.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that certainly members opposite can stand and talk very politically with a great deal of partisanship, but with no real meaning or feeling for the employees of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. They only talk philosophy on why there should be more state intervention, more state ownership. Members opposite have ignored the real impact on the economy of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, without regard to the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite have spoke for two and three days at a time. Mr. Speaker, I want you to know that there are members on this side of the House that want to get into this debate. We have had probably eight or nine members speak, and there are more who will wish to speak. I believe that this motion that limits this debate to four more days should be ample opportunity . . .

(0815)

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order. Member for Moose Jaw North, you, sir, have been interrupting almost continuously and are so again, and I ask you to refrain.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — This motion, Mr. Speaker, should give all members opportunity to present the real arguments, Mr. Speaker, the real arguments that impact and affect the people of this province. But, Mr. Speaker, those cannot happen when you have members going on for two and three days at a time. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it would be fair to say that there's almost a contest amongst NDP members, not to see who can give the real fundamental arguments but who can talk the longest. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a sad day in this legislature in the province of Saskatchewan when it's simply entered into a talking forum to see who can outdo the next.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, what this motion is about really is management. And, Mr. Speaker, this session, because of NDP obstructionist tactics, has not been managed well.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that this motion, this motion over four days will allow the real arguments to be brought forward. If the NDP members are sincere in their belief that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan should not be privatized, I challenge them to stand up and provide real arguments over the next four days. I say, bring forward new information if you really have it. Are you

sincere, Mr. Speaker?

The next four days on debate on this issue will tell the tale. I'd say, stand up. Stand up, members of the opposition, and provide your real, true arguments, because thus far, Mr. Speaker, the press has acknowledged it, the radio talk shows have acknowledged it — the NDP have not provided any real arguments to sustain their position that this Bill should not pass.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — I say, Mr. Speaker, that this motion, once again, is based on fairness, it is based on reason, it is based on management of this Assembly, and I ask the NDP members' co-operation to stand up, debate this issue, allow our members to debate this issue. Do not go on totally for two or three days at a time.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would hope and trust that members of the opposition in this current debate will provide their arguments and will allow this motion to pass this evening. And, Mr. Speaker, we will see if the members of the opposition really want to get to the potash debate and really want to debate this issue with real fervour, not shallowness. And thus far, Mr. Speaker, that is all we have seen. And I say once again, Mr. Speaker, likely the reason is that there are no real, solid arguments why this Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan shall not be privatized.

Mr. Speaker, I say once again, and I refer to the Crown Management Board document of January 1981, within this document it is stated by members of the New Democratic Party their intention to privatize the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is that why they have not really debated this issue? I say to you, that is precisely the reason why, because they are totally embarrassed because of this document written by NDP members.

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

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Members opposite denounce with fervour the privatization and the free enterprise system. But, Mr. Speaker, let's look at it with a little depth, let's look at it intensely, Mr. Speaker, and let's look at the individual members. And I refer to you, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Allan Blakeney, as well a man who denounced these privatization things publicly, but privately what did Allan Blakeney do, Mr. Speaker? He bought shares himself personally in Saskoil. Is that why the members have not debated this . . . (inaudible) . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — I'm going to have to ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to this Bill so it doesn't become a wide-ranging debate.

**Hon. Mr. Hodgins:** — Mr. Speaker, this Bill deals with the allocation of time in providing members the opportunity to produce real arguments on this debate. And I suggest to

you, Mr. Speaker, the reason they have not produced real arguments on this debate, and the reason why it is necessary to bring in this time allocation motion is because, Mr. Speaker, the NDP are totally embarrassed. Because when you get into their hearts of hearts, they know that there are advantages to this privatization principle, to the free enterprise principle. And I lay before you, Mr. Speaker, this document from the Crown Management Board meetings of January, 1981.

I say once again, Mr. Speaker, the real reason is because the Leader of the Opposition will say a few months ago, no, this privatization is bad, this free enterprise system is no good, but then that same member will go out and work for one of the corporate conglomerates called the Bank of Nova Scotia.

I say furthermore, Mr. Speaker, members opposite such as Tommy Douglas back in history, back in history has talked long and hard and denounced privatization. But what did Tommy Douglas do? He went and sat on the board of directors of the Husky Oil corporation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask the members opposite to stand up today, stand up in this debate and provide real arguments on this potash debate. Nothing has been heard so far, Mr. Speaker, that would convince the people of Saskatchewan that this Bill should not pass.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have produced this morning my arguments why this time allocation motion should be passed today, why we should move with haste into the potash debate again. And I challenge the members opposite, when that debate resumes, to stand up and provide some debate. Let us not just provide talk. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do look forward to the passage, the quickly passage of this motion.

This motion is seconded by the member for Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. And, Mr. Speaker, I do move:

That following the adoption of this motion, when the order is called for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill No. 20 — An Act respecting the Reorganization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, not more than two sitting days shall be allocated to debate on such order and that at fifteen minutes before the set time of adjournment on the second sitting day, unless sooner concluded, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the order; and

That there shall be two sitting days allocated to the consideration of Bill No. 20 in Committee of the Whole, and at fifteen minutes before the set time of adjournment on the second sitting day, unless sooner concluded, the chairman shall put all questions necessary to dispose of every section of the Bill not yet passed, and shall report that Bill forthwith to the House, and that the question for the first and second reading of any amendments shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate; and,

That there shall be two hours allocated to the

consideration of the motion for third reading of Bill No. 20, and at the expiration of two hours, unless sooner concluded, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the order for third reading of the Bill; and,

That consideration of Bill No. 20, pursuant to this motion, be a special order of this Assembly to be called immediately after orders of the day.

And I so move, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — Mr. Speaker, it's with pleasure that I rise today to second the motion introduced by the member from Melfort. The motion we are debating is very plain, it's very simple, Mr. Speaker. It's fair and it's reasonable. It's reasonable because by the time the debate on Bill 20 is completed, it will have been the longest debate in the history of this province, the longest debate in the history of this province.

Mr. Speaker, time allocation is not new. It's not new and it's not an unusual thing. It's common; it's common all over this country. It's common in all parliamentary democracies. It's fair, it's reasonable. It speaks to democracy, it speaks to common sense, Mr. Speaker. It speaks to common sense — the people that we represent and the people that the members opposite represent — it speaks to everyone.

Saskatchewan already has time allocation on two most important government measures. Debate on the budget is limited to six days, Mr. Speaker. Debate on the throne speech is limited to seven days. Time allocation is used across this country on a regular basis to maintain the ability of the Legislative Assemblies to function efficiently.

Duly elected governments have the right to govern, and in turn the opposition has a right to oppose. But surely there must be a balance. There must be a balance, Mr. Speaker. There must be a balance between those two principles. And the province, our province, must come first.

I am proud to second this motion, but I do regret that it is necessary. Only a short while ago an agreement was signed to end the bell-ringing debate. This agreement, that agreement committed the opposition to passing all government legislation by mid-summer. And by anybody's standards, this is mid-summer, Mr. Speaker. Mid-summer is here.

The government has held off on SaskEnergy. The government has held off SaskEnergy, and the Barber Commission is presently reviewing the proposal. The government has kept its word. It's kept its part of the deal, Mr. Speaker. The government has kept its word, but the opposition is reneging.

Mr. Speaker, during the bell-ringing debate I mentioned that the Leader of the Opposition had welcomed me to a club, a very special club. And I have to really wonder

what that special club is all about, and I'd like to have him here today explain what his special club is all about. If his special club is what he's presented here in the past five months, I don't want any part of his special club.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — I truly believe, I truly believe that he's forgotten why he's here, and I truly believe that a lot of the members opposite have forgotten why they are here. I think they've forgotten who they represent and what they represent. I believe they've forgotten what this institution represents. And the examples of the past few months clearly represent that and show that clearly to everyone.

The parliament, this parliament is a place to speak. It's a place to speak and it's a place to listen. It's a place for debate, and debate we shall have, thanks to the motion before us.

I've sat and I've listened to this debate on Bill 20. I've sat and listened as much as anyone in this Assembly. I've listened to all the speakers, Mr. Speaker. I've listened to them all. I've heard about everything. I've heard about everything from *Romper Room* to the Alamo, Mr. Speaker, and I think enough is enough.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — My college English professor told my first year English class to write a speech for a weekend assignment. A good friend of mine asked that professor how long it should be. Professor Dean replied, it should be about 20 minutes, but if you've got enough time, make it 10. And I think that tells us a lot, Mr. Speaker, it tells us a whole lot.

Good speeches are short. They're short, they're concise, and they're to the point. And they take a lot of time to prepare, but they don't take much time to deliver. Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the members opposite. I have listened to a whole lot of the members opposite. I have listened to the members opposite. I have listened to the member for Rosemont, the member from Moose Jaw North, speak for over 10 hours, over 10 hours each, Mr. Speaker; no preparation, and that's why it took so long; that's why it took so long and that's why it was so painful.

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

**Mr. Wolfe:** — I really don't like to admit it, but I do have to say that the member from Nutana last night probably said more in an hour and a half than the members opposite said in their 10-hour speeches. She said she cared and I think she showed she cared. She clearly showed that she really didn't understand, but she did show she cared. She was kind enough to stop at that.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. The government has a right to govern, and I think we all agree with that. It also has a constitutional duty to do that. It has a constitutional duty to govern, and the Leader of the Opposition knows that well, he knows that very well, and I would hope he will consider that in how he deals with the motion before us today.

(0830)

The government just can't say, it just can't say, the opposition might not like this, the opposition might not like what we're going to do, so maybe we'd better not do it. We had better not let them decide, Mr. Speaker, we had better not let them decide. We're the government, we have the right to rule, and the people have the opportunity to decide every four to five years, Mr. Speaker. The government sets the agenda, Mr. Speaker, not the opposition, and it does it for very, very good reasons. And the Leader of the Opposition knows that very, very well.

Mr. Speaker, the motion before us should not have had to have been presented, but the opposition is committed to revolt and obstruction, and they've clearly showed that. For the first time in history, for the first time in the history of this province we have an opposition committed to making this province ungovernable. Members opposite have stood in their places and claimed to be proud to be radical, proud to be radical. Just as the opposition held this Assembly hostage for 17 days this spring when they rang the bells, they have held this Assembly hostage for 17 days this spring when they rang the bells. They have held the Assembly hostage by delaying passage of Bill 20 and many other government Bills that they've promised to pass, Bills they've promised to pass. A promise they've broken; a promise they've broken to this Assembly; a promise that they've broken to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is fair; it's reasonable. It's fair and reasonable. It speaks to democracy and the values that the people we represent stand for. It will provide for debate on potash on both sides of the Assembly.

What could have been the greatest debate of the decade has been little more than talk, thanks to the members opposite. Little more than talk, thanks to the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, there can be a great debate. There still can be a great debate in the next four days. There really can be. This motion will allow for that debate to occur. And for that reason, it's with pleasure that I second the motion, moved by the member from Melfort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today. In the course of my remarks I intend to clearly refute the nonsensical comments made by the member for Melfort.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — That was some kind of fantasy land dream he had last night, Mr. Speaker. It's clear by his speech just how arrogant, just how arrogant and out of touch this government really has become, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — This government is stifling democracy,

Mr. Speaker, and this is clear to everybody in Saskatchewan. It's clear to everybody but the Premier and his government.

This morning we are seeing the usual contradictions by this government, the usual hypocrisy where the minister tells us, he says, stand up and present your arguments in this legislature, on the one hand, and on the other hand he brings in closure. He's not even making any sense, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — The minister said that this motion is about management, Mr. Speaker. It's not about management at all; it's about muzzling. It's about muzzling the public and muzzling their elected representatives.

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

Mr. Pringle — Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the reasoned arguments put forward by my colleagues. We don't need any lessons in debate or sensible arguments from the member from Melfort, thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give a little bit of a background about why I decided to run for politics in 1987, because this motion today is very much related to a disturbing pattern that I was concerned about back then, so I'm just going to give a few brief comments.

When I decided to seek the nomination for my party in 1987, I did so primarily because of what I saw happening to people in the province by this government, and to what I saw happening to our great province. While I was always interested in public affairs as a citizen, I certainly had no intention to seek the nomination at that time, for a variety of personal and family reasons. But as friends and neighbours began to approach me, and as I reflected on the situation in the province at that time, it became clear to me that there was really no choice but to run for elected office. I say no choice because there were some very disturbing signs that our once buoyant economy and our well-managed province was in deep, deep trouble under the Tory government.

I mention this bit of personal background, Mr. Speaker, only because it is now clear to me and to many other people of Saskatchewan who were concerned about the same time, that these concerns are very much related to democracy, Mr. Speaker, or to a continual and frightening erosion of our democracy, and very much related to this motion.

This motion as presented today is yet another unparalleled and unprecedented action by an authoritarian, by an arrogant and a cowardly Premier and his government.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Speaker, senior citizens in Saskatoon Eastview tell me that our province has only seen one other such government, that being the PCs of over 50 years ago. Mr. Speaker, it took 50 years for people to forget and forgive the last Tory government, and it'll be another 50

years before a Tory government is elected again in Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — It'll be another 50 years, Mr. Speaker, because of their record of waste and mismanagement, their record of deception, of broken promises, of hurtful policies, and particularly their record as it relates to eroding democracy in the province of Saskatchewan.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, by this closure action — as the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg rightly said, an action never before seen in Saskatchewan, never before seen in Saskatchewan's political life — and by the sell-off of PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan), their damage will be felt well beyond 50 years, Mr. Speaker. That's the tragedy of this Bill No. 20 and of course of this closure motion that we see today.

Mr. Speaker, I join today proudly with my leader, with other colleagues who will speak on this motion, and we will fundamentally oppose it. We will oppose this motion with vigour and for many reasons, Mr. Speaker.

In 1987, as I mentioned, I decided to run provincially because of what I saw happening, because of the actions of this government. Well what did myself, and obviously the good people of Saskatoon Eastview, given my mandate, what did they see which was . . . what did we see which was of such great concern to us?

Well first of all we saw a government get elected by a margin of 13 seats, even though the official opposition had 1 per cent more in the popular vote. Well of course their electoral boundaries gerrymander has resulted in the fact that, with us winning 1 more per cent in the popular vote, they would gain a 15-seat majority. That's the first erosion of democracy — blatant, blatant erosion of democracy — by this government for purely political purposes, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — We saw a government that, once elected, refused to call the legislature into session to deal with the pressing economic and social issues facing the people of the province.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, it should have been clear to all of us that that was a sign of things to come. That was a sign of this government's attempt to silence the opposition and therefore the people of the province.

**An Hon. Member:** — Ongoing trend.

**Mr. Pringle:** — An ongoing trend, as my colleague has said, of this government silencing the opposition or silencing any group that disagrees with them, and silencing the people ultimately.

Mr. Speaker, we saw a government deviously privatizing, even though it never mentioned it nor campaigned on the issue. In fact, in 1985 the Minister of Justice said that privatization is yesterday's theory.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — Our Premier promised not to privatize public utilities, so again blatantly misleading the people of Saskatchewan with the SaskEnergy Bills. We saw the Minister of Finance "miscalculate" his budget forecast by over \$800 million, then respond cynically to the public's concern by saying something like: well what do you expect? I'm just a politician.

We saw a dismantling of health care, Mr. Speaker, which was an excellent system, built up over many years by the people of Saskatchewan, one that we were proud of and one that was the envy in all of North America.

Mr. Speaker, we saw the Premier and his government make Draconian cuts to health care, all the while telling us that they were building health care, Mr. Speaker, the Premier and his government cannot fool the people of Saskatchewan any longer. They destroyed the dental plan for children; they threw 400 people out of work by that action alone. They've created hardships in health care due to the prescription drug plan. They had at that time over 11,000 people on waiting lists in hospitals just in Saskatoon alone.

We saw a record of a serious debt situation involving back in 1987 when I decided to run. I saw the rise of food banks, never before seen in this province except for the last Tory government. I saw the rise in food banks and the increasing number of hungry families, hungry children. Again, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's rhetoric in his government, they talk about valuing families and valuing young people, and then they let them starve. It's another example of their hypocrisy. That's an ultimate form of erosion of democracy — letting people of the province starve, Mr. Speaker.

I saw cuts to services, rising incidences of abuse because of the stress being placed on families, high unemployment, record taxes. This government has broken every promise that it ever made on tax relief. They've raised taxes to the point where we're the highest taxed province in all of Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, in 1987 I saw a government that talked about how well it was doing, when everyone else knew that that wasn't the case at all. This government was either out of touch or they were deliberately mislead the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. The hon. member has made an unparliamentary remark. Would the hon. member withdraw his remarks.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Mr. Speaker, I did not certainly intend to make an unparliamentary comment, and if I did so, at your decision I withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that the legacy of this government since I've been here in the last 15 months has been one of deception of the people of the province; it's been one of confrontation, not just with the opposition but with all kinds of other groups — anybody that stands in the way, including the officials of this Assembly, gets

attacked — so one of confrontations; one of not working with communities; one of bullying; and one that's ultimately undemocratic. Now that's the legacy that I've seen with this government as reinforced by this motion that was presented this morning.

Mr. Speaker, in my remaining comments I'll outline how, by other undemocratic actions like this closure motion this morning, this PC government has broken the trust of the people of Saskatchewan. That's why they have absolutely no credibility on any issue before the public today.

The Premier's low popularity in several recent polls is not without good reason. Saskatchewan people have a proud tradition of good public leadership. The public of Saskatchewan expect their political leaders to be open, to be honest with them, to be up front. They expect their public leaders to keep their promises after elections. They expect their public leaders to listen to them.

(0845)

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I've been listening carefully to the hon. member's remarks, and we are discussing a time allocation . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Did you hear the speech? Did you listen to . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I've listened to the hon. member . . . I've been listening to the hon. member's remarks, and the Bill is on the time allocation as related to Bill No. 20.

I've given some latitude of . . . Order . . . The member for Saskatoon Nutana and the member for Saskatoon Sutherland and the member for Saskatoon . . . sorry, Saskatoon Westmount, Westmount, and the member for Saskatoon Sutherland, and all other members, would you just relax for a moment.

Now I am listening to the hon. member's remarks, and I have listened to other remarks by members, and I have given some latitude to members on both sides — to both sides. I have given some latitude.

Now I've been listening to your remarks, sir, and so far you haven't given firm indication of referring to the actual motion, and I ask you in remarks to do that.

What's the . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — It is a point of order.

**The Speaker:** — Point of order.

**Mr. Shillington:** — You allowed the minister to range all over the landscape . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. I am going to repeat once more — once more — I have given latitude in this debate to members on both sides, and as we all know, some members received great latitude. The member introducing the motion has received some latitude, and I referred to the member to keep his remarks to the motion.

I have given this member latitude, and I am asking him to refer his remarks to the motion. And this concludes the debate.

**An Hon. Member:** — On a point of order.

**The Speaker:** — There's no point of order, sir. There's no point of order. Order. I have given a ruling. Before there can be another point of order, some business of the House has to take place. No business of the House has taken place, therefore I assume that you don't have a point of order that is in order.

The member for Saskatoon Eastview.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what I was attempting to do, and maybe not very well, I tried to indicate at the outset that I would try and give some comments that related to undemocratic actions by the government in a pattern that I was concerned about as it related to the general approach of this government on the broader level in the community and throughout the province, which I consider very much related to democracy. And certainly I will focus my comments on this motion, and the concern I have about this motion as it is another in a pattern in undemocratic actions in legislature I'm concerned about.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — So I'll attempt to abide by your ruling, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the right that the citizens have, a right that they have to expect from their political leaders. And, Mr. Speaker, they certainly have a right to not go hungry; children have a right to not go hungry in the province. It's a democratic right, Mr. Speaker. We're a signator to the UN Declaration on Human Rights which was renewed in 1988, December of 1988 by the Minister of Social Services, yet we have children going hungry. Now that's a violation of democracy, Mr. Speaker.

The citizens have a right to have their governments not only preserve democracy but to enhance it, to work towards enhancing it. I mean, that's the proud tradition of the governments of Tommy Douglas and Allan Blakeney, to enhance and promote and further democracy, and further democratic institutions and the integrity of them.

And so we see by this motion and some of the other actions of this government their attempts to in fact erode democracy. This is clearly a motion designed to stifle the opposition and therefore the people of the province. And that's the point I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — That's the essence of the debate.

**Mr. Pringle:** — That's really the essence of this entire debate, Mr. Speaker. Citizens have a right to expect their political leaders, to expect their Premier to respect democratic institutions, to respect the democratic traditions and conventions in the Legislative Assembly, not to violate them the way we've seen by this Premier.

Citizens have a right to . . . they want their leaders to be fair to all people, to all people across the province, not just to their buddies. They expect their leaders to govern wisely and be good stewards, Mr. Speaker. And importantly, they expect their leaders, their political leaders and their Premier to be accountable to them, to be accountable to the taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that's the essence of democracy in the British parliamentary tradition.

This Premier and his insensitive and incompetent government has not measured up in these areas — that's the case I'm trying to make — have not measured up in any of these areas, Mr. Speaker, and it is clear, if we examine the record, that they have not done so.

Mr. Speaker, that's not just the New Democratic Party, or the official opposition talking about that. I would just like to read briefly, if I can, just a few sentences from an article in the *Swift Current Sun* to support what I'm saying. And it's dated Monday, May 29, 1989. The headline is . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Which paper, Bob?

**Mr. Pringle:** — It's the *Swift Current Sun*. And the headline, Mr. Speaker, what it does is this article criticizes the government, the Tory government, for doing what it pleases despite how the people feel. That's the point I'm trying to make. Basically, the heading is: "Devine government shows its contempt." And I quote:

The provincial government seems to think lately that it can do anything it wants . . .

The first scuff came when the provincial government decided to sell shares in SaskEnergy, despite the fact that two out of three people in Saskatchewan don't like the idea.

But then the Tories formed a commission to study the issue and appointed Lloyd Barber as its chairman. Barber belongs to a business group that promotes privatization and favours selling SaskEnergy. How's that for a government thumbing its nose at people?

Well that's a comment about democracy, Mr. Speaker. That's the comments I was trying to make in my earlier remarks. And this is further evidence that these people don't care about democracy, as is this motion that we've seen presented this morning.

But then it goes on to demonstrate further that this government does not care about democracy.

Then came the Willard Lutz affair. In his report to the legislature, the provincial auditor, who has the quaint notion that taxpayers have a right to know how their money is spent, complained about government secrecy. He said, he never gets the ledgers for about half of the money spent by the government of Crown corporations.

Now this is not me speaking, or the opposition. This is the *Swift Current Sun* speaking this year. I quote further:

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

They attacked one of your officials, Mr. Speaker, a blatant attack on democracy, on democratic institutions of one of your officials. That's what the article is saying.

Justice Minister Bob Andrew, quoting selected and fragmented passages from a letter written by Lutz's lawyer, implied that Lutz was willing to "change his report" if he received a better pension and was allowed to name a successor.

Then they go on to say that this was kind of the height of impropriety and I won't read that, but they go on to talk about that. I'll just read the last couple of comments here:

Then, last week, the Saskatchewan Securities Commission ordered SaskEnergy to stop its campaign promoting the proposed sale of shares in the natural gas utility. Through advertisements, public meetings and letters to every home in the province, SaskEnergy was touting the financial benefits of buying its shares before it had released a prospectus on the share issue.

The government response in this case was to approve an order allowing SaskEnergy to bypass security laws and continue its campaign. The rest of us must play by the rules; (it says) Devine government makes them up as it goes along.

In short, it does as it (darn) well pleases.

That's what the article says and, Mr. Speaker, that's why people in the province are concerned. This government does what it pleases whether the public supports it or not, or whether they've got a mandate or not, and that's the essence of democracy — make up the rules as they go.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the government doing as it pleases, this is true of all the things that it's doing. I would suggest that this article represents the vast view in Saskatchewan about the way in which this government has eroded democratic institutions in the province of Saskatchewan. This is a serious allegation, Mr. Speaker. This article is saying that this government is not accountable. And surely, accountability is what democratic government is all about. It's certainly what this motion's all about. This is an undemocratic motion. So, Mr. Speaker, this is an undemocratic motion from an undemocratic government and is a sign of desperation. There's no question about that.

Mr. Speaker, it is now clear that what I saw in 1987 was only the tip of the iceberg of what I have seen over the past year. The pattern of erosions and outright attacks on democratic practices and institutions has really escalated as this government sinks in popularity and gets more desperate to ram through this potash legislation and to ram through its own right-wing privatization agenda, their blind, off-the-wall agenda, Mr. Speaker.

Even their own supporters, Mr. Speaker, are abandoning them in droves because they don't accept this way of



dealing with people, this lack of integrity, this lack of fairness, saying one thing before the election and then doing something else. Their own people have got more integrity than that.

Mr. Speaker, this motion this morning is just the culmination of a pattern that I've been concerned about since I've come into this legislature. But what are some of the other things we've seen in this particular legislative session that make people of Saskatchewan concerned about erosion of democracy by this Premier and his government?

Well we saw a Premier and a Deputy Premier and a government that promised not to privatize Crown utilities. They made that very clear. They're on public record as saying that. A year ago they split SaskPower. Everyone knew what they were up to. Everyone knew what they were doing. You can't fool the people of the province like that.

But because this government has so little regard for preserving democracy in the province and so little regard for what the public of Saskatchewan thinks, they tried to break that promise. Now I submit that that's an undemocratic actions, Mr. Speaker, and I say "tried" because they clearly were not successful and will not be successful in SaskEnergy.

Mr. Speaker, you know the rest, the great public outcry on that, the 70 per cent of the people opposed to their action; Premier's trust level not at something like 23 per cent in the province.

Then the Premier — that wasn't enough — the Premier decided to attack the people of Saskatchewan some more, and the Deputy Premier, and they belittled the people of the province. They belittled the people by saying, well the pollsters asked the wrong questions and the people didn't know what they were responding to. They belittled over 100,000 people who in their democratic right signed petitions which were filed in this legislature. They belittled those people like they did the people on the health care petitions — said that the people didn't know what they were signing; they didn't know what they were doing. They said that . . .

(0900)

**An Hon. Member:** — Two-year-old children.

**Mr. Pringle:** — The member from Cut Knife-Lloyd says that two-year old children were signing petitions. Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of offensiveness, that's the kind of attack on the people of Saskatchewan that I'm trying to talk about. They don't even understand it, they're so out of touch and so arrogant.

Mr. Speaker, the right to sign petitions, the right to present petitions in the legislature that's on the agenda, is an historical right in the democratic process, in the legislative process. In this government, that member from Cut Knife-Lloyd is showing contempt for the people of the province when they choose to exercise that right, and I say that that's an attack on their democratic right and is blatantly offensive, Mr. Speaker. And the people of the

province do not appreciate that. People of the province have a right to be heard through their elected officials, something that this motion is going to restrict.

It's not for the government to decide what arguments we can or cannot put forward and how long we can speak on a Bill and how long we can't. That's not their decision; that's not their right. We're here duly elected by the people of our constituencies and we're accountable to them, not to that government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's well-known that the opposition walked out in protest, and I might add, like the federal Tories have done, like the Manitoba Tories have done, and as I understand it, like the Saskatchewan Tories have done in the past. And then they have the audacity, the Premier has the audacity to say that it was an undemocratic action. Mr. Speaker, that was recognized and is recognized as a legitimate right within the rules of this Assembly.

How would they describe their actions, their deception of the Saskatchewan public by trying to sell off SaskEnergy and the potash corporation when they said they wouldn't; by not campaigning on something that fundamental and then trying to do it the third year into their term? Surely that is an undemocratic action, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly they're doing that, and then going against the will of the people, some 70 per cent, is an undemocratic action. So I take great exception to the minister standing up this morning and to the Premier of this province talking about us walking out of the legislature. Then we come back; they say, well just come back and debate us, and then they bring in closure, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we see with this government is that they always blame others. I mean, that's part of their pattern. They never accept responsibility for their behaviour, for their actions. Everything is always the fault of somebody else. And we heard that again this morning.

Mr. Speaker, there's a clear double standard in this province by the Government of Saskatchewan. Well the public knows; I would suggest that the public knows who has been undemocratic. The public will judge this motion as an undemocratic motion. The public knows who has been undemocratic on SaskEnergy, on Sask Potash Corporation, and they know who has been deceptive. And this continues with the whitewash Barber Commission. It's been made clear in the recent, the last day or two; the Yorkton paper makes that very point.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like just to take a couple of minutes here to just quote a few sentences from Eugene Forsey, because it speaks to the issue of closure, which is the heart of this motion came before us this morning; in fact this is the closure motion. And I would suggest that Mr. Forsey is an expert, and he's dealing with something which I consider a parallel. It's the constitutional aspect of the Canadian pipeline debate, that historic debate, as the potash debate is an important and historic debate — and Mr. Forsey's speech to the closure rule, something that we see before us this morning, and it's particularly relevant to what's happened here today, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker.

What does Mr. Forsey say about closure? And there are many disturbing parallels as to what we see going on here today, Mr. Speaker. And I quote:

It is not merely (however) that closure was imposed (four times), but that it was imposed in utterly unprecedented circumstances.

Like in Saskatchewan today. We have not seen that, as the member of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg says, in the history of the province. But of course he blames the opposition because that's what he's learned to do on that side. I quote:

It was also, even apart from other proceedings, some already noted, some still to be noted, a gross and flagrant breach of the spirit of our Constitution (that is this closure motion). Parliamentary government is not just a matter of counting . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Once more I ask the member from Moose Jaw North to refrain from interrupting.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quoting about Mr. Forsey's concerns about closure. He says:

Parliamentary (democracy) is not just a matter of counting heads instead of breaking them. It is also a matter of using them. It is government by discussion, not just by majority vote. Parliament is not just a voting place. It is also, pre-eminently, essentially a talking place. "Parliaments without parliamentary liberty," says Pym, "are but a fair and plausible way into bondage." Freedom of debate, being once foreclosed, the essence of the liberty of Parliament is (withal) dissolved.

So, Mr. Speaker, this closure motion is a serious matter. He even goes on to say that closure is indeed a double violation of the constitution. He says:

The Government's (again speaking on the pipeline debate, but I think there's a parallel here) . . .

The Government's (debate) broke no rule of the House. They did something far worse (than break the rule of the House); they violated the spirit which gives life to all our laws and to all our rules, the unwritten conventions of moderation, self-restraint, decency, fair play, without which the system crumbles into ruins.

Mr. Speaker, this is why the government's actions on this closure motion is so serious. It parallels what Mr. Forsey is talking about — this government's record of violating long-established conventions and traditions of this Assembly.

I just have one small part here, Mr. Speaker, because I think this is very critical. He says:

For its use of closure, and (the) treatment of this Bill . . . the Government offered four reasons.

Well one was urgency, but it says:

Secondly, the Opposition had threatened obstruction (which we heard this morning). So it had. It had a perfect right to threaten it, and a perfect right to engage in it. There is a widespread impression in Canada that obstruction is something new and vicious. It is neither (he says).

On a great issue of public policy, a Government defeated in parliament is entitled to appeal from parliament to the people, because it believes the existing Parliament has lost the confidence of the people. Equally, on a great issue of public (debate) an Opposition (that being us), facing certain defeat in Parliament, is entitled first to try to arouse public opinion . . .

Which we certainly have been able to do, or the public opinion has aroused us, because the public is as concerned as we are about the undemocratic actions of this government. But the opposition facing, okay:

. . . is entitled first to try to rouse public opinion and so force the Government to back down; and secondly, if that fails, to try to force an appeal from Parliament to the people, and for precisely the same reason which entitles a defeated Government to appeal: that it believes the existing Parliament has lost the confidence of the people.

A Government makes its appeal by dissolution. An Opposition makes its appeal by trying to force dissolution, by obstruction . . . Used, as it should be, and almost always has been in Canada, only for the gravest reasons, it is a legitimate and indeed essential part of the parliamentary system; in the last resort, with the Government's power of dissolution, the only way (the opposition has) of keeping Parliament responsible to the people.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that this is what we're trying to do. The government did not campaign on the issue of privatization.

**An Hon. Member:** — Just the opposite.

**Mr. Pringle:** — In fact, they campaigned, as my colleague from Moose Jaw South said, they campaigned just on the opposite.

The government clearly does not have public support for their privatization plans. Now they're denying the official opposition the right to full and free debate on the issue. It's sort of like the final nail in the coffin, Mr. Speaker.

Any reasonable person in Saskatchewan, on such a fundamental issue, such a clash of visions, such an important issue in the province, would support the right of the opposition to indeed debate this issue as long as it felt appropriate to do so.

Mr. Speaker, one final comment from this article, because again it very much parallels what we see today is:

What the pipe line debate revealed, above all (and

I say similar to this motion we see today), was that the Government and the presiding officers alike had simply no understanding of the basic principles of parliamentary democracy.

They had no understanding that it rests on discussion. Their use of closure and their treatment of the bill . . . showed that.

They had no understanding that parliamentary government rests on the rule of law; that the Government must not break the rules any more than any private member; that majorities are not enough; that they must be majorities acting within the rules.

They had no understanding that parliamentary government rests on their unwritten conventions of self-restraint and fair play; that if any one part of it uses all its legal power, it can wreck the whole thing. All of their conduct showed that (in that debate).

Not unlike we see in this debate, Mr. Speaker. And that's my point.

They had no understanding of the sacredness of an Opposition, of the fact that the decisive difference between parliamentary democracy and "people's democracy" is the existence of a freely functioning Opposition, an Opposition with the means of becoming government, peacefully, decently and in order.

They had no understanding of the sacredness of the office of the Speaker . . . They showed no consciousness of the fact that it is the Speaker's peculiar duty to protect the rights of the Opposition. He must, of course, protect also the rights of the Government, notably the right to get a decision after (after) proper debate. But the Government's rights are very seldom in danger.

There's no government rights in danger here, Mr. Speaker. Apart from the fact that we've run out of per diems and those members want to get out of the House, there's no rights of the government in danger in this debate.

And he says:

. . . the Government's rights are very seldom in danger, because it ordinarily has the majority. It can look out for itself. The Opposition cannot, because it ordinarily has not a majority. That is why it is the Speaker's duty to guard with the utmost care and vigilance even the most technical rights of the minority. Unless he does, the very fabric of free parliamentary institutions is in danger.

(0915)

Last sentence, Mr. Speaker.

Last, but not least, the Government and the

presiding officers (in that debate) showed no understanding that obstruction is a necessary part of the (democratic) system. They were not even clear about the necessity of a device for ending obstruction when it has performed its function; they thought it was a device for preventing obstruction.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this government, like, this government cannot continue squelching democratic rights of the official opposition and the freedoms of free speech, and ultimately, Mr. Speaker, they cannot continue to squelch their rights of the constituents who duly elected us.

Mr. Speaker, this government has, similar to the quote from Mr. Forsey, this government has violated not only the spirit of the rules of this Assembly but the rules themselves. They've attacked the traditions. Their unilateral attack, their unilateral move to limit bell-ringing, their unilateral move, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to extend sitting hours, both of those actions, this closure action — all three of these actions which have occurred just in this session are undemocratic, they're unparalleled, and they're unprecedented in this Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In the past, as you well know, these kinds of decisions have been made by — well of course there hasn't been closure in the past . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — It's hard to set a precedent if there isn't one.

**Mr. Pringle:** — That's right, there isn't a precedent for that. But the other unprecedented actions — the bell-ringing motion, extending the sitting hours, Mr. Deputy Speaker — in the past these decisions were made by an all-party committee with input from everybody by consensus.

So this government, by those actions and by this motion today, by this closure motion today, has shown once again no regard for the opposition viewpoint, no regard for the constituents that we represent. They've shown, essentially, it's the might of the majority over the minority, and that's short-sighted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's an attack on democracy and the democratic institutions and the democratic traditions of this legislature.

But that's only the beginning. There are many other undemocratic actions. I mean, that's the problem. The pattern is so well established that they don't even recognize them, and the vicious and scathing attack on the Provincial Auditor certainly shows to what lengths this government will go to not to be accountable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government will attack anybody who gets in their way. I mean, we've seen it. Again I want to come back to the point, this is a violation of democracy which we're concerned about in this ultimate act of closure.

They attacked the wildlife federation — I mean it doesn't matter who, anybody who gets in their way — they

attacked the wildlife federation, and Rafferty. They attacked the United Church. They attacked the Ombudsman three years ago. I mean, kill the messenger is the approach used by this government. They attack poverty groups when they speak out against fellow citizens being hungry, and they attack the official opposition which is an ultimate attack on the people that we represent; it doesn't matter.

**An Hon. Member:** — And personal attacks.

**Mr. Pringle:** — . . . and personal attacks. We saw the attacks on the Leader of the Opposition this morning. They weren't putting forth any arguments. They were attacking the Leader of the Opposition personally, and I would suggest that that's not a class act; that's not keeping with the decorum of this Legislative Assembly. And it should be.

I mean, if they want to heighten the debate and create an atmosphere, as they say, of better relations in the Assembly, you don't go on the offensive and make personal attacks as the Leader of the Opposition. It shows their disregard for his role in the Assembly. Of course also they're well aware of his popularity in the polls, and so it's clear as what they're trying to do there.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the other undemocratic actions . . . It's clear that the government . . . Not only did they attack the Provincial Auditor, they've sabotaged the Public Accounts Committee process by not co-operating. I was in Crown Corporations not too long ago, and the minister for privatization was saying, well, I'll release the results of that Sask Minerals in due course.

Now I would suggest that the withholding of information from the public of Saskatchewan is an undemocratic action and is something that clearly the Premier shouldn't be tolerating. But that's not the only secret deal that the government has made. They made secret deals that the government has made. They made secret deals on SMDC (Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation). Of course they broke their promise too, but that's another point; they said no jobs would be lost. A secret deal at Saskoil; they said no jobs would be lost there either, but we've seen a 25 per cent reduction in the work force. In fact, we've seen a phasing out of the affirmative action program; that's how socially responsible Saskoil has become.

So these secret deals, these secret privatization deals . . . and of course they were attempting through Bill 1, privatization Bill, to get the power to make more secret deals in privatization. But these secret deals show the arrogance of this government and a disregard for the right of the Saskatchewan public to know just how this government is managing their affairs.

Mr. Speaker, the secret deal on the arrangement with Cargill . . . I mean, we saw the Premier give three different versions of what the arrangement was with Cargill. And the people of the province had a right to know that at the outset, but that information was withheld.

But there's more. Late filing of documents and annual reports in this Assembly can only be seen as a deliberate attempt to withhold information, Mr. Speaker. I would

say that again that's an attack on democracy, not unlike this Bill we see before us this morning, this motion we see before us this morning.

Taking leave of questions is a favourite strategy of the government, designed as a way to not have to answer questions in the Assembly. Again it shows a disregard for the Assembly and a disregard for the constituents represented by the official opposition. Ultimately it shows a disregard for democracy itself because we have a right to ask questions and to get a response from the government.

And the message in that and the message in this closure motion this morning is that we're not accountable, we're above accountability as a government. That's the message that this government is conveying to the public of Saskatchewan.

This government's appointment of a provincial Ombudsman three years ago, again unprecedented in that it was without consultation with the opposition. And there was a debate around that, Mr. Speaker, as it related to one of the members of this . . . a comment in this Assembly, the opposition having no input into that discussion at all.

The constant underfunding of the public watch-dog agencies in the province of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission which last year the staff took a 10 per cent pay cut so that nobody would have to be laid off. The underfunding of the Ombudsman, the attacking of the Ombudsman's report three years ago.

These are questions of accountability, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would suggest that accountability is the essence of democracy as we know it.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's sort of amazed me since I've come here, and one of the things that's caused me a fair amount of anxiety is that we never quite know what government business is going to come before the Assembly. Apart from the fact that it's inefficient, which it certainly makes the Assembly become inefficient, it is not courteous to the opposition.

It's my understanding that the previous administration, they used to give a week's notice of government business. And one has to ask why the government is not willing to give the opposition some notice of official business. To me that's an undemocratic action.

**An Hon. Member:** — In the British House of Commons it's law.

**Mr. Pringle:** — In the British House of Commons that's law, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But when they can't even extend us that courtesy, well in my view that shows a lack of respect for the opposition's role, and ultimately for democracy.

Government accusing the opposition of holding up government business, in my view, is another attack in democracy. I mean, as was indicated this morning by the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, the government is responsible for government business, for Legislative

Assembly business. Well we've been telling them that for a long time, and I'm glad the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg appreciates that.

The problem is they haven't been taking that responsibility. Instead of getting on with government business — they know they set the agenda — they went on to motions of bell-ringing and bits and pieces of potash corporation debates, extended hours. All these motions have been brought in in an unprecedented and undemocratic way, and then they're upset because we want to take issue with those undemocratic actions.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that government, that Premier's government, it was them that voted against all of our motions to get on with important business of the people of the province. They voted against our motions urging them to get on with business, to deal with the real issues.

It was day 72 in this Assembly before we had one Bill to deal with small businesses in the province. Here we've got small business people going bankrupt at a record rate again this year — as a record was established last year; it'll be a new record this year — and the government did not deal . . . bring any business in until day 72. It was day 80 before they brought in any agricultural Bills, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at our insistence.

So they set the agenda, they're responsible for the agenda, and then they accuse us of holding up government business when they haven't even brought it in. These are blatant deceptions, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan are not holding the opposition accountable for the very little business being done in the province of Saskatchewan . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No they're not. They're holding the government accountable for the fact that we've dealt with very little business in this Assembly.

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

**Mr. Pringle:** — I see the Minister of Finance, I touched a nerve there when I talked about that. So I'd like to talk a little bit about the Minister of Finance and his contribution to erosion of democracy in this Assembly and as it relates to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. His deception regarding, not the budget of the election year, that was 800 million out, but his deception regarding this budget that we're currently in right now.

And this deception occurred on a number of fronts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First of all, he knew full well, the Minister of Finance knew full well, as everyone else did, that the government had given a commitment on the drought payments. Now they maybe tried to get out of it, but they had given a commitment in December to participate in the drought payment. So the Minister of Finance knew very well that this \$120 million would be added to the deficit, would be added to the budget. So his forecast is going to be out by 100 per cent again this year.

But he knew that was going to occur. But he . . . I won't say deliberately misled, but it's certainly suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the minister would not know that when everybody else in the province knew that. The minister

knew . . . I mean, we told the minister, my colleague from Regina Centre was well aware of this, that they had inflated or overestimated the federal transfer payments.

So of course the federal transfer payments would be lower. Well we can blame somebody else for our deficit. Well we told them that they had underestimated that. And the Finance minister must have known that that guess was not right.

(0930)

Mr. Speaker, the government, as I said, because they were so preoccupied with the unilateral decision on the bell-ringing motion, that they refused to call important government business. And then they told school boards that the opposition held up the interim supply Bill. I mean, that was deceptive. That is not true, that relates . . . That's what I'm trying to talk about in terms of straightforwardness with the people of the province. And democracy and preserving democracy, that's what I'm talking about.

Now what the Minister of Finance will be able to say at the end of the year, although he won't get away with it because his track record is not good, but he will be able to say, or what he's going to try and say is, well this huge deficit is due to unforeseen circumstances, circumstances beyond the control of this government. And of course the people of the province will know that this isn't true.

Mr. Speaker, the government's arrogance and feeling no need to be honest with the people regarding Rafferty and the whole process there. I mean, they got into trouble themselves on that issue. It wasn't the fault of the wildlife federation or the opposition.

The gerrymandering. I mean, they phased out by legislation, cancelled the independent boundaries commission. And that's again another in a pattern of undemocratic actions like this Bill, this motion we see this morning. They phased out the independent boundaries commission. Now we're in a situation with this boundaries report where in fact the boundaries are more askew than they were before the report was written.

Has democracy been better served by this action? Is there more representative population sizes between the constituencies? Has democracy been better served? No, certainly, Mr. Speaker, and we'll have a lot more to say about that very calculated, undemocratic act at some point in future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Securities Commission where the government broke its own laws. I mean, surely if there was an undemocratic action by a government it's one of breaking your own laws. Like the Provincial Auditor says, they broke their own laws. Well what did they do? Again, if something gets in the way, they change it, they change the law.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are two standards, one for everybody else in the province and one for this government. And I would say that that's undemocratic. Any reasonable person would say that's undemocratic.

Mr. Speaker, this closure motion, we can see the hypocrisy of this Premier and his government. We can see by this motion their intolerance for democracy and full and free speech.

When we were out talking to the people of Saskatchewan about the government's SaskEnergy sell-off, the Premier said something like this. He said, just come into the House, that's all I ask; let's debate the issue. That's what this legislature is for; come back here and debate. Well we came back, Mr. Speaker. We came back. He didn't move to government business as he said he would. The government rarely called estimates, so here we've been on potash, this Bill 20.

In the mid-1970s, unlike the member from Melfort tried to convey this morning, there was unlimited debate. People stopped debating; the government didn't have to invoke closure. There was unlimited debate and full debate allowed by the Blakeney administration and, I might add, with the support and under the direction of the current Leader of the Opposition. And those were good debate, good and full debates by members on both sides of the Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I might add, a member of the Progressive Conservative Party spoke at considerable length, one particular member in that debate, and he was not stopped, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The opposition and the people of Saskatchewan view this potash debate as important and as historical. In fact, the government members were even picking up our lines. I heard two or three of them say that yesterday: it's an historical and it's an important debate. The next day we see closure on the debate. So there's no conviction to that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is an historical debate. This is an important debate. This is a fundamental clash of visions, and there's nothing wrong with that. I would suggest that that's healthy in our democracy. I would also suggest that we are promoting a vision on behalf of the people of the province that in fact what we know that represents the majority viewpoint.

We have every right to promote that vision because it's a vision with a history of co-operation and working together between small-business people and co-operatives in the public sector, and so we're proud to promote that vision. We're proud to build on that vision. So it's a clash of visions, and there's nothing wrong with that. And all members should be allowed, on behalf of their constituents, to have free and full debate.

What kind of political debate, Mr. Speaker, could be more important than a fundamental clash of visions on economic policy? I can't think of any, Mr. Speaker, because it has, particularly with the potash corporation with thousands of years of potash reserves, it has implications well beyond any of us in this Assembly, the lifetime of any of us in this Assembly.

So we have a responsibility to allow — not only allow, but to promote and foster and encourage — extensive debate by all members, and not to tell people how long they

should debate and when time is enough.

When the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg this morning talked about, if you can't say it in 10 minutes it's not worth saying, well that's simplifying this whole issue of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. You can't deal with that issue in 10 minutes, unless you're going to throw around a bunch of rhetoric and just attack the opposition, which has been the thing that the government members have done. Then of course he accused us of not putting forth any arguments. It's been just the opposite, Mr. Speaker.

I would submit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Bill 20, this Bill that's being . . . this debate that's being foreclosed today, that this Bill is perhaps the most important debate ever in the history of the province of Saskatchewan because the implications are for so many years down the road.

So this government said, this Premier said, come back in here and let's debate. Then we come back to debate and they bring in closure. And as has been pointed out, this has never happened in 84 years in this province. Just think about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This has never happened; closure has never happened in Saskatchewan's history. And I would ask the members opposite to think about the comments I read into the record by Mr. Forsey about democracy and the role and the rights of the official opposition.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm submitting that by this motion this morning the government is stifling debate. It's our democratically elected right to ask or to speak on behalf of our constituents.

As of today, Mr. Speaker, in this historic debate — and I want the people of Saskatchewan to hear this — in this historic debate, our Premier, our Premier has not had the courage to get up and speak. I want the media to make note of that, Mr. Speaker — our Premier has not had the courage to get up and speak.

He has not even had the courage to put forward any economic arguments about the sell-off of our resources, or to deal with the unanswered questions, the questions that aren't in this Bill, such as, on the board of directors, how many board of directors are we looking at? Well we're guaranteed three. Is that three of 25 or three of 50? He has not even had the courage to get up and forward his arguments. This is the Premier who is supposedly the economist. Nor has he answered the questions that we've raised or that the public's concerned about.

Allan Blakeney didn't cop out like that, Mr. Speaker. He travelled the province defending and putting forth reasoned arguments about the decision of the potash corporation, the potash debates in 1970s. Believe it or not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know you know this, but I say to the people of Saskatchewan, not only has the Premier not spoken on this issue, the Minister for Development and Trade has not spoken on this issue from the government side, except to get up and interrupt the rest of us on points of order.

Can you imagine, the Minister of Development and Trade

has not even spoken in this debate. The Minister for Economic Development has not even participated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is absurd. The Minister for Economic Development has not even spoken in this debate. Can you imagine that? The Minister of Labour, the minister responsible for Employment, the Minister of Labour and Employment has not spoken in this debate.

So here we have a record level of unemployment in the province, 43,000 people looking for work, record number of people leaving the province for opportunities elsewhere, record number of poverty, and the Minister of Labour, the minister responsible for poverty, has not even spoken on the debate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is not responsible government when the key front-benchers, including the Premier, have not even spoken in the debate. And then we have closure this morning, Mr. Speaker, that's not the end of it.

The Minister of Energy and Mines has not spoken on the debate. The Minister of Energy and Mines — I have a list here of who's spoken in this debate — the Minister of Energy and Mines has not spoken in this debate. She has not spoken in this debate. Well there's time for her to speak in this debate. If you would let her, by not supporting this motion, then she could speak. That's not fair to the Minister of Energy and Mines not to get the opportunity to speak. She is an honourable person. I know she hasn't made that decision; that decision has been made for her.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has not spoken in this debate. Another key front-bencher, a member I have a lot of respect for, and I'd like to know what he has to say. He's not spoken in this debate. He's an honourable member. He has not spoken in this debate, and I'd be interested in what the Minister of Health has to say.

**An Hon. Member:** — Well as soon as you sit down you're going to hear it.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Well, I doubt that. I've heard that before. But I plead with the Minister of Health to contribute to the debate and put forth his reasoned arguments.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that the Premier and the key ministers responsible for Employment and Economic Development and Trade have not spoken in this debate, and I want the people of Saskatchewan to know that. And I say that that is irresponsible. And then they have the gall, the nerve to bring in closure when they haven't even had the courage to get up and defend this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

(0945)

Their House Leader spoke for 15 minutes when he introduced the Bill. But he didn't talk about the Bill, he didn't talk about the Bill, Mr. Speaker. He attacked us, and ultimately he attacked the people of the province. He didn't defend the Bill.

Mr. Speaker, the front-benchers, including the Premier, have not had the courage to get up and join the debate, yet they have the nerve, they have the intolerance to

move closure today. I would say that this is very much related to democracy. This is the height of disrespect for the people of Saskatchewan and it's the height of disservice. It's a disservice of huge proportions.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note — and I have the list here — that as of right now, as of today, only nine of the 37 government members have spoken to this debate, yet they're bringing in closure. Twenty-five per cent of the government members have spoken in this debate and yet they're moving to closure. Then they said yesterday this is an historical and important debate, and only 25 per cent of them, not even the front-benchers have participated except for, I believe, two. Certainly, I mean, the public are going to be concerned about that, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — What does that tell you?

**Mr. Pringle:** — Yes, what does that tell you about their confidence in this Bill 20 if they can't defend their own Bill? They can't defend their own proposal.

I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, I would guess that this lack of performance is unparalleled in such an important matter in this Assembly. Instead, what we see the government doing is using their front groups like the Barber Commission, in this case the Institute for Saskatchewan Enterprise, to speak for them — that objective group that has no links with the Tory party. The Premier's using that front group to speak on his behalf. And, Mr. Speaker, I won't go into it, but the Tory front group institute, their arguments are discredited by the people of the province, and rightly so.

And, Mr. Speaker, of more concern to me than the fact that only nine government members have spoken in this debate is that only 14 of our members so far have been allowed to speak. Only 14 have spoken. Our Deputy Leader has not had the chance yet to speak, our House Leader has not had the chance to speak, our Whip has not finished, and several other MLAs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say today that we demand this opportunity. We are duly elected by our constituents. It is our right to enter this debate. It is our right to be allowed to enter this debate and to spend as much time on this debate as we see fit. It's not the prerogative of the government to tell us how long we should speak. We're accountable to our constituents, not to the government.

Mr. Speaker, I represent over 20,000 voters in Saskatoon Eastview. It's near the largest riding, near the largest population in the province. I won't say it's the largest, but it's near the largest. But what I do know is that it represents over 4 per cent of the voters in the province. I represent over 4 per cent of the votes in Saskatchewan, and I have a strong mandate, Mr. Speaker. I have a strong mandate to speak on behalf of the voters of Saskatoon Eastview.

**An Hon. Member:** — It used to be a Tory seat.

**Mr. Pringle:** — That used to be a Tory seat. I have a strong mandate, not because I was elected with a strong majority — that's not the only reason — but I have also done my homework. I have done a survey on privatization in Saskatoon Eastview in the opinions of small-business

people, and I have presented some of those findings in the House in the past, that the vast majority, almost 70 per cent, of the small-business people in Saskatoon Eastview are opposed to privatizing utility Crowns. Over 55 per cent, I believe it was 58 per cent — I'm going by memory here now — 58 per cent of the small-business people in Saskatoon Eastview, based on my survey, oppose the government's privatization plans.

So I have a right to speak in this debate on behalf of my constituents in Saskatoon Eastview. And I demand that right, Mr. Speaker. So the majority of my constituents are opposed to the government's plans and will be very concerned that this debate is being stifled through this motion today.

Mr. Speaker, I say this motion is a cowardly act. The government is wrong in its privatization, but the Premier and members of his government won't admit it. If they were right, if the Premier was right in this legislation, he would get up and debate the issue. His senior ministers would get up and debate the issue. If the government was right with this legislation, they would go to the people — ultimately they would go to the people. If they were right, their arguments would stand the test of debate. If their arguments were so good, they would stand the test of debate, Mr. Speaker.

This government gets in a fight, then it runs, and that's what we see by this motion today. They haven't got the courage to stand up and debate the motion . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Or the potash.

**Mr. Pringle:** — Or the potash corporation, that's right. That's what I meant, sorry. They haven't got the courage to stand up and debate the potash Bill, so they bring in closure. If public opinion was on their side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they wouldn't need closure. They're only using this because, like all their other issues in this session, they're on the wrong side of the issue, and they know it.

The government says selling off PCS is such a great deal, yet they won't get up and defend it. The Premier of the province will not get up and defend it. And those who did get up, like the minister of privatization yesterday and the Minister of Urban Affairs, didn't put forth any economic or reasoned arguments.

I give some credit to the Minister of Education because he tried to, and I commend him for that. The Minister of Education put forth a philosophical point of view, but he also put forth some economic arguments, took issue with some of our economic arguments, and I give him credit for that. The Minister of Urban Affairs, the minister of privatization, did nothing but attack the opposition and ultimately our constituents and the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Well this is a sign of desperation, and the people of Saskatchewan see through it. The people of Saskatchewan will not forget that the Premier would not stand up and take part in this potash debate, and will not forget that the Minister for Economic Development, the Minister for Trade, the Minister for Social Services and Labour would not debate this issue, and they will not

forget that this government is selling off the future, and they will not forget that through this motion the government is stifling full and free speech.

Mr. Speaker, I would say, in my concluding comments that by this motion today, this government . . . it's a culmination of this government breaking all time-honoured traditions in this Assembly, and this is why this Assembly is not working. That government is responsible, and they will pay the political price, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I won't read from a couple of articles, but I'll just make reference to what they say. *Star-Phoenix* of June 7, 1988, talks about the privatization as a public affair. And they go on to say that essentially that a full debate should be encouraged and promoted on the issue of privatization because the government hasn't gone to the people. The government doesn't have a mandate, and the opposition and the government must be allowed to debate the issue in a full and free manner — I'm just paraphrasing here because I'm conscious that others on my side want to make some comments.

But I would also say that the *Star-Phoenix* again, July 27, as it relates to the potash Bill. It says that debate should run its course, and it says that:

The legislative debate over the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS) should be allowed to run its course. This is not the time for the government to invoke the closure rule and curb the discussion.

Now again, Mr. Speaker, I could read on because that's the essence of the article. And as I said, other people want to speak, but this editorial in the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, or these two editorials, represent how the people of Saskatchewan feel, and that is that the government has got to allow on such an important and a historical debate full and free speech to all members who are duly elected by the people of Saskatchewan.

And so, Mr. Speaker, they make the point that we're not to be stifled, and I plead with the government to respect this view which I believe is consistent with the view of the editor in the Swift Current paper, as I referred to earlier, or the editor recently of the Yorkton paper, that this government — and the editor of the Prince Albert paper — that this government simply has got to allow full and free debate in the Assembly. And we see this motion this morning as nothing but an attempt to stifle debate on this important issue.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge government members, especially my friends in the back benches, not to support this motion. These people do not want to be part of the ongoing attacks on democracy that we've seen by this Premier and these members. I urge my friends opposite in the back benches, who by the way are the ones that have been getting up and speaking and I give them credit for doing that.

It's my understanding that the minister wants to hear the editorial, the Minister of Justice wants to hear the editorial from the *Star-Phoenix* from July 27, 1989, Mr. Speaker,



and at his request I will just quickly read parts of that that I was going to initially.

And I appreciate his interest, and maybe this will allow him to change his mind, and in fact it will encourage him to get up the courage to pull together some arguments, some economic arguments, to put forth to the Assembly about why this potash Bill is such a good Bill, because he hasn't spoken yet and I'd be anxious to hear what he has to say.

This article says, and I quote:

The legislative debate over the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS) should be allowed to run its course. This is not the time for the government to invoke the closure rule and curb the discussion.

That closure has never yet been invoked in . . . Saskatchewan (before) is a positive testimony to the democratic process. Sometimes its wheels grind more slowly than the government would like, but that's not necessarily a shortcoming. If the legislation the government has introduced is good for the province, it should be demonstrated as such through the debate.

Precisely what I've been trying to say, Mr. Speaker.

And the argument over privatization of a Crown corporation like PCS, one of the province's major industrial players, is hardly a trifling affair.

If the Tories do resort to invoking closure, the measure promises to create more problems than a protracted debate would ever cause for the government. The NDP has vowed to pull all possible tricks out of the bag to thwart the measure. As a result, the public would perceive the legislature as even more petty and discordant, although it's hard to imagine that possible.

And as I said, it's the government that's responsible for that.

It's better to let the debate go on. If MLAs want to take their time debating privatization and pay their own expenses while they're at it . . . let them do it.

Finally in closing, I have one further comment. Finally in closing, Mr. Speaker, as I said I encouraged my colleagues, my friends on the back benches to oppose this motion. They would be justified in doing that. Some of them are stepping down, and I'm sure they don't want to be part of such an undemocratic action as bringing in closure for the very first time in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, democracy is very fragile, as I've tried to outline.

(1000)

This government has attacked the democratic traditions in this legislature and on every front outside of this legislature, which reinforces my point that it's very fragile and must be protected. Our parliamentary system has

served us well because we have honoured the conventions and traditions of it. Previous governments have respected this legitimate role of precedence, respected the legitimate role of opposition, and importantly and fundamentally, they have honoured the principle of public accountability. And I ask this government to begin to do that, and they can do that by not supporting this motion. I urge the back-benchers to support us in opposing this motion.

At that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for your patience in allowing me to put forward my views on why this government has been engaging in undemocratic actions over so many months, and that this is the ultimate one — bringing in closure for the first time. My colleagues and I cannot support this motion. I thank you for the opportunity to present my views.

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as you will know and as all members will know, we often stand in this House and at the outset of our remarks will say it gives us pleasure to enter into the debate on this particular motion. I can't say, Mr. Speaker, that it gives me particular pleasure to rise and speak on this particular motion, because it certainly does not give me pleasure.

Mr. Speaker, I find it necessary to rise and to speak on this motion because I feel it is important, and it's important that we lay out the reasons, the reasons that I believe we have come to this juncture in this session, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order, please. The member from Regina Wascana is on his feet.

**Mr. Martin:** — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce some students in the gallery.

Leave granted.

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Martin:** — Thank you to the Minister of Health for giving me this opportunity as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you 28 students from Quebec who are at the bilingual studies, the summer language bilingual studies program at the University of Regina. It's an excellent program, Mr. Speaker, and we're delighted to have you here.

I guess you could stay in the Legislative Assembly for something like 15 or 20 minutes, and I think they've chosen an opportune time to be here. I hope you've had a good summer, and will probably be here for another few weeks. Meanwhile, when you go back to Quebec, remember us fondly and as we will you.

Thanks very much for being here today. Please welcome our students from Quebec.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

**Time Allocation (continued)**

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, it doesn't give me particular pleasure to enter this debate, but I believe it's necessary. I believe it's important to put on the record the reasons that I believe we've come to this juncture in this session.

Mr. Speaker, this legislature certainly is the place for reasoned debate between the two sides that are here. Both have a responsibility to their constituents, as some members have said.

The member who just took his seat talks about the responsibility that he has to his constituents at being an opposition member. Mr. Speaker, I've served on both sides of this House as an opposition member and now on the government benches for two terms. I believe that those responsibilities . . . and I took them seriously on that side of House, take them seriously on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, in this morning's Regina *Leader-Post*, the member opposite, just prior to taking his place, was quoting us an editorial, as we tend to do in this House from time to time, was quoting an editorial . . . This morning's Regina *Leader-Post* has an editorial entitled, and I quote, "The place and time for a proper debate." And just let me, if you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to quote the last couple of paragraphs of that editorial which is pertinent to the debate here this morning, and I quote:

The legislature ought to be the focal point for deliberation and it is unfortunate if debate is restricted, if indeed there is more to be said. By the same token, there comes a time when long-winded and repetitious speech making becomes not a hallmark of parliamentary acumen but a sign of someone who can't or won't get to the point.

The hour is fast approaching where one might suspect the opposition objectives have less to do with persuasion than with procrastination for procrastination's sake.

Mr. Speaker, that's the position, I believe, that the people of Saskatchewan have come to as they have observed, and as we certainly who are close to it every day observe, the obstructionist tactics of that opposition, that NDP opposition that we see here this morning.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, as well, believe that this is the place for debate, for reasoned debate. This is the place for an opposition to exercise the responsibility that they have, and that is to oppose, but to oppose in a responsible way. And that's key — to oppose responsibility.

And that takes us now to this motion now, Mr. Speaker, that provides for time allocation on this debate which has gone on for an awful long time. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan . . . let me just say at the very outset that Saskatchewan already has permanent time allocation on the two most important government measures. Debate on the budget of the entire province is limited to only six days. Debate on

the throne speech is limited to only seven days.

As of August 2, the date notice was given for this time allocation motion, there had been 27 days of debate on Bill 20, more than three times that allowed for the budget, almost three times that allowed for the throne speech. The debate has lasted four months, and when completed will have taken 120 hours, the longest debate in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, what has brought us to this situation? Well I believe that those members opposite have a deliberate strategy of obstruction, and it's set out . . . they've been following it religiously. There's no question about it. I give them credit for having a strategy, but that strategy is nothing less than obstruction and only obstruction.

And that's what they have and that's what they've carried out. And they've carried that out at every turn throughout this session. They've carried it out at every turn following the endorsement by their House Leader, the member from Elphinstone, his endorsement of a call by the leader of this federation of labour to "make this province ungovernable."

Make this province ungovernable — strong words, Mr. Speaker, strong terms by their ally, and endorsed by the House Leader of the Opposition. But, Mr. Speaker, they're their words, not my words. Mr. Speaker, those are dangerous calls when one thinks about it for a moment.

The member from Regina Rosemont, quoted in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* on March 19, 1989, and I quote:

The NDP must organize to create a climate of political revolt in this province.

Strong words, Mr. Speaker, very, very strong words. Not my words though, not my words, Mr. Speaker, words of a duly elected member of that NDP opposition.

The member for Regina Victoria, he said here in the Assembly on July 18, last month:

I am proud to be a radical.

I am proud to be a radical, he says. And the member for Rosemont once again in *Public Accounts Committee* on June 6, and I quote him on June 6 of 1989:

I take great pride in wearing the badge of radical because I am one.

Strong words, Mr. Speaker, strong words, but it shows the mind-set of members opposite, and it shows the mind-set and the strategy which they've undertaken — a strategy of nothing short of obstruction and only obstruction for obstruction's sake.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to say to you, but I can only conclude, and I believe many, many people across this

province and in increasing numbers are concluding that the radical left have taken over the NDP. There's no question about that. I have no question about it in my mind. The radical left have taken that group over, and they've kept their promise to do everything in their power to create revolt and to make the province ungovernable.

Once again I say, that's strong language, but, Mr. Speaker, I remind you, those are their words, not my words.

Mr. Speaker, those members went out of this Legislative Assembly, this Legislative Assembly, the parliament of our province, they walked out of here for 17 days on strike during this session — a strike of 17 days duration. And they say . . . unprecedented certainly, and they say, oh no, we're not carrying out radical action; no, no, we're not into obstruction. But they walked out of here for 17 days. We didn't; they did. They walked out for 17 days.

Mr. Speaker, they have a right to oppose. They have a responsibility to oppose, but they must oppose in a responsible way, and 17 days of walking out of here on strike is not responsible action.

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

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, the opposition have obstructed the Assembly through frivolous points of order. They've obstructed this Assembly through incessant presenting of petitions that should have been presented as a group. They've obstructed this Assembly through dilatory demands for recorded votes. They've obstructed this Assembly through verbally giving notice of motions for returns which are normally given on the order paper. They've obstructed this Assembly through repeated demands for emergency debates on a variety of non-emergency matters. They've obstructed this Assembly through irresponsible calls for quorum, and, most particularly, they've obstructed this Assembly through extended speeches.

And how have they obstructed this Assembly through extended speeches — 13 hours, 12 hours, 10 hours, several days. A little contest among them in the back lounge behind their . . . on their side of the House, a little contest: who will have spoken the longest; I made it for this long. Did it matter what they said to them? Not one bit. Does it matter to them what they say? Not at all. They spoke about the Alamo and about *Romper Room* and about the caveman. You name it, they were there. They spoke about everything that could come to one's mind. For what reason? To see which of the radical left members could speak longer than the other member.

Now that's not that all members did that. There are some of their members who entered this debate in a reasoned way. But for the most part, their speeches have been obstructionist because they've been extended.

Mr. Speaker, throughout this debate the government has approached this whole matter . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order, order.

**Hon. Mr. McLeod:** — Mr. Speaker, throughout this entire

debate, approaching 120 hours and over these four months, the government has attempted to approach it in a moderate way. We've tried to be responsive, tried to be careful in our conduct. We first agreed to hold off on the SaskEnergy legislation until after the independent Barber Commission reported. A Major conclusion, I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, a concession, I submit, unmatched by any previous government in Saskatchewan.

We agreed to withdraw the rule change motion limiting bell-ringing on the signed word of the NDP — I emphasize — the signed word of the NDP that they would co-operate in the passage of other government Bills. There were no stipulations in that signed agreement that there were some Bills that they would co-operate with and others that they would not. The only exception in that signed agreement, Mr. Speaker, was that the SaskEnergy legislation . . . was any legislation relating to the SaskEnergy initiative, and that was postponed by a government concession, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I have said, time allocation is not new. Saskatchewan already has permanent time allocation on the two most important government measures. Debate on the budget of the entire province is limited to only six days, as I've said. Debate on the throne speech is limited to only seven days. Time allocation is used around the country on a regular basis to maintain the ability of legislative assemblies to function effectively.

Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons in Ottawa has permanent time allocation such that no member may speak on a Bill for more than 20 minutes. Mr. Speaker, the Mother of Parliaments in London, England, at Westminster, has similar time limits on speeches.

Notable examples of important measures that have come into being in this country, only after the use of time allocation, include the Canadian flag — of which we're all proud — and the creation of the Canadian National Railway, both significant measures in this country. Both came into being and came into force with the use of time allocation in a reasoned way.

So, Mr. Speaker, time limitation on debate is not that unusual. It has been used in Saskatchewan for a long time for budget and throne speech debate. It's been used on all debates in the House of Commons and many other assemblies throughout the Commonwealth for many years. Mr. Speaker, its use in this specific case is the result of careful consideration and after much attempt at compromise.

(1015)

Bill 20 has been debated very extensively and all positions are clearly known. Mr. Speaker, positions on this Bill are clearly known by everyone in this province, and have been for a good long time, so it's not as though positions are not clearly known, or it certainly is not as though those members have not had an opportunity to make their position clearly known. The purpose of debate is to make positions known and to explore alternatives. Since both have been done, there can be no purpose in further extended debate except to obstruct the Assembly, which I submit is what their reasoning is all about.

Mr. Speaker, the government has given more than due consideration to the objections of the opposition, but in the final analysis the majority in the Assembly must be allowed to vote, and the majority must determine what will and what will not pass into law. It's just, as I have said, they have a responsibility to oppose responsibly. Mr. Speaker, we on the government benches, whoever occupies these chairs at any given time, must have and exercise the right to govern and the right to govern in a responsible way. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, I believe sincerely, that's what we are doing today.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely wish we had not reached this point, a point where a motion such as this is necessary, but we have reached a low point. And I will be supporting the motion because in the circumstances, in the circumstances that we find ourselves in in this session, but certainly with this Bill, this is a reasoned and a fair course of action, Mr. Speaker. I believe that sincerely, and I'll be supporting the motion. I urge all members to do so.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do wish to enter into this debate, not with much pleasure, but I wish to enter into the debate because of the importance of it. And I want to begin by saying a few words of response, if I might, to the arguments which have been advanced primarily by the Minister of Health thus far by the government side on this important matter. I don't wish to demean the contributions of the other members, but quite frankly, as compared to those by the Minister of Health, they do not bear much rebuttal. The Minister of Health does raise some points which do require consideration and rebuttal.

The Minister of Health makes two or three points which I think need to be answered and need to be noted before I get into the main remarks of my speech this morning on this important resolution.

First of all, the minister gets up and says time allocation exists everywhere. He says, after all there are seven days on the throne speech or there are six days on the budget speech, whatever the time allocations for those particular important debates are. That's correct; I concede that point to the Minister of Health.

But the Minister of Health full well knows that with respect to both of those debate, these are generalized debates which historically in our parliament have been generalized from the point of view of permitting the opposition and the members of the House to review the overall state of affairs with respect to the province of Saskatchewan and the economic circumstances in the province of Saskatchewan.

But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, what the Minister of Health refuses to tell the people of Saskatchewan — and this is critical — that any time allocation of debates such as the debate on the budget or the debate of the throne are allocations which are set out in the rules of this Legislative Assembly and agreed to by every one of us in the rules of the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — That's an entirely different situation, Mr. Speaker, an entirely different situation than a government coming in and using the heavy hand of its majority and arbitrarily deciding in its opinion that the opposition's debate has been too long, in its opinion that our arguments have been irrelevant, in its opinion that we ought not to be talking about it.

They come here to define the rules of this legislature, to do this arbitrarily by simple majority, and to equate this kind of a heavy-handed, undemocratic, unprecedented, and unwarranted attack to the rules where all the members agree, is totally unfair and inaccurate, and the Minister of Health and the government opposite know it. There is no comparison. This is the act of a government which has no arguments for the sell-off of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, and it uses its majority to crush the minority, that's all that it does.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — The second point the Minister of Health referred to deals with the question of obstruction. He says the opposition has been obstructing, Mr. Speaker, is that the case? I ask the journalists: is that the case?

Take a look at this legislative session since March. And I ask the members of this House to answer the question exactly who it is that's been obstructing. Who was it that refused to give the information to the Provincial Auditor, necessitating the Provincial Auditor to come to this legislature saying that he has been obstructed; that we cannot consider the public accounts, we could not consider how the dollars of this administration are spent? Who's responsible for the obstruction in that? Not this side. It's the government side that's responsible for that.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I could go on at record about who's responsible for obstruction. Take a look at the number of questions which have been ordered by this Assembly to be answered and have not been answered. Since 1986, ordered questions on the table for two year in this legislature, questions about expenditures, questions about documents, questions about studies obfuscated and delayed and denied by the government opposite. And may I say, rarely a word by the press gallery about that abuse by democratic process. It's them who's obstructing, not us — them, not us.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Public accounts I think is a classic example. What better, what more important debate is there about a Legislative Assembly than the consideration of the passage of accounts and how the government administers the funds of the taxpayers and where the money goes to? And we know what the damning report is all about. This is what really this obstruction argument, which the Minister of Health talks about, needs to be addressed.

I ask you, sir, to take a look at the number of stories in the various newspapers and in the television and in the electronic media about that point. Now I got to give credit with respect to the print journalism. There is a little bit from time to time in this regard, but virtually nothing on the electronic media, nothing whatsoever. I'm not here to criticize the media in this context. They do whatever they have to do.

But it is not us that are denying the passage of those accounts. It is not us that is telling the members of the public accounts that you can't get on to the current report. It is not us that refuses to table and answer the *Public Accounts*. It is the government. If there's any obstruction, Mr. Speaker, it falls on the head of the Premier and the House Leader and the PC government. And they're the ones who are obstructing.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Mr. Speaker, I've been around this Legislative Assembly for a long time, and I want to tell you to raise the third point that the Minister of Health raises is this question of the *Leader-Post* editorial.

I've been around this House for a long time, and, Mr. Speaker, we have here in the province of Saskatchewan probably the most momentous debate, not only about potash — this closure motion is on potash — but it's potash and SaskEnergy, the most momentous debate about the future direction economically, socially, constitutionally, politically, that the people of the province of Saskatchewan have to face.

**An Hon. Member:** — Well, where have you been?

**Mr. Romanow:** — I want to tell you . . . where have we been? I have delivered a speech here of six hours in this legislature before the walk-out on SaskEnergy. Every one of our colleagues have delivered speeches of an hour or so. I'm not complaining . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . all right, or more, or more — or more. And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, they will deliver the speeches and they should have the right to deliver the speeches as long as it takes in order to make the point.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — I want to say something about this *Leader-Post* editorial. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, in all of that coverage, I think the amount of the coverage with respect to the *Leader-Post* stories on the potash debate take-over at the time that the Leader of the Opposition spoke — by the way, the Premier and the others were not even in their seats; I don't care, they've got other business to do; that doesn't bother me at all — but on a momentous debate is a story about three inches wide and several inches high. Maybe that's all the speech warranted in the minds of the journalists, I don't know, but there's been nothing by way of anything else that the members here in the back bench have been talking about. Absolutely nothing.

Not only that, but the business of the day is determined not by us, Mr. Speaker, it's determined by the House Leader who has abdicated his responsibility, now being

determined by the junior house leader of the government opposite. They keep calling the potash debate. They don't call the agriculture debates. They don't call the job debates. They don't call the Premier's estimates debates. They don't call any of the matters which affect the province of Saskatchewan. It is sell, sell, sell — the privatization mania of this government.

We have to face that agenda, and the editorialists of the Regina *Leader-Post* say that we're going to lay over and play dead. I've got news for the Regina *Leader-Post* editorialists: they can lay over and play dead; we're going to fight for the ordinary people of the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — My colleague from Fairview spoke on Bill No. 1, Bill No. 1 — the Act to privatize everything in the province of Saskatchewan. He spoke, and I use him as an example, on this particular motion with respect to Bill 20. I invite you, sir, to take a look at the coverage of the media in that debate. I invite you to take a look at the coverage of any other one of my colleagues who has spoken on this. Absolutely nothing! Absolutely nothing!

And yet when we walked out of the legislature, in 17 days we got more coverage and we aroused more of the interest of the province of Saskatchewan, because of the absolute failure of the media to do its job in debating this momentous issue for the province of Saskatchewan, than we ever did. And the members opposite say that that is radical.

Well I want to tell you, if it's radical for the defence of the ordinary people of this province, for the farmers and the business people, to try to stop this sell, sell, sell approach of the PCs opposite, count me in there too because I'm for the defence of democracy.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — The Minister of Health knows that that's the case. And I want to make one last point — the journalists know that's the case. The journalists in this province know that's the case too. Where have they been? In almost any other gallery in this country, with this momentous debate, with this unprecedented act of closure, in any gallery in any legislature in Canada, this press gallery would have condemned this government to force them into an election so the people could decide what's doing and what should not be done in this area.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — But I want to tell you something, Mr. Speaker, I don't expect much more. After 20 years of being a member of the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the New Democratic Party, I know what the name of the game is here. These people want to continue their philosophy of privatization and linking us to the North American economy, and that's exactly where they're coming from. And it has always been difficult for those who are fighting for the wave of the future and fighting for the families of this province to try to get those arguments to convince us. Nothing new

about that.

But please, Mr. Speaker, let's be fair about this. Do not blame the opposition for the impasse that we're in. Put the blame exactly where it belongs, Mr. Speaker. That's on the Premier of this province, the PC Party, and their big-business, multinational corporations. That's where it was wrong.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer now to the other aspects of my address on this motion. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in my judgement this is, I can't think of anything but a phrase which has been used on one or two occasions in the past in this legislature, but it is truly, this day today, it's a black Friday for democracy today.

And I would have expected, Mr. Speaker, given the importance of what's taking place here — the unprecedented attack on democracy . . . That's what it is. The basic inalienable right of people to speak, the basic inalienable right where other countries are fighting for, in China and elsewhere in the world. The basic right to speak is being denied, and it is being denied, Mr. Speaker, without one scintilla of an academic or intellectual argument which has any merit whatsoever. How shameful. How shameful.

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

(1030)

**Mr. Romanow:** — But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, what this does show. This motion today shows this black Friday for democracy, this unprecedented attack on freedom in the province of Saskatchewan, maybe an attack on 26 lonely members of the opposition.

But I tell you it's more than that, Mr. Speaker. It is an attack on every farmer and working person and small-business person and every young person who has to leave this province. It's an attack on them as well as it is on us. They will probably get away with it here sooner or later. They will get it with the help of the press gallery, and they'll get away with it with the majority that they have.

But I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, and the members opposite, that they may win the day today sooner or later, but they're not going to win the day when the people have a chance to say come the next election in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Democracy, the right to speak. Who's to say that my speech is irrelevant — Dale Eisler or the Minister of Health or the Premier or the junior deputy leader? Who's to say whether it's irrelevant? They can make their comments upon that. I have a right to say what I think is strong about this province of Saskatchewan, or isn't. Nobody else.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — I've been elected by the people of Riversdale, I've been defeated by the people of Riversdale to come here and to represent their views as they see fit that I should represent those views, as I interpret those views. That is my obligation; that is my duty.

I did not get elected in 1986 to tell the people of Riversdale that I cannot speak in this House. I did not get elected by the people of Riversdale to say that I can't speak too long, or that I can't advance certain arguments because the member from Melfort thinks they're repetitious, because the Premier thinks that they may be repetitious. I am free to speak, Mr. Speaker, free to speak.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Free to speak, Mr. Speaker. The debate may go 120 hours. What if it goes 220 hours? Well, you know, it's summer-time. We should be all out; it's summer-time. Where should we be out all summer-time? Where should we be that's more important than debating this fundamental issue about the future economic direction than right here? Why should we be elsewhere?

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Tell me why we should be elsewhere? Why should we be elsewhere because the members opposite say, well, we've got to be doing other things; we'll have to be playing golf, or we should be doing other things.

I mean, it's not us who has put this agenda item before us on the government table here. It's not us who is trying to sell off the heritage of the province of Saskatchewan. It's not us that's trying to sell off PCS or trying to sell off SaskEnergy. We must respond to their initiative. Where else should we respond?

When we walked out after 17 days in order to grab some press attention and to bring this matter to the people in the province of Saskatchewan, when we moved ahead and we said to the people of the province, we are drawing to your attention, it was the Minister of Finance and others who said: oh, no, it's undemocratic. You've got to come into the legislature and you should be debating your arguments right here in the legislature. That's what they say, undemocratic.

And so here we are. Then we get to debate and the editorialists say . . . and the Conservatives say, no. It's undemocratic to debate. You shouldn't stay in here to debate. We should be doing other things. Enough is enough. You can't walk out to make the point, and you can't stay inside the legislature to make the point. Where do you make the point? Where do you make the point?

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Who are these people who say that we have no right to make a point? Who are they that they say that we cannot do it by going out to the people and explaining our point on the 17-day walk-out, and we can't do it inside the Legislative Assembly either because of this guillotine, this black Friday, this attack on democracy. Who are they?

Well I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that as far as I'm concerned you can attempt to muzzle me, the gallery can attempt to muzzle me, but as long as I'm an MLA in opposition, in defeat or in victory, I am not going to be muzzled by your people. I am going to speak for the farmers and the working people and the business people until we stop this . . . (inaudible) . . .

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — And you know, Mr. Speaker, this is not some sort of a housekeeping amendment that we're debating. This is not a non-controversial or even controversial Bill. This is a fundamental issue. Maybe the members opposite don't see this as a fundamental issue; I think they obviously do because they're guillotining it.

You know, they say there's going to be a debate. In fact, I noted with some amusement the member from Melfort getting up and saying, you know, now we're going to have the debate in the two days — which is of course another side of the guillotine which has been put on us, having been silent for the 80 hours, virtually silent, and we have about 12 members yet who have not spoken in this debate. Having been silent, all of a sudden, once they use their heavy-handed majority to guillotine us and limit us to two days, then they'll guillotine us even further. They'll now mount their speakers so that the two remaining days that we have left for argument on principle, they now of course are going to enjoin the debate.

Now the Premier's going to come to the debate. Now all of a sudden some of the ministers, the silent Sams of this government, the silent Sams who have no arguments and nothing whatsoever except to sit in the back benches and to say, aye, aye, captain; to sing the Hallelujah Chorus, now all of a sudden they're going to come forward to debate this Bill.

This is not a housekeeping amendment, Mr. Speaker, that I'm talking about. This is not an ordinary piece of legislation which we might even oppose or agree with. This is by everybody's accounts — the Eislars and the journalists and the public opinion people and those right here in the Assembly — a fundamental debate about the direction of the province of Saskatchewan.

Maybe our vision is wrong. Maybe our vision is wrong; maybe our vision is right. I don't know. I have a strong feeling about this matter. But I tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, I should have the right to be able to debate this because this speaks to the fundamental aspects of the PC Party's ideology, this Bill 20 debate, and the PC privatization ideology.

We started this legislature with the Premier saying that it was going to be the Alamo. There I go again, another example of repetition some member opposite's going to say. But that indicates how important the government made this debate. They made it the number one *cause célèbre*. And when we joined them in this issue to make it a number one *cause célèbre*, we can't do it. We can't do it because they're guillotining us.

Now I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is an issue which requires debate by all of the people and all the members of this House. But I say something else to you, Mr. Speaker. The fact that this government has not been able to carry public opinion with it, the fact that this government is resorting to this black Friday, this attack on democracy, supported by some editorialists in some of the newspapers, is proof positive that not only is this government discredited, Mr. Speaker, I say to you that it is discredited and that it is desperate. This is an act of political desperation, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — It's desperate, Mr. Speaker, because they know that the public has rejected their arguments. They know that the public has opposed the SaskEnergy; they know the public is opposed to the potash corporation sell-off; they know the public is opposed to the sell-off of SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance). In fact we don't hear about SGI right now. Mind you, mark my words, if the Premier should get re-elected, SGI will be on the chopping block too, in order to finish it all off. That's bound to take place.

They've lost all of those. They've taken a beating in this Legislative Assembly, not because of the opposition. They've created the circumstances, whether it's GigaText, or the Provincial Auditor, or SaskEnergy, those are their initiatives. They have defeated themselves because their arguments are mounted on a house of cards. It's not what the people of the province of Saskatchewan want.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — So, Mr. Speaker, discredited and desperate, this government has no other choice. It resorts to the actions of a bully. It resorts to the actions of coming down and guillotining of the opposition here. It's an act of desperation, so not only, Mr. Speaker, is this coming from a discredited government, this is coming from a government which is desperate, Mr. Speaker, and that makes this action this morning all the more illegitimate and all the more reason why we should oppose it and vote against it.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to canvass for a few moments what are the reasons behind the government motion? Well I've already alluded to the fact that the government's number one agenda item is privatization, we all know that; and the privatization of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, we all know that.

My colleague, the House Leader, who's done an able job for us in leading the House, Mr. Speaker, anybody who objectively analyses that will agree, I'm sure, whether you're a Conservative or a Liberal, or otherwise. But he said it so ably the other day when he said: Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the history of the province of Saskatchewan — well not in the history, but the recent history of the province of Saskatchewan — for the time, Mr. Speaker, we no longer have a minister of co-ops

sitting around the cabinet table working with people and co-op's policies, but for the first time we now have a minister of privatization sitting around the cabinet table.

That indicates exactly what this government is all about — privatization, privatization. They've forgotten about roads. They've forgotten about hospitals. They've forgotten about medicare. They've forgotten about education. They've forgot about social services. They forgot about jobs. They forgot about the population drain. They forgot about young people. They forgot about rural Saskatchewan. You travel anywhere in rural Saskatchewan and the desperation that is there, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely enormously forgotten because they are so ideologically blinkered by their privatization mania — their sell, sell, sell of the province of Saskatchewan, their death wish, their suicide pact almost. They are embarking upon a scorched earth policy, Mr. Speaker.

You know, when we lost in 1982, as somebody once said, we left a legacy behind for this new incoming government, a legacy which I am sad to say they are now dismantling, but at least they had a legacy with which to work and to dismantle. I ask you, sir, to consider what kind of a legacy will they leave those who follow them, because mark my words they will be followed sooner or later, whether it's by myself and my colleagues or somebody after me, it doesn't matter. Sooner or later they're going to be followed.

And what will be our legacy as the result of this privatization mania? Is it going to be \$4 billion debt? Is it going to be a population of 700,000 people? Is it going to be an uncaring, unsharing society where those who are weakest get trodden on the most? Is it going to be a society where the free-market system rules, full stop, period? What legacy will that be for the incoming government?

In fact I tell you, the member opposite, at some point or other, the member from Economic Development had the right approach about this. I have here in front of me a Moose Jaw newspaper article talking about this question of privatization. It features the Minister of Economic Development. I'm not to mention his name, except in the context of a report, which I shall do, Mr. Speaker. And this fundamental issue of Crown corporations, this is what they told us before the election in 1986. Quote — I'm reading from the Moose Jaw Herald:

But to debate whether or not Crown corporations should exist at all is an archaic question, Andrew said.

Now these are the internal quotes of the remarks:

It doesn't make sense for one government to build these things and for the next one to come and sell it all off.

And then Mr. Andrew went on to say, quote:

Its privatization is yesterday's theory.

Now I'm not going to argue privatization. We're not arguing privatization here, only inasmuch as it relates to

the closure motion. But what I'm trying to make by that quotation is that the Minister of Economic Development adopted the right policy for successive governments. Each successive government builds on what the previous one did, Mr. Speaker. When we took over from the late Premier Ross Thatcher, we built on what he did. We didn't accept all that he did, because there are differences, but we built. And when he took over in 1964, he built. Every government in the history of the province of Saskatchewan has built, except for this government. This government does not want to build. The minister of Economic Development says that they should be building; that's prior to 1985. That's his commitment that the privatization schemes would not involve the corporations like SaskEnergy.

He says we should build, but the moment they got into power, Mr. Speaker, they destroy, destroy, destroy. They sell, they burn, it's on a scorched earth policy, and I say, Mr. Speaker, when that government breaks the tradition and the role of the province of Saskatchewan, it's our duty to debate and to debate at length and vigorously, and that's what we intend to do, Mr. Speaker.

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

(1045)

**Mr. Romanow:** — I remember about the Premier going just a . . . Oh, it seems like a long time ago now. Some of the journalists seem to have forgotten about that. It's funny, you know, how you make these kind of statements, get a little bit of coverage, then we move on to something else. You see the cynicism in the whole process — how the Premier went to the Far East just a few months ago — remember what he was going to do on potash corporation, Mr. Speaker.

Well, he was going to sell 20 per cent of PCS to India, 25 per cent he was going to sell to the Koreans, another 25 per cent to China, of course, then we put China on hold temporarily. But, you know, we're not ruling China out yet. He went on to the Orient express and he said that's what he was going to do. He said PCS was an albatross. I'm going to be interested to know whether that's exactly the government position about it being an albatross, because that'll be an interesting thing to sell once PCS . . . If it is privatized, how are they going to sell that position to the investors who are going to be investing? But it doesn't matter.

And he said, as I've said before, this is your Waterloo. And you remember the Speech from the Throne. They're going to privatize Bill 20, PCS, which they've introduced. And in order to illustrate exactly what they're doing, they introduced Bill No. 1, which speaks to Bill 20, because it's the omnibus Bill. They did that.

Now why is the government doing what they're doing, Mr. Speaker, in the light of all this track record? Because when you go to the farm homes and when you go to the small-business people, and when you visit the towns and the communities of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden the boastful bravado is gone. All of a sudden the boastful bravado is gone, and now this



government doesn't know what to do. They know that the people of Saskatchewan are saying — talk about enough is enough — they're saying enough is enough. And this government doesn't know what to do. And so they have no more arguments and they've got no more political will and they have no more political support, and they are resorting to this resolution, Mr. Speaker, as a consequence. That is what's behind this motion, make no mistake about it.

They tried advertising, millions of dollars of taxpayers' dollars. They did something, Mr. Speaker, which is rarely done and for which I condemn this government. They sent out civil servants, Oscar Hanson, a respected civil servant, and others, ill-prepared and ill-equipped to enter into a political fight when they sent them out on the SaskEnergy privatization hearings. That didn't work; it was a bust.

Now they've got the Barber Commission out there doing the same thing. I've got my arguments with the members of the Barber Commission, but leave those aside for the moment. I think they're honourable people, each and every one of them, more or less. But it doesn't matter what they're doing. This government is going to privatize SaskEnergy come heck or high water, making the whole Barber Commission thing irrelevant. And that's failed now.

And then they moved with SGI and they say, we're not going to proceed because the public is against us, and so that has been stopped.

And so, Mr. Speaker, they're left with only one last single piece of privatization — that's Bill 20 where this closure motion is now coming, the Bill before us to privatize this Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and to stop the investors . . . to get the investors that are in Canada and elsewhere being involved in this operation. That's exactly what's happening.

And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that this is the last shred of support that they have for the privatization matter, the PCS Bill. That's what's really behind this. If they walk away from this, somehow they think that the public is going to say they've failed, and they've got to do it. Notwithstanding the fact that the public has rejected them from SaskEnergy to SGI, they say they've got to do it. That's what's behind this closure motion.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the PC members opposite appear to have ignored the only sound piece of advice that their Premier ever gave them. Do you know what that was, Mr. Speaker? He said, don't say whoa in a mud hole. And they've ignored it. Well, Mr. Speaker, there they sit, stuck in the mud hole, a quagmire where the whole buggy and team is sinking, afraid to go forward, afraid to go back; unwilling to admit they've made a serious mistake; unwilling to debate us; unwilling to discuss the policies — not even willing to get off that old buggy and move on to things that people want them to deal with, which are roads and school and hospitals. That's where they're stuck.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — And so, Mr. Speaker, stuck in that mud hole. Someone should say the Premier should enter this debate and he should tell his troops, never say whoa in a mud hole. He's got to get this potash corporation, Bill 20, privatized because somehow in their own little minds in the back bench of this government they will have thought that they have accomplished or salvaged a bit of what is really a policy in gross tatters and large tatters.

That's the real reason for this motion, Mr. Speaker, the real reason — a desperate government, a government which is discredited, a government that has only one thing on its mind: the last salvation of its political timetable and its political agenda. It has become so concerned about its political agenda and its political timetable, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier and this government has forgotten that there's another agenda. And we're going to speak to that. That's the people's agenda and the people's timetable, and they don't want privatization.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — And one last point about the real reason about why the government is doing this, Mr. Speaker. The government has never tried to argue that there is any economic or social or policy reason that says this Bill must be passed by a certain date. I note that, Mr. Speaker. None. There is no urgency to this, yet it's closing off the debate, not having made a case out for urgency. None whatsoever.

But the people of Saskatchewan know that the only urgency in this case is the partisan political urgency of the PC government opposite.

And may I say one point before I move to the next segment of my remarks, Mr. Speaker. I invite the journalists — I don't expect the members opposite will do it — to take a look at the documentation which was tabled at the time that we went into the potash business in 1975-76 in support of what was being done. Reports by David S. Robertson of Toronto, respected international mining economist and mining engineer, of that thick, to justify . . . I ask you take a look at the documentation that we tabled at the time of that debate to what's been tabled by this government to show the economic justification for getting out of the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan. Not one document, Mr. Speaker.

Oh, there is the five-page Institute for Saskatchewan Enterprise document. It's there. This is the front group which Mr. George Hill organized. We all know that. Five pages, not even tabled in this legislature. How scandalous! How cynical! How unbelievable! In any other jurisdiction, that fact alone on this major fundamental issue would be cause enough for headlines and editorials written by the Regina *Leader-Post* to condemn this government to such a point it would never recover again. How scandalous! Where is it? Where is it?

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — So you have it, Mr. Speaker. For 80 hours they don't enjoin us in the debate; they condemn us

for speaking at length. For 80 hours they don't debate. They don't table the documents. They don't call anything else. They never called agricultural Bills. When they did, we moved right to them, even if we disagreed. I repeat again, we're prepared to do that with respect to every piece of legislation — right now!

If they tell us that right now they're going to stop, we'll deal with every piece of legislation. I tell that to the public. I tell that to the journalists. I tell that to you. They know that. We've been telling them down the line. I repeat that again. We're able to deal with every piece of legislation.

But I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the sale-off of SaskEnergy or the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, when it comes to the demolition of the province of Saskatchewan, there's only one group which can give the approval to this government to do that. That's not us, it's not them, and it's not you, and it's not the press gallery — it's the people of Saskatchewan and an election, and that's what we want to have.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to move to say a few words about the motion itself, the actual wording of the motion itself having examined the reasons for the motion and having said a few words about the Minister of Health's intervention in this debate, which I welcome.

And I want to just say, Mr. Speaker, if you take a look at the actual text, this is important as well because, Mr. Speaker, unreported but factually so, is that this is worse than the use of closure, although it's the same thing as closure. It's worse — that's why they've done this.

If they followed the rules which everybody agreed upon, and which closure is in the rules, then they'd have a mechanism, according to the agreed-upon democratic system, to achieve their objectives. But they didn't even do that. No, they're not doing that.

Arrogant, arrogant, dictatorial and undemocratic, they throw the rules on closure and the rules out the window and they come in with this motion which we are debating, which, Mr. Speaker, is even worse than any closure rule that this government, under the rules, might be able to contemplate. Worse. That's what they're doing.

Why? Again I come back: why? Just examine the reasons why. Well we've been here too long. The speeches have been repetitive. The speeches have told us everything that we don't want to hear. We don't have the patience to listen to repetitive speeches. We want to be doing something else. We are members of the Legislative Assembly, but don't let us be bothered about little things about being members of the Legislative Assembly. That's the reasons that have been advocated here. That's what's been happening here, Mr. Speaker.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, in a civilized society the opportunity and political freedoms have been the foundation of our parliamentary traditions and institutions. I could cite you noted academic writer and

scientists and constitutionalists for ever.

I'd like them to cite me another one to the contrary point of view, which talks about the right of democracy and opposition to filibuster — I hate that term, but let's even accept it — to speak on the issues as long as you want. Every system acknowledges that. If there's a change in those rules, it's to be done by the consent of all of the players of the game, not by one side only. And we're prepared to consider that.

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

**Mr. Romanow:** — I want to quote one. Whether you agree with this person or disagree, this is an eminent Canadian, Mr. Speaker, on this motion, an eminent Canadian. At his advanced age, this person still writes and reads and thinks, and has intellectual arguments which are impossible to rebut in many instances — Eugene Forsey, Professor Eugene Forsey, Senator Forsey from Ottawa. Here's what Forsey says about this issue of the right of a civilized government and a civilized society to debate. He says this, quote, and I underline these words to the members opposite:

Parliamentary government is not just a matter of counting heads instead of breaking them. It is also a matter of using them. It is government by discussion, not just by majority vote. Parliament is not just a voting place. It is also, pre-eminently, essentially, a talking place, a *parlement* (in the true meaning of the word).

Now the members say, discussion. Where has been their discussion in this operation? Where has been their discussion? The member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, has he entered in this debate on this main motion? I don't know if he has or not; whether he has or hasn't, I don't know. He thinks that some sort of shortness of speech is virtuous. Well I've got to admit that in his case, a short speech is . . .

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

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Level of interruptions is rising a bit too much, and I ask you to allow the member to continue.

**Mr. Romanow:** — So what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that debate, if you take the Forsey position, is a fundamental right. And there's another fundamental right, Mr. Speaker, and that's the right of the opposition to oppose. It has an obligation and a solemn duty to oppose. That's our job, is to oppose; if we had no opposition to oppose, to ask the questions, even if they are 70, 80 per cent irrelevant in the minds of some people, imagine what kind of a democracy we would have if we didn't have an opposition. Imagine what kind of a society we have when the pressure on us by the media and by the government by this motion is to say, you cannot oppose as you see fit to oppose within the rules of the system of opposition. This is the way to put up the most fully explained position on the most controversial issues. We don't filibuster every Bill. We don't filibuster every motion. We don't abuse the rules, Mr. Speaker.

Let me close before you call 11 o'clock by just giving you one quotation which I think sums up this theme that I'm trying to elaborate, very well, by Mr. M. J. Coldwell, leader of the CCF. Again, I don't care what the ideology is, a respected intellectual and a person who gives thought to what this institution's about. And he wrote the following, talking about this duty of the opposition to scrutinize carefully every proposal of the government, and get this:

... to use every means, including those laid down in our parliamentary procedures, to bring about a proper and adequate discussion.

(1100)

That is our duty, and that's what we've been doing, Mr. Speaker. And that's what we intend to do, Mr. Speaker.

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

**The Speaker:** — Being 11 o'clock, the House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The Assembly recessed until 1 p.m.