

The Assembly met at 2:00 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Van Mulligen, chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presents the sixth report:

Your committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act, be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for clause-by-clause consideration.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Mr. Speaker, I want to make just a few remarks, and at the conclusion of my remarks I'll make the motion that the report be concurred in.

I just want to explain to members what this report is all about. What it is, is a request from the Public Accounts Committee to the Legislative Assembly that the Assembly consider at the conclusion of second reading debate on Bill 53 that, as opposed to normal procedure which is to refer the Bill for study to a committee of the whole House, that it refer the Bill for clause-by-clause study to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, where it will then be considered and then sent back to the House with a recommendation.

The Bill — and I don't want get into any debate on the Bill — but the Bill itself contains essentially four changes to the Act which governs the Provincial Auditor — Bill 53. One is to do with the term of appointment for the auditor, which has been a lifetime appointment, is proposed to be a six-year appointment with an option to renew. It also clarifies the qualifications for the Provincial Auditor. I believe it expands the various memberships or the qualifications that an auditor can bring to the job.

Thirdly, it proposes to provide the Provincial Auditor with an expanded mandate on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, with additional powers and responsibilities to conduct value-for-money audits of government operations. And that is in addition to simply determining whether expenditures are in accordance with the edicts of the House, also whether or not the people of Saskatchewan, the taxpayers, have got good value for their money in the expenditures that were made by the government.

And fourthly, there is another change that proposes to change the way in which the auditor's office is funded. As of now, or up until this spring, the office of the auditor had been funded by a vote of the Legislative Assembly. And the change has been made to have the moneys for the auditor's office be provided through the Board of Internal Economy, the same as other offices which report to the Legislative Assembly as opposed to the government.

That's the Bill that is before the House, and that is the Bill that we're asking the members to refer to the committee for clause-by-clause study. And the reason that we've done that, Mr. Speaker, is that, first of all the committee structure is such that it expands the possibility of witnesses that can be called before us. In Committee of the Whole, the only witness that we in effect hear from is the minister who answers questions from members about a Bill. In the committee, in addition to hearing from the Minister, we can hear from a deputy minister, we could hear directly from the comptroller, we can also hear from the auditor himself as to how he views the legislation. I might say that, from what I understand, he views it positively, as we view it positively on this side of the House, and I assume on that side of the House.

But anyway, it expands the opportunity for witnesses to be heard, and perhaps also others that we may see as necessary to be called into this.

Secondly, the atmosphere of the committee is usually somewhat different in the House itself. The proceedings are usually more informal than the House. We don't quite have the pressure cooker, hothouse atmosphere — highly charged, political atmosphere — that the House has. And so that in a more informal way, the committee feels it can assist the Assembly by considering the Bill.

Thirdly, the structure of the committee also engenders greater involvement on the part of members and especially, in this case, members who belong to the governing party. The structure and the Committee of the Whole generally means that most of the questions are put by members of the opposition to a minister, and that gets into political debate at times. But in the committee there is an onus on all members to participate, and it provides a greater opportunity for members of not only the opposition but members of the government party to ask questions, to put forward suggestions, and should they so wish, to put forward amendments — something that is not as easily accomplished here in Committee of the Whole.

And I might point out for . . . you know it's understood by members in the House but perhaps by others who are watching . . . that there is a difference between members who belong to the governing party and members of the government and that they, the members, also have an obligation to hold the government accountable.

Finally it means that . . . well, Mr. Speaker, I would just conclude by saying I believe that this would pave the way for all members to be involved in the questioning and the clause-by-clause study.

But I might say that it would not preclude any opportunity for any other members of the House to participate in Committee of the Whole because, when the Committee is finished, it will report back to the Legislative Assembly. And the Legislative Assembly then can consider the matter further in Committee of the Whole so that other members of the House who have not had an opportunity in Public Accounts to participate can then participate as well in the Bill, whether it's questions or amendments or suggestions on the Bill or discussion on the Bill.

Members will be concerned, Mr. Speaker, about precedent. I might point out that the action that we are suggesting is of course action that's followed by parliament in a number of other jurisdictions where Bills and other significant matters are not necessarily dealt with by the House in Committee of the Whole, but are referred to appropriate standing and other committees of the House for review and report back to the House.

I might also point out that in 1983, Mr. Speaker, there is a precedent of the House, at which time the House, on the motion by the Hon. Bob Andrew at the time, who was the minister of Finance, moved that an Act, Bill No. 48, which was also an Act respecting the Provincial Auditor, be read a second time and then referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for review. We've reviewed this and in fact the Public Accounts Committee did review the Bill and then sent it back to the House, I believe, the very next day with its recommendation on that, and allowed the committee to have a very meaningful role in the review of the Bill. So I think that there's good, solid precedent for this action.

Finally I might just say as an aside that I heartily recommend this kind of process for other Bills as well. I believe that the time has come to look for opportunities to involve all members of the House more meaningfully in items before the House. There are, for example, members of the government side who might not have had much of an opportunity to participate in the proceedings in the House who I think have very excellent qualifications and will add a lot to a discussion on a Bill. And these are not members of the government but members who have an interest and certainly a lot of experience to bear, and that is the reason that I believe the committee is bringing this Bill before you. And I might say that all members of the committee agreed in bringing this report before you.

So I will now move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by my colleague, the member for Cut Knife-Lloydminster:

That the sixth report from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll just take a few moments to speak on behalf of this recommendation from Public Accounts Committee. I'd like to indicate to you that it had been a unanimous recommendation from the Public Accounts Committee to have Bill 53 brought forth to the committee for study.

I know that there is a lot of confusion with the different types of accounting systems that is used throughout government and the private sector, and therefore some of the clarities have to . . . or should be brought forth to the Public Accounts Committee, and indeed by that it is showing an openness to the public of Saskatchewan. Because since 1982 the public for the first time were allowed to enter those particular committee meetings along with the press and take part in the hearings of the auditor's report.

I think it's just another step to more openness and reform in the province of Saskatchewan. I believe, Mr. Speaker,

that people will also be able to gain a better understanding for what Public Accounts is all about — the expenditure of government — and it will give people a better understanding what the Provincial Auditor is all about.

I know in my particular riding, and I suppose it's not anything unique, I believe it might be across this province, that a lot of people say, well the Provincial Auditor works for the Department of Finance. The Provincial Auditor does not work for the Department of Finance. He represents all members of this Legislative Assembly and he reports through you to this Assembly by way of the auditor's report. And therefore I think that probably what we are recommending here today, Mr. Speaker, is just again a sign of reform in the province and indeed what's happening right across the country, and what people in the public of this province is requesting of all politicians and all parties these days.

And I believe it's one move that I hope will be taken into serious consideration by the Minister of Finance, and have it pushed onto the committee.

So I again thank you for few minutes that I've taken to speak on this.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to add some comments as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, and even more importantly as an individual member of this legislature, to the motion that was put forward in interim report from the Public Accounts Committee. The items that I want to touch on here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a number of things actually in regard to this report.

And I know the government is anxious to get on with other business today; that they've given notice that they're bringing in closure on Bill 61, the tax Bill in which they want to make sure that by the time today is over that they can bring in closure for the first time in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I know that they want to get on with that. But first they're going to have to listen to some of the comments I have to make in regard to The Provincial Auditor Act and also in regard to the interim report from the Public Accounts Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the background of the interim report. I think that's very important. And the member from Regina Victoria and the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster have alluded to that somewhat.

I also, Mr. Speaker, want to talk about the Act respecting the Provincial Auditor and the auditing of certain accounts. I want to also talk about the role of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk about the role and structure of the Public Accounts Committee. I want to talk about value-for-money auditing, and it's sometimes referred to as comprehensive auditing, Mr.

Speaker.

Mr. J.J. Macdonell, the Auditor General when I had the privilege of serving as a Member of Parliament, often referred to value-for-money auditing as a very important part of the accountability process. And he always talked about the three E's, Mr. Speaker — the economy, the effectiveness, and the efficiency of expenditure of the public's tax dollars.

I want to also talk, Mr. Speaker, in regard to this interim report, about the timeliness of the budget loop in the province of Saskatchewan, going through the steps from the introduction of the budget through the *Estimates* and then the *Public Accounts*, and the auditor's observation on that process. So I want to talk about that, Mr. Speaker.

But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about what else is needed in the interim report, but members of the government side would never agree to having included in an interim report to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — When we look at a government who has done more to erode the economy and the community of Saskatchewan, I think that it deserves some comment as to what should be in an interim report placed before the legislature and before the people in the province of Saskatchewan. When you look at the waste and mismanagement, people are saying, enough is enough, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Some of the things, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that should have been in this interim report are going to be mentioned here this afternoon. Now before I do that I want to point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Bill, Bill 53, that's being referred to the Public Accounts Committee through the motion put forward by both sides of the House here today — I commend that action — but I want to point out that in Bill 53, it does four things, Mr. Speaker. It defines the term of the Provincial Auditor to six years. It secondly gives the Provincial Auditor a reference that he must be a member in good standing of related professional groups.

And thirdly, an important move, it takes away the budget from the Legislative Assembly for the Provincial Auditor because the Provincial Auditor is really a servant of this Assembly, and there should be some removal of his own budgetary process. It puts the budget into the Board of Internal Economy so that they may review the Provincial Auditor's annual budget.

And fourthly and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, what Bill 53 does, is that it provides value-for-money auditing which I had mentioned earlier, and I'm going to go a long way into value-for-money auditing here today. Because value-for-money auditing is important so that people know that the government, who always has the weight of the majority, not only spent money with due regard for the legislative authority, but they spend that money with due regard for the efficiency, the economy, and the

effectiveness when they're spending taxpayers' dollars in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And some of the things that we have to look at, Mr. Speaker, would be items that should be brought out into the public. For example, in a publication I have here called: *50 Ways They Waste Your Money* — and that refers to the members opposite — they talk about \$27,089 to buy a Citroën. That's not a fruit, Mr. Speaker, that's a luxury European automobile for the Conservative government's agent-general in London. That's a former cabinet minister, one Paul Rousseau, Mr. Speaker.

I want to also talk about the need to have examined the \$7,327 that was spent on airfare for a trip by the Premier and the Deputy Premier from Regina to Minneapolis and then to Edmonton and New Delhi and Kathmandu and New York and Frankfurt.

Also, Mr. Speaker . . .

An Hon. Member: — What were they doing there? Does anybody know?

Mr. Anguish: — Well the member here asks what were they doing there? We don't know what they were doing there, Mr. Speaker. But if we had value-for-money auditing within our system of the budgetary process in Saskatchewan, the people would know what their elected public officials are doing in places like Kathmandu.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — The interim report will also provide a way, Mr. Speaker — for the fourth point in value-for-money auditing that's contained within Bill 53 — to look at the \$17,423 in expenses run up by the Premier's office at Regina's Hotel Saskatchewan in one year. That comes from the *Public Accounts* of 1987-88. People in Saskatchewan wonder, Mr. Speaker, why can't meetings be held in the Legislative Assembly which isn't a bigger drain on the people's taxpayers' dollars. Why would the Premier have to use \$17,423 to meet people at the Hotel Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker?

How about, Mr. Speaker, the \$19,368 in expenses run up by the Premier's office at the Regina Ramada Renaissance Hotel in one year, Mr. Speaker, in the same year — in the same year.

People in Saskatchewan are saying, what is that for, Mr. Speaker? Why would they have to run up those expenses at that hotel? Isn't the Premier's office in the Legislative Assembly a good enough place to meet with people, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, I think we should look at the \$230,000 that this government spent buying and refurbishing a condominium in Regina, Mr. Speaker. I think we should look, Mr. Speaker, at the \$137,000 this government allowed Guy Montpetit to spend on a condominium for Dr. Paillet when he was running GigaText in the province of Saskatchewan and trying to translate the laws of Saskatchewan from English into French with artificial intelligence, Mr. Speaker.

And the artificial intelligence didn't exist, my fellow members. It didn't exist. It cost us over \$5 million for that experience, Mr. Speaker. And the members opposite are the ones responsible. People in Saskatchewan are saying, enough is enough, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, it's time we talked about the unprecedented patronage in the province of Saskatchewan through value-for-money auditing, Mr. Speaker. What about Stan Korchinski, the former Progressive Conservative member of parliament, who was supposed to advise the Devine government on how to lobby the Mulroney government. They hired a defeated PC (Progressive Conservative) member of parliament who lost his nomination, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The hon. member has indicated in his remarks that he intends to make remarks which are going to be a very wide-ranging nature covering very many different issues. I would just like to make these few remarks.

The Bill itself, in general terms, can be referred to in order that the hon. member can make his case why the Bill should go to Public Accounts Committee; however, not discussed in depth. The report of the Public Accounts Committee itself of course can be discussed because that's the motion we're debating.

The Provincial Auditor's report is not acceptable for in-depth debate because the issue we're discussing is the report itself or the report of the Public Accounts Committee. The in-depth report of the Provincial Auditor is not the issue we're discussing right now.

And therefore I wish to draw that to the attention of the hon. member for The Battlefords who, in his opening remarks, has indicated that he intends to carry on a very wide-ranging debate on the Provincial Auditor's report . . . not on the Provincial Auditor's report but the report on Public Accounts.

Why is the hon. member on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Hodgins: — Mr. Speaker, out of respect for all of our guests in the gallery, I would seek leave of the Assembly to move to introduction of guests. And if it is the preference of the opposition to revert back to the business now at hand, that's certainly fine. But I would ask for that leave to move to introduction of guests, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — In the spirit of co-operation and I guess the wish to introduce guests, we would give leave to introduce guests at this time, but remain on this point on the agenda.

The Speaker: — It is agreed with the understanding that we revert to the present business at hand.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just

would like to introduce to you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly the president of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses and one of her executive members who are in the gallery, the east gallery, Mr. Speaker. As members in the legislature will know, all of our citizens will know Ms. Stuart is very much involved in leading her members in part of a democratic process just now in our province.

And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming her, other members of SUN (Saskatchewan Union of Nurses) to the gallery today to watch how the democratic process is carried out in this forum.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Simard: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too on behalf of the New Democratic opposition, would like to welcome Pat Stuart and Joan Fockler and any nurses who are in the gallery. I'd like to welcome them to this Assembly.

They have been keenly interested, I know, in the proceedings here and are presently out on strike protesting this government's underfunding of the health-care system and the many job lay-offs that they've suffered as a result of government underfunding of health care.

So I know that these nurses are the front line workers, Mr. Speaker, with respect to health care. They see the situation that exists in our hospitals today, and that is very much a part of the strike that we are witnessing in Saskatchewan today — is their protest with respect to patient care being jeopardized by government underfunding. Thank you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Martin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege and my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to all members of the House, 66 grade 10 students from Campbell Collegiate. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to introduce them now — they're sitting in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker — because several of them had to catch a plane at 3 o'clock. So it's nice to get this over with and have an opportunity to talk with them after.

Mr. Speaker, the teachers are Peter Charles and Pat Hanson from Campbell Collegiate; Norman Grant and Nicole Desrosiers from Matane. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll have an opportunity to meet with them in a few minutes, have our picture taken and meet with them in a few minutes. And I wish them well. Glad to see them here today and hope that you enjoy the remaining few minutes that you have, and I'll see you later for pictures. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gleim: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and through this Assembly 31 students from Ponteix, Saskatchewan, which is in my constituency. They're seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Along with these students from

Ponteix that are from grade 7 to 11, there are 18 exchange students from Acton Vale, Quebec.

I want to congratulate you and thank you for coming to visit us in the Assembly. And I hope you listen carefully and maybe some day you will have a chance to be in the position we are down in here. It is a great challenge I know, and I just wish you the best. And I'll be meeting with you for pictures and drinks later. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hopfner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today, Mr. Speaker, to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, a number of Progressive Conservative candidates that are here in our legislature today. Some are sitting in the west gallery and up in your gallery and in fact, in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker. And they are indeed a bunch of bright, young men and women that have come all the way to Regina here to join us in a caucus, and I'd ask all members of the Assembly to please give them a warm welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My introduction very much follows on the heels or in the theme of what my colleague and friend from Lloydminster-Cut Knife did a few moments ago.

I'd like to introduce to you, sir, sitting in your Speaker's gallery, a group of 19 individuals who come from several ridings throughout the province of Saskatchewan and are very strong activists in the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that you and all the members of this Assembly realize that in politics everything depends upon the dedication of the volunteers. And none of us would be here if we didn't have the activists and the volunteers who devoted those endless hours and worried about all the cake sales and bake sales and getting the nominations organized and supporting some of the candidates.

We in our party have the same kind of dedication, and every year we have something known as a leader's club announcement where the top performers of the 66 constituencies in terms of memberships and fund raising are, if I may use this word somewhat immodestly, are honoured by the leader. And today the leader's club is meeting, and as part of the proceedings they are in the legislature to watch the proceedings.

I will not give all the names because time doesn't permit, but I would just simply ask you, sir, and the members opposite, in the spirit of co-operation and democracy, to acknowledge the representatives of the following six constituencies, 19 in all — I won't ask them to stand — but 19 representatives, six constituencies which have topped the membership role and the fund raising for us. And they come from the constituencies of Humboldt, Biggar, Shaunavon, Regina North West — of course I have to say — Saskatoon Riversdale, and finally Estevan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I think we can now proceed. If there are no further introductions — I see that there aren't any. I'm assuming that then we will, as agreed to, revert to the motion under discussion, under debate, and we will recognize the hon. member for The Battlefords.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Public Accounts (continued)

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And first off I want to say that I do recognize your intervention and how you do desire to have the debate more confined to the specifics of the Bill. And I suppose I did get somewhat carried away.

I had prior to speaking today, Mr. Speaker, I did have a number of things I wanted to put on the record in regard to the report. So I had looked at Beauchesne's, the Fifth Edition, citation no. 659, and I thought that point (2) of that citation gave me some leeway, Mr. Speaker, to be able to put on some of the things that I want to get onto the record.

But I will, Mr. Speaker, for the rest of my presentation, try and confine my remarks to the more specific items that you would like covered here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Yes, I appreciate the remarks of the hon. member for The Battlefords. And I would also like to perhaps clarify my comments about it.

I believe that the debate on this motion should . . . can discuss the Bill in a general term, once again so as to outline why it should go before the Public Accounts Committee, and the desirability of referring the Bill to the Public Accounts Committee and why the Public Accounts Committee is the appropriate place to review it. But I'm sure you'll agree with me that we are not debating the Provincial Auditor's report itself.

Mr. Anguish: — Yes, I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad you gave me clarification on that. And I will confine my remarks as best I can to the reasons why Bill 53 should be referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

And a large part of that has to do with the actual role of the committee itself, Mr. Speaker, and the role of this Assembly.

And I do have a few well-chosen words for the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. And if I deviate from what I'm supposed to be saying, I'm sure that you will call me to order again this afternoon during the course of the presentation I want to make, to have on the record here in the Assembly on behalf of myself, the members of my caucus, and the members of the Saskatchewan public at large, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill should be referred

to the Public Accounts Committee because the role of private members has to be strengthened within this Assembly. Far too long, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the heavy hand of government do things under the majority rule of this Legislative Assembly with little regard for the role of back-bench members of the legislature.

And I think by referring Bills to appropriate committees, not just the Public Accounts Committee but the Agriculture Committee, the Committee on Privileges and Elections . . . There are several committees of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, which very seldom, if ever, meet. I know that some of the committees have not met since back into the 1950s, for example.

And I would say that we have to strengthen the role of committees or else get rid of the committee structure entirely, Mr. Speaker. And I certainly do not advocate doing away with the role of committees. I think we should strengthen the role of committees, and therefore we should be referring Bills like Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act, to the Public Accounts Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Now, Mr. Speaker, we have to realize that the Public Accounts Committee is still not the ideal situation, but it's better than the partisanship that has happened over the past few years within this Legislative Assembly, where the opinions of back-bench members, whether they be on the government side or whether they be members on the opposition side, are very seldom if ever listened to by the Executive Council.

The Executive Council use far too often the authority and the weight and the clout that they have to override the public interest of members of this Assembly and members of the public at large, Mr. Speaker.

By referring this Bill to the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, we will involve at least 10 members of that committee in the discussions. We have on the Public Accounts Committee, 10 members, Mr. Speaker. Six of those members come from the government side; four of those members come from the opposition side.

And the importance that has been placed on the Public Accounts Committee historically, Mr. Speaker, is that a member of the opposition always chairs the Public Accounts Committee. It's not a government member that chairs it; it's a member of the opposition who chairs the Public Accounts Committee, and that would be the member from Regina Victoria who introduced the motion in the House here this afternoon. And of course the vice-chair would be the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster who seconded the motion here this afternoon.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's still the majority of the government on that Public Accounts Committee. But the Public Accounts Committee has seen — although rare — has in fact seen displays of co-operation in the committee. And I think the motion that comes before us here this afternoon — I'm sure all members will support — is an example of that co-operation amongst members

of the Legislative Assembly, regardless of the party he represents.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — This Bill in particular, Mr. Speaker, is appropriate for the Public Accounts Committee because the Public Accounts Committee functions in such a way as I'm about to describe.

The Public Accounts Committee takes references from the Provincial Auditor's report and from the *Public Accounts*, Mr. Speaker, to examine how the government has spent their money in the previous year. And now sometimes this is not very timely. For example, we have had situations in the Public Accounts Committee where we have dealt with budgetary expenditures . . . I should say expenditures in the budgetary process that have been sometimes two years and sometimes more than two years old.

We also look at the Provincial Auditor's Act, Mr. Speaker, and in the . . . or the Provincial Auditor's report. And each fiscal year the auditor does issue a report, Mr. Speaker — and, incidentally, they're getting thicker and thicker every year — on observations of where the government has inadequate financial controls. And the auditor also makes observations as to whether or not the government has spent money with due regard for the legislative authority that's been given to them.

And so with the auditor's Act coming up before the legislature, it's only appropriate that that Act would go to the Public Accounts Committee, because it is the Public Accounts Committee that deals most often with the auditor.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, you would know, as a long-standing member of this Assembly, that the Provincial Auditor comes to all meetings of the Public Accounts Committee. And every Tuesday morning and every Thursday morning the 10 members of the Public Accounts Committee get together. And we have Mr. Strelieff, who is a new auditor, comes there with his staff and we also have Gerry Kraus who is the comptroller for the Department of Finance or for the government, I suppose. And we examine the accounts.

And there's some very important things that happen in the accounts of government, Mr. Speaker. And I would just for a moment refer to an example of something that would be looked at by the Public Accounts Committee. We would look at volume 3 of the *Public Accounts*, for example, Mr. Speaker. And when I open volume 3 of the *Public Accounts*, and look at the Department of Environment and Public Safety, I find on page 119 where there are detailed expenditures to individuals, Mr. Speaker.

And when I look at this one name of an individual who was a deputy minister for the Department of Environment and Public Safety, I find that he was paid in the fiscal year 1989-90 a grand total of \$242,152, Mr. Speaker. Now this particular deputy minister, we don't know why he left the employ of the government of Saskatchewan, whether he was terminated or whether he left of his own accord.

But the Public Accounts Committee would ask, Mr. Speaker, why did this individual get paid \$242,152 in the fiscal year 1989-90, Mr. Speaker?

We would ask questions like: was it severance pay? If it was severance pay, Mr. Speaker, did this person go on to another job or is it the same kind of severance pay that was paid to people like the trade minister in Minneapolis now, the former member of this Assembly from Kindersley. Or was it a similar severance package like was paid to the member, former member from Indian Head-Wolseley who's now over in Hong Kong, Mr. Speaker? Does this mean that these people are just drawing more from the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan?

And I know that members on the opposite side get a little upset because I do realize that you want to bring in closure on the tax Bill, the biggest tax grab in the history of the province, but just bear with me, Mr. Speaker, just bear with me on this.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Why is the hon. member on his feet?

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, just on a point of order, as we had concurred . . . the member is a part of Public Accounts Committee. We had already established the fact that this would be just an interim report to the committee with a recommendation. The member is babbling on regarding things that have . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I wish to interrupt the hon. member, to draw to the hon. member's attention that we should consider carefully the words we use when we refer to other members in the House. And I'm drawing this to your attention not only for your benefit but for the benefit of all members so that our debate flows in as smooth a manner as possible.

Mr. Hopfner: — I'm sorry, I'll just finish my point of order, Mr. Speaker. But the member is a member of the Public Accounts Committee. We have discussed the whole format of why we brought this interim report here to the Assembly for the recommendation for the auditor's Bill to come forth to the Public Accounts Committee.

The member is going at great lengths of things that have already been asked of the Provincial Auditor in the Public Accounts Committee. And those particular points have already been asked or can be asked in the forum of the Public Accounts Committee that is already in session. The member is really, Mr. Speaker, dwelling at great lengths away from what the interim report of the Public Accounts Committee had recommended here in the first place.

(1445)

Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, I want to comment upon the member's point of order, if one could be so generous. While I think the member's comments, the member from The Battlefords' comments were clearly in order — he was talking about the Bill in the committee — relevancy is going to be an issue I think in the next few days. And it's going to be important I think to what we're doing and to the relevance of this legislature to the public. And I think

your decision on relevancy is very important. It transcends the importance that it would normally have.

I have the view that what we are dealing with in the next few days in a general sense is the ability of this legislature to discuss issues of concern and to bring the public point of view to bear on the issues of the day. I therefore think that we need to consider the issue of relevance very important because if we narrow the debate on any given subject down — this one included — if we take a very narrow focus we will frustrate the ability of the legislature to bring public opinion to bear on the subject.

I have some quotations with the general comments, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask you to consider a quotation from Erskine May. I want to refer to Beauchesne's in a moment but I sometimes find that Erskine May has a more philosophical, if you like, approach to it and I think that's important in this context.

He says quite properly on page 372:

A Member must direct his speech to the question under discussion or to the motion or amendment he intends to move, or to a point of order.

He can't wander around and discuss whatever the spirit moves you. It does say however:

. . . when bills, in the charge of the Government, dealing with subjects bound together by a common principle, stand in a series upon the Notice Paper, debate on the first bill may include a discussion of bills of a cognate character.

It seems to me what this says is if Bills are related in their subject matter, you're not necessarily restricted to strictly focusing on one Bill because the principle may be intertwined with that of other Bills.

Thus I think the member when he's talking about the Provincial Auditor . . . this is a different subject, this is the Provincial Auditor. It goes — and I'm not going to make his arguments for him, but it's relevant to my point — it deals with the *Public Accounts* consideration of the jurisdiction of which should be given to the Provincial Auditor. And that's directly germane in our view to the whole issue of waste and mismanagement and thus Bill 61.

So I want to make the argument and I want to ask Mr. Speaker to consider it very carefully because I think it's important to the view people have of this legislature. I want you to consider very carefully the importance of this principle and that is that when Bills are related in nature and stand together, then one ought to be able to discuss the general principles which includes them all and not in an artificial way try to restrict your focus to one of those in several related Bills.

I just want to make one other comment before I take my seat and that is a Beauchesne's, and I think this ought to be an overriding principle in any of Mr. Speaker's decisions. "Relevance is not easy to define." And this is the subject I want you to consider on page 136, rule 459(1):

Relevance is not easy to define. In borderline cases the Member should be given the benefit of the doubt . . .

So I'd ask you to take that into consideration as well, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. I appreciate the hon. member's point of order and I appreciate the hon. member from Regina Centre's arguments. I think that they have both put forward particular views and they have put them forward with sincerity.

As it pertains to this particular debate, which we must recall is a debate on a committee report, on a committee report — not a Bill but on a committee report — let me express to you these views.

Members will have further opportunities to fully debate the broad and detailed issues raised by the Bill — further opportunities. For example, the Bill, Bill 53, is currently before the House at the second reading stage. The second reading debate has not been concluded, and members may speak to it at length at that time.

If indeed the Bill is referred to the Public Accounts Committee, then members will have a further opportunity for detailed, clause-by-clause debate. In addition, the whole House will again have the opportunity to debate these issues in Committee of the Whole and at the third reading stage.

Therefore I must rule that this debate should be strictly relevant to the Public Accounts Committee request which is contained in one simple sentence as follows:

That your committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act, be referred to the Public Accounts committee for clause-by-clause consideration.

And the motion before us which reads:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

So you see, sir, we are not discussing the Bill itself. We are discussing the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

I've listened to your arguments on relevance carefully, and of course those are important arguments. However I also would like to draw to your attention citation 657 in Beauchesne's Fifth Edition, page 205, which reads:

When the House is debating the report of a committee, it is not competent for a Member to open the whole subject matter that was originally referred to the committee.

And therefore, you see, this is a different type of debate than what the hon. member for Regina Centre was

referring to.

Mr. Anguish: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll certainly honour your ruling on that. And I can understand wanting to stick to the specifics of the debate as you guide, and that's your role in the Assembly here is to guide the debates so there is some decorum and rules under which we can all operate.

I do though want to on behalf of my constituents express some concerns I have this afternoon, and I will try and keep those expressions relevant to the debate. And there are some reasons to support this motion and, on the other hand, there may be other reasons not to support the motion. I think though right now I will speak from the aspect of wanting to support this motion.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for wanting to support this is that this Assembly doesn't really have the chance to get into a lot of detail, Mr. Speaker. And the reason it doesn't have a chance to get into a lot of detail is because of the diverse interests that this House must encompass.

We deal with statutes, Bills that cover a wide, wide range of law in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact that's the role of this Assembly and we couldn't get bogged down with the budgetary process itself, otherwise the system in Saskatchewan would certainly come to a standstill. And I'm sure that people like the Government House Leader understand that very well. They have to continue on the business of the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

So when a Bill like this is referred to committee, you get an opportunity to look at greater detail, and that's true, so we don't have to go into detail. But just the example I was using, Mr. Speaker, of this one particular individual getting a payment of \$242,152 — chances are that that may never come up in the Legislative Assembly itself, Mr. Speaker. Oh, it might come up in question period, but maybe the members on this side might think there's something of greater importance on the day that that particular question is brought forward. And there could well be.

And it may never come up in the estimates process, Mr. Speaker. But it's certain that a question surrounding something like a huge payment like that to one individual would certainly be looked at in detail in the Public Accounts Committee.

We don't have the luxury of deviating to other items in the Public Accounts Committee such as we do in this Assembly. But in the Public Accounts Committee, if it's in the *Public Accounts* . . . there's three volumes to the *Public Accounts* each year. They're supposed to be put forward very close to the end of the fiscal year which is always March 31. But this government seldom if ever does that. But if it's referred to us in one of the three volumes of *Public Accounts* or the Provincial Auditor's report which is done after the end of each fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, we can look at that in great, great detail.

Mr. Speaker, the other reason it's important to have this Bill referred to the committee is the knowledge of members on both sides of the House as to the importance of the role of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

The knowledge of members opposite and on this side of the House . . . the 10 members that are composed of the committee have a fairly good understanding of the authority, the responsibilities, and the role of the Provincial Auditor. And I know that that's not encompassing to all members of this Assembly when it comes to the *Public Accounts* and to the auditor, Mr. Speaker.

And I give you an example of that. The auditor puts out this report so that the government and the Assembly — mainly the Assembly because the Provincial Auditor is a servant of this Assembly, a watch-dog of the public purse . . . the auditor can detail in here things that the government should do in their financial management to make it better or to correct deficiencies that the Provincial Auditor and his staff find within the operations of government and Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

But it is difficult for the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, if the auditor doesn't have the respect of all members of the Assembly. And we've seen in the past where the former member from Kindersley attacked the provincial auditor in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It was a shameful display on an officer of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. He had to publicly apologize to Willard Lutz, the former provincial auditor, Mr. Speaker. And I can imagine the stress and the discomfort that that particular cabinet minister caused Mr. Lutz and his family.

Mr. Speaker, we now have Mr. Strelloff as the Provincial Auditor and he is a professional just like Willard Lutz was before him.

And in the report, Mr. Speaker, we have a chance, and the public have a chance, and this Assembly in a non-partisan way should have a chance, to make things better in the accountability process of government, Mr. Speaker. And we can't attack people who bring bad messages or messages that are harmful or messages that are unfavourable to a government. The strength of the government would be in, Mr. Speaker, honouring the requests of the Provincial Auditor. If there's a deficiency, that deficiency should be corrected.

(1500)

And you see, Mr. Speaker, the reason this Bill should go to the Public Accounts Committee is that we have the luxury and the expertise on that committee to look at The Provincial Auditor Act amendments in greater detail and with greater scrutiny than the entire Assembly would have, Mr. Speaker. And I know that members on the government side and members on the opposition side want that to happen. But, Mr. Speaker, the things that will come out of the examination in the Public Accounts Committee will serve Saskatchewan well in the democratic process as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor each year when he publishes the Provincial Auditor's report sets out in the back of the auditor's report — I have here just as an example, Mr. Speaker, the 1986-87 Provincial Auditor's report . . . You turn to the back, Appendix I, and you'll find a copy of The Provincial Auditor Act. So those people that are truly concerned can determine what the role of the

Provincial Auditor is by statute. What is the law that governs the activities, the role, the responsibilities, and the conduct in fact, of the Provincial Auditor.

And now we have had before the Assembly, we've had first reading of Bill 53. Bill 53 is An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act. And we're asking that that be referred to the Public Accounts Committee. And I think that it's important, Mr. Speaker, we look at what the Bill actually does. And just in brief, I'd like to lay those out because I think it fits well into the argument that I'm putting forward here today, Mr. Speaker.

The first item of that Bill makes sure that the auditor's term is for six years, and I believe with the ability to be appointed for another six years. Now in the Assembly, something like that could get passed over very quickly. But it will not be passed over very quickly in the Public Accounts Committee because it may be determined by the Public Accounts Committee, by the wisdom of the 10 members present and voting, that maybe the term should be for five years or ten years, Mr. Speaker.

And you see the other thing that happens in a situation like that, Mr. Speaker, is that we have witnesses that come before the committee. We have the ability on the Public Accounts Committee to call forward expert witnesses. If we wanted to, Mr. Speaker, we could hear from the Provincial Auditor himself or a member of his office who the Act directly affects, Mr. Speaker. That's a good reason why it should be there.

But do you know, Mr. Speaker, it could be a very cumbersome — possible but cumbersome — process to have the Provincial Auditor appear to give testimony before the Legislative Assembly as a whole. Now it has happened in the past, Mr. Speaker, where witnesses have come before the bar of the Assembly to give their expert evidence on a particular situation. But it becomes a political show, Mr. Speaker. It puts it into the political arena. The Public Accounts Committee is, or it least should be, beyond that, Mr. Speaker.

If we wanted to call Kenneth Dye, the former auditor general of Canada, as an expert witness to the Public Accounts Committee, all that would have to happen is ten people — or in fact just a majority — six people would have to agree that we call Kenneth Dye before the Public Accounts Committee.

And he could provide us with expert evidence in his role as the auditor general for Canada. He has gathered expertise that very few are privileged to gather in this country, Mr. Speaker.

It's a very prestigious position. It's a position in which you are a select person to attain the position of Auditor General. Now I would think that we would have a great deal of difficulty convincing members of this House, all the members of this House, in sufficient time to get Mr. Dye before this Assembly to in fact look at Bill 53, the Bill that's the subject of the referral here today, Mr. Speaker.

But just six members would have to agree on the Public Accounts Committee, and can you imagine . . . and I'm sure that members opposite would be so excited to have

that quality of a Bill come out of the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that would happen, Mr. Speaker, is it would ease the burden that's placed on this legislature. Because of the very heavy work-load of the large number of Bills and the budgetary process, the estimates, and the budget speech and the throne speech — which I guess we didn't have this time round; we're still continuation of the last session that recessed back on June 22, 1990, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, the members on all sides of the House would be extremely excited, extremely excited about the quality of a Bill that would come out of the Public Accounts Committee because of the expert evidence that could be provided, the expertise of witnesses that could be called before the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker.

So people like Kenneth Dye would have very strong opinions as to whether the term of the Provincial Auditor should be for six years, as this Bill suggests, or maybe it should be for a different term, Mr. Speaker. Who knows that until we have a detailed look at the legislation that would be before the Public Accounts Committee.

The other thing that can happen, Mr. Speaker, is that I'm sure that if a member of the public felt they had a great deal of request and asked the Public Accounts Committee if they could appear before it, I'm sure that at least six members — the majority of the committee — would agree to hearing someone from the Saskatchewan public at large to provide expert evidence, maybe someone from a private-sector accounting firm, Mr. Speaker. Because we've got into a wide-ranging argument about private-sector auditors versus the Provincial Auditor and what their role is . . . I mean, when the Provincial Auditor points out that he in some years only sees 50 per cent of the revenues of government . . . or I shouldn't say government, of taxpayers' dollars, those expenditures, that's unbelievable.

And I think that if we called a private-sector auditor before the Public Accounts Committee, there could be a dialogue between the Provincial Auditor and the private-sector auditor or auditors, with questions coming in from members of the committee, the four members on the opposition side and the six members on the government side.

I think that would be important in resolving conflicts that happen like that, Mr. Speaker, between private-sector auditors and the Provincial Auditor and the role that he has to serve as the watch-dog over the public purse, Mr. Speaker.

So that again is another advantage of having that Bill come before the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker. Even a Bill like Bill 61, I think, may have some role in coming before the Public Accounts Committee — that Bill that the government members want to bring in closure on here this afternoon.

I think that the public could have greater input if there was a strengthening of the Public Accounts Committee and other committees of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt in my mind about that. One of

the greatest things in making democracy work could be for this Legislative Assembly to pass this motion and pass other motions that give greater responsibility, a greater role, to private members who sit on those public accounts committees, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor must be a member in good standing in related professions. That's stated in this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker. And let's look at how the Public Accounts Committee could better deal with that particular item than this Legislative Assembly could as a large collective group that gets tied down in partisan politics. And I know it would frustrate the member from Melfort from time to time in his role as the House Leader of the government, in wanting to get forward and put forward the business of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, as harmful as that business sometimes may seem on the public of Saskatchewan, just like the big tax grab Bill would be, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at this, there are a number of Acts that have to do with this Bill. And you see, we can never get them all together at one time in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, but we can get them together all at one time in the Public Accounts Committee with a number of people who have expertise. Wouldn't that be a great thing, Mr. Speaker? These Bills that are affected by this piece of legislation, they would have to be brought in. If you just bear with me for a moment, Mr. Speaker, I want you to know which other Acts would come in. We'd have to bring in experts into the committee.

But you look in particular to . . . the auditor must be a member in good standing in related professional groups. Well, Mr. Speaker, you have The Chartered Accountants Act. Mr. Speaker, you also would . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I know it's going to be rather difficult for the hon. member. The range of the debate is somewhat narrower than the members are often accustomed to. Let me read once again what we are discussing.

Your committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for clause-by-clause consideration.

And the motion before us at this moment reads:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

In other words, the issue I've just read. I'm bringing that to your attention again because I may have to intervene from time to time because as I say, the perimeters are not of a wide area.

Mr. Anguish: — I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker, and if I stray somewhat and you feel it's appropriate, please do bring me to the more appropriate debate.

Mr. Speaker, I was providing reasons as to why this particular Bill would be better dealt with in committee than before this Assembly as a whole. And I think that's

the argument that I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker.

The point I was on — and I do recognize I may have been straying — there are, as an example, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that have to be dealt with is that there would be a number of Bills involved at one time that affect this particular piece of legislation. I'm just trying to establish some relevancy here, Mr. Speaker. In the Assembly the mechanism is that we deal with one piece of legislation at a time. This Bill has to go in all good conscience to the Public Accounts Committee because it deals with several different Acts and we have the ability in the Public Accounts Committee to deal with several different pieces of legislation or several different items at one time, Mr. Speaker.

Just in terms of this Bill, Bill 53, that we're referring, Mr. Speaker, to the Public Accounts Committee or asking for it to be referred . . . And I'm sure by the time I'm done all members will support referring this Bill to the Public Accounts Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1515)

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I've read through the Bill. We have the financial management Act. We have the Legislative Assembly Executive Council and legislative secretaries Act. We have The Financial Administration Act, Mr. Speaker. We have The Tabling of Documents Act. We have The Certified General Accountants Act, and we have The Chartered Accountants Act, Mr. Speaker.

Now the point I'm making is that we have here one, two, three, four, five, six Acts that are consequential to the Bill that's being referred to the committee, Mr. Speaker. Now this Assembly has no format to get all of these pieces of legislation before the Assembly at one time. But in the Public Accounts Committee we do have that ability, Mr. Speaker.

In the Public Accounts Committee, for example, if you had here six pieces of legislation that are consequential to Bill 53, you could bring in one witness, expert witness, on each of these particular pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And you could have the Provincial Auditor himself or Kenneth Dye as the auditor general for Canada be a witness, expert witness, on the subject Bill itself.

And wouldn't it be great if you could have members of the committee question all of those people at one time so if there was something that was contradictory, Mr. Speaker, from say the witness that was appearing on the subject Bill to someone who's appearing as a witness for The Certified General Accountants Act, Mr. Speaker, that discrepancy could be cleared up immediately. Just immediately, Mr. Speaker, because they would be all there listening to the expert testimony at the same time. And you would have the verbatim transcript. You have the press there, Mr. Speaker. The whole forum is so opened and complex but yet simple, Mr. Speaker.

So the detailed examination of such an important Act that governs the accountability of the public purse should in fact go before the Public Accounts Committee, Mr.

Speaker, and not this Assembly where we don't have the luxury to be able to deal with the breadth and the consequences of a piece of legislation that's passed, Mr. Speaker. And just as a side-note, I think that this should happen for many, many Bills of the Assembly.

Another reason, Mr. Speaker, this should go before the committee is to give members a more meaningful role in their jobs as a member of the Legislative Assembly. Quite often I know, especially members that are back-bench members of government feel insignificant in their role, Mr. Speaker, because they don't seem to have any impact on the overall scheme of things. Of course they go to their caucus meetings and they make decisions with their colleagues, but quite often those decisions are already made at cabinet level, Mr. Speaker, and they're imposed on the back-bench members of a government.

And I'm not being partisan here, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that's happened with our government in the past. I'm sure it's happened with the Liberal government in the past. I'm sure it happened with the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) in the past, Mr. Speaker. But it's time to change that, Mr. Speaker. We have to make sure that the role of members of the Legislative Assembly is relevant and meaningful, Mr. Speaker. They have to have impact on the system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Far too long, Mr. Speaker, governments have been maintainers of a system that has been not very well serving to the people of the province. If we're to ever change the system, Mr. Speaker, we have to start here today, Mr. Speaker, so that the public in the province of Saskatchewan are respected and listened to by their members of the Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — That's another reason, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill should go before the Public Accounts Committee, to make the role of members of the Legislative Assembly meaningful in every way possible, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also think that it's important for this Bill to go before the Legislative Assembly so that we can establish a more at arm's-length budgetary process for the Provincial Auditor's office itself. And I do not have confidence, Mr. Speaker, that that will happen here.

Again in a non-partisan way I would say, Mr. Speaker, that a government would want to have control over the budget of the Provincial Auditor, but that should not be so. That should not be so, Mr. Speaker, because that Provincial Auditor should never have to compromise his position because of the cabinet pulling the string purses to choke the responsibility and the authority out of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — That should never happen, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we need to strengthen the role of the Public Accounts Committee in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — I'm confident, Mr. Speaker, if this Bill goes before the Public Accounts Committee that it will return a much improved Bill from what it is right now.

Mr. Speaker, I think that by putting this Bill into the Public Accounts Committee we will assure, we will assure in the future that the role of the Provincial Auditor is independent from government and serving to the Legislative Assembly and therefore the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, also I think that it should go to the Public Accounts Committee because of the aspect of value-for-money auditing, Mr. Speaker. Value-for-money auditing has been used by the federal government for a good number of years now. They make sure that there is due regard for efficiency, economy, and effectiveness.

Now again in a non-partisan way, no cabinet, no cabinet feels well served by a Provincial Auditor that not only looks at how the government spent their money and if they had the authority to spend that money, but also to look at the waste and mismanagement, Mr. Speaker.

That's what value-for-money auditing provides. And this government, Mr. Speaker, the cabinet, the Executive Council would never allow value-for-money auditing to pass, but the Public Accounts Committee would, Mr. Speaker.

We have on our verbatim transcript of the Public Accounts Committee — every member of this Assembly who has spoken in that committee — some indication that they support value-for-money auditing. But has there ever been a government in the history of the province that supported value-for-money auditing, Mr. Speaker? No, there has not been.

But the time has come when people in Saskatchewan say enough is enough. We have to change the system.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — The public feel that it is an appropriate place in the Public Accounts Committee; the members of the committee on both sides of the House feel that the Public Accounts is the appropriate committee. And we're asking this Assembly here this afternoon to also sanction that it is the Public Accounts that is the appropriate place, not in the hands of cabinet, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, the other reason it should be referred to the Public Accounts Committee is that we will strengthen the Bill. Mr. Speaker, we will make sure, when this Bill comes back from the Public Accounts Committee, that the Provincial Auditor has all the authority to go along with his responsibilities.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — The Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, will make certain that the Provincial Auditor doesn't just look at 50 per cent of taxpayers' expenditures by a government; the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, will make sure that the auditor has access to every single penny spent by a government or their agencies, Mr. Speaker. That's the commitment of the Public Accounts Committee.

That's what members on that side on the Public Accounts Committee want; that's what members on this side on the Public Accounts Committee want, is for the Provincial Auditor to have the authority to look at all the books. Open the books, is what people are saying, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — And, Mr. Speaker, pathetically that is not the case right now. The Provincial Auditor has reported in his annual report that he doesn't have the co-operation of government, for example. We would make sure when this Bill came back from the Public Accounts Committee that the government would co-operate with the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

We cannot allow politics to interfere with the job of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor and his good office and his good staff should be beyond reproach. There can be no perception that he is being interfered with by government. But he has been interfered with by government, Mr. Speaker. There are citations in his annual report of being interfered with, Mr. Speaker — information being withheld, Mr. Speaker.

The Public Accounts Committee would make sure that the Provincial Auditor could not be interfered with. Mr. Speaker, the public have the right to know.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — You see, Mr. Speaker, the reason the public has the right to know, through the Public Accounts Committee and then finally, I admit, through this Assembly . . . We have the right to know that this government has raised its revenue since 1982 by 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker. But the problem we're in today is that they've increased their expenditures by 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And they don't open the books to determine what those expenditures are.

Fifty per cent is hidden from the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. That's not good enough, Mr. Speaker. We need to know if it's waste and mismanagement that's causing this to happen, Mr. Speaker. The public has the right to know. And they're saying, enough is enough. If you've got four and a half billion dollars every year of our money, you bloody well better account for it — open those books.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I know the hon. member feels emotion.

I'm going to however . . . We're trying to restrain our comments even under great emotion and sincere feelings, and I'm going to ask the hon. member to withdraw that particular remark.

Mr. Anguish: — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, which remark? Could you just tell me which remark and I'll withdraw it.

The Speaker: — The remark referring to, the government bloody well should do something or other. That particular remark.

Mr. Anguish: — I certainly withdraw, Mr. Speaker. I had no intention of offending the Chair or the Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — I apologize for getting carried away. When I start talking about four and a half billion dollars of the people's of Saskatchewan's tax dollars that can't be accounted for, I tend to get a little bit emotional about that, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — You see, Mr. Speaker, in the Public Accounts Committee, if the Bill comes before there, we look at expenditures this year, the government's estimating total expenditures of \$4.8 billion — \$4.8 billion. We're just talking about the Consolidated Fund. Revenues, \$4,554,200,000 — \$4.5 billion in revenue.

(1530)

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, again I'd like to draw to your attention that the member is becoming very broad on his debate again and he's becoming very repetitious regarding the issue at hand here. And he's abusing his rights as an individual and I'd like you to bring the member back to the Bill, that Bill 53 that we had recommended to be sent back to the Public Accounts Committee.

The member is trying to mislead the public in this House about the fact that documents that he is reading from have not been set forth to the public. Those documents he is reading from are already in *Public Accounts*, Mr. Speaker. We are dealing with them in Public Accounts and what he is saying is not actual of what is in that documentation. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like you to rule on that.

Mr. Shillington: — I just want to point out, Mr. Speaker, you've been more than fair with members of all sides of the House. But I just want to point out, perhaps for the benefit of the member from Lloydminster as much as anyone, that certainly members can and do become repetitious, but I don't think the member here had. While he has not necessarily been concise, neither has he been repetitious. Members opposite . . . if the member from Lloydminster thinks he's repetitious, he ought to be a little more specific and not just make the comment.

The member from North Battleford is speaking about a

subject which we happen to feel is important and we think it's worth a little time in this Assembly. We think, Mr. Speaker, the member's not being repetitious nor is he being irrelevant. You have defined the limits of the debate and I think he's stayed within it. And I think his comments are appropriate and in order.

The Speaker: — I've listened to the hon. member's point of order and the member for Regina Centre and his response. I wouldn't at this point rule that the hon. member is being repetitious as such. However, I would once again draw his attention to rule no. 657 in Beauchesne's. And I'm going to read it again:

When the House is debating the report of a committee, it is not competent for a Member to open the whole subject matter that was originally referred to the committee.

I know it's a difficult concept perhaps to grasp, but once again I can only bring to the hon. member's attention that we aren't discussing specifics of the Provincial Auditor's report, or we aren't discussing specifics of the *Estimates*, which does restrict you, I appreciate; however that is the type of debate that is presently taking place.

And as I have remarked earlier, all hon. members will have sufficient opportunity on several different occasions to discuss items in detail and bring up many different issues at times when further opportunities are presented, for example, continuing second reading, if it's referred to the committee; discussion before the committee, Committee of the Whole, third reading — many opportunities as I mentioned earlier to discuss specifics.

But that opportunity, I'm afraid, isn't offered to you although perhaps the hon. member would like to. But this debate doesn't offer you that.

Mr. Anguish: — That's fair, Mr. Speaker, thank you. I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I do fail to understand though, the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster, that he doesn't understand the reason for this debate taking place here this afternoon.

Certainly part of the whole purpose of this debate, Mr. Speaker, is to give some strength and support from this side of the House to members on the government side who sit on the Public Accounts Committee. We should be wanting to put forward the strongest arguments possible to give the members opposite who sit on the Public Accounts Committee the ammunition and the strength to stand up to their own government when they have to, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — If something is wrong and harmful to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, it shouldn't matter whether you're a Liberal or a Conservative or a New Democrat or a Reformer or whatever you are on that Public Accounts Committee. You should stand up for the people of Saskatchewan — not your government, your cabinet, your Executive Council to tell you how to vote.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — So we want . . .

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

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, regarding the statement the member from The Battlefords has just made, I'd like to draw a point of order. The point of order I'd like to draw to your attention is the fact that the member has accused members of the Public Accounts Committee of not being part of that recommendation and this motion that is before the floor. There is no one on this floor of this legislature, be it the NDP opposition or any government member, Mr. Speaker, that are not willing to support this particular motion. And the member likes to make it sound like there are. I want to draw it to your attention that the member is speaking on behalf of every other member of this legislature and that's . . .

The Speaker: — I have listened to the hon. member and the hon member's remarks are not a point of order.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to continue on that point. Part of the purpose of this debate here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that all members who sit on that Public Accounts Committee have the strength of their courage and their convictions to represent the public interest in the province of Saskatchewan. And that has not always been the case. And I said that in a non-partisan way, Mr. Speaker — totally non-partisan. It doesn't matter who's in government, Mr. Speaker. The members who look at the *Public Accounts* of Saskatchewan have to stand for what's right not what's partisan, Mr. Speaker. That's the point I wanted to make to the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster.

And we have seen situations in the past, Mr. Speaker, to be quite frank and honest with you, where if a member of the government side voted with the opposition because they believed in it, they were not treated very nicely, should I say, by other members on that committee of the same political party, Mr. Speaker. And those things have to stop.

If something's right, it's right. If something's right, we should do it, Mr. Speaker. If something's wrong that's happening in government, we should correct it, Mr. Speaker. And we need a strong Public Accounts Committee with a strong Provincial Auditor to assure that the people's interests in the province of Saskatchewan are protected and not obliterated.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — One of the things that I want to touch on before I end my intervention in this debate, Mr. Speaker, is the strengthening of the Bill itself. We've gone through four items in the Bill — the four direct impacts that it has. There's first off, the term of six years, and we've dealt a bit with that. There's the Provincial Auditor must be a member in good standing in related professional groups, and we've dealt with that. We've talked about the Board of Internal Economy to review the budget of the Provincial Auditor, and there may be more that could be added to that but we've touched on that.

And fourthly in this Bill, it provides for value-for-money auditing. And there is much, much more that could be said about value-for-money auditing, but I know that this Assembly is not the proper place to do that today, Mr. Speaker.

There are volumes on value-for-money auditing. We could have a debate for many, many, many days, many, many months. In fact the debate about value-for-money auditing is going on for years across Canada amongst those in the public accounting profession, those provincial auditors and the Auditor General who are the watch-dogs of the public purse.

So I realize that that debate is far too complex to get into here, and that in itself I think, Mr. Speaker, is a reason why all government members and all opposition members should vote to see this Bill go to committee, Mr. Speaker, go to the Public Accounts Committee.

So we've reviewed those four items, Mr. Speaker. But I think that there's another area that deserves some debate here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and that is, what could be added to the Bill by the Public Accounts Committee to be brought back in reference to this Legislative Assembly, so that the housework that takes place in here could be much more streamlined than what it is today.

Now the Public Accounts Committee, once it got a hold of an Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act, the list is endless what you could do to improve Bill 53, Mr. Speaker. I would think that the amount of information that could be put into this Bill would assure the Provincial Auditor was very clear about the role that he has, and he would be absolutely certain that he had the authority to carry out that role and responsibility that he has to the Legislative Assembly and therefore the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Now I think one of the things that could be added into the Bill by the Public Accounts Committee — that wouldn't happen here because that encompasses too broad a range — is that the auditor could play a greater role in reviewing the budgeting procedures of the province of Saskatchewan.

You see, timeliness has always been a very important aspect of the budgetary loop, Mr. Speaker. And we have a situation today in Saskatchewan where sometimes these *Public Accounts*, Mr. Speaker, this annual volume that's produced, is not produced and yet they're starting to bring in next year's budget.

Well the whole idea behind the *Public Accounts* is so you can look through it and study it in the Public Accounts Committee in great detail and make recommendations before next year's budget comes out, to make sure you don't find the same pitfalls in next year's budgetary process, Mr. Speaker. But the timeliness is not there.

Now it would be possible, I suppose, that if The Provincial Auditor Act went to the Public Accounts Committee that we could hear professional, expert evidence that could tell us how to put in place the mechanism to assure us, for example, that if the fiscal year

ends on March 31, 1990 in this case, that we should have those *Public Accounts* by December 31 of 1990, Mr. Speaker.

That gives you a period of time in there of about nine months, if I'm not mistaken. Nine months should be enough time to prepare the *Public Accounts* for this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Nine months should be enough time.

But when did we get this particular *Public Accounts*, Mr. Speaker? We got this particular *Public Accounts*, not at the end of 1990; we got this *Public Accounts* into 1991, Mr. Speaker — long too far after to be really meaningful to the process.

And, Mr. Speaker, there is a list of dates that I want to just put out to you to assure you that this is unusual. And it's happened by tradition as to when this document is presented, but tradition has gone by the wayside lately. I don't know whether it's the rapid-moving technology or the burden on the Government House Leader, but tradition no longer means what it used to mean in our British parliamentary system, which is the forbear I suppose to our conduct in the way we operate here, Mr. Speaker.

But if you look between 1945 — this is as an example to stress the need for having this added in by the Public Accounts Committee, which we could do — between 1945 and 1970, Mr. Speaker, this *Public Accounts* document was put out in February of each year. All those years, 1945 to 1970, it always came out in February, the month of February.

And then you start looking at some of these dates in here, Mr. Speaker. It's not at the end of the year; it's not in the spring. Sometimes these documents, you don't get them for almost a year. Sometimes I believe it has been a year. I'd stand to be corrected on that but I think sometimes it's been more than a year for this document to come out to the public.

(1545)

And what a farce that is, Mr. Speaker. What a farce, when you've items where the budget for the government comes out before the public accounting for the last year. Mr. Speaker, how can you tell where all the money went? Where did all the money go?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — And, Mr. Speaker, you see the problem that happens is that when people don't know where all the money went, they don't want to give more. And now we're looking at the largest tax grab in the history of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So this loop . . . I call this the budgetary loop, Mr. Speaker. And the Public Accounts Committee plays a vitally important role in the budgetary loop. And the auditor is a vital link to the Public Accounts Committee to information, Mr. Speaker. That's where we get our information from. We get our information from the Provincial Auditor.

So we would want in The Provincial Auditor Act that this Bill does come to committee, that we make sure that this budgetary loop — from the budget, from the expenditures, from the raising of revenue, through to the accountability of looking at the *Public Accounts* — is timely, Mr. Speaker.

We would, for example, put into this Bill, if it went before the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, that the *Public Accounts* would be tabled by December 31 following the closure of any fiscal year, end of the fiscal year being March 31. And it wouldn't have to be the legislature assembled. That would be preferable. But if the legislature was not assembled, those reports could be in fact presented to you, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly. You're an elected member, now of that Chair, the position you hold, and I think that the Public Accounts Committee would see it as appropriate for you to receive the Public Accounts, if in fact, the legislature was not assembled, Mr. Speaker.

Because we can't allow a government to avoid public accountability just by not calling in the legislature, Mr. Speaker. You can't allow that to happen. So that's happened in the past, and I think that the public are a little tired of things like that happening, just a little tired of things.

But the Public Accounts Committee could deal with it because do you know that if the Public Accounts Committee wants to sit when the legislature is not in session, all they have to do is sit down and agree with it. The chairman of the Public Accounts Committee phones the vice-chairman of the Public Accounts Committee representing both sides of the House. They'll contact the rest of the members.

The members say there's got to be some accountability here and by gosh, Mr. Speaker, there will be accountability there, because the members of the Public Accounts Committee care about what happens with the taxpayers' dollars in the province of Saskatchewan. That's another reason this Bill should go to the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, because we can deal with it intersessionally. This Assembly does not have to in fact be in session, Mr. Speaker. So you see, tradition has gone by the wayside in terms of putting out the *Public Accounts* to this Assembly.

So I think that it has to be entrenched in The Provincial Auditor Act, Mr. Speaker — when it's going to be tabled, how it's going to be tabled, and to make sure that the process is timely so that a government does not bring in a budget before you can even account for the previous year's spending, Mr. Speaker. That is just not acceptable in today's society. That sense of Saskatchewan integrity has to be restored, Mr. Speaker, and the Public Accounts Committee and the Provincial Auditor can make sure that that goes a long way to having that restored, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that would happen in this Bill when it goes before the Public Accounts . . . I'm sorry I keep saying when it does, I assume that all members will want to be supporting the motion when it comes up, when everyone has had their chance to speak

on this motion here this afternoon.

And I think it's important to realize that if other members want to get up when I've concluded my remarks, they should feel free to get up and give their views on this particular Bill and the process that we are debating here this afternoon. All members I remind you, back-benchers included, have a right to get up and give your intervention on this particular and very important motion. I wanted to mention that, Mr. Speaker, to certainly make sure that they have their share of the debate as well, and the courage of their convictions to get up. And if they feel there are ways to convince everybody in the House to support this Bill going before the Public Accounts Committee, they should feel in fact free to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, there's another item that I think deserves mentioning here this afternoon, as to why this Bill should go before the Public Accounts Committee, that I don't think could be adequately dealt with in this Assembly, in this forum here. I understand it would have to come back and be approved finally by the ultimate authority of the legislature, but we could save an extreme amount of work for this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things . . . what I want to mention is that we need to review the accounting procedures within government, within the departments and agencies of the government, Mr. Speaker. I give you an example where the Provincial Auditor has some concerns, and that has to do with the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation, Mr. Speaker. Loans are given to the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation from the Consolidated Fund, Mr. Speaker. You would be aware of that. And in turn, the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation makes loans to hospitals, schools — to be specific, I guess, or to be more general — to capital construction projects. But then the Property Management Corporation shows that as an account receivable on their books when they make a loan. But they never get that money back in from the hospital or school, from the third party — that's correct expression — from the third party that they've loaned the money to. So the Provincial Auditor has a problem with the accounting process of government.

And I don't think that we can allow that to continue. The Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation has given no indication that they're going to correct that accounting procedure which is not in line, in the Provincial Auditor's opinion, is not in line with generally acceptable accounting principles. It doesn't fit in.

So if this Bill comes before the committee, we can make amendments that assure that the accounting principles in government, and the methods of accounting, the procedures of accounting, are in line with generally accepted accounting principles as set out by the accountants' association and that are accepted by other provincial governments right across this country, Mr. Speaker.

We have to make sure that the Provincial Auditor has the

authority to go in and say — in this case the Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation — say to them: look, you're doing something here that is not in line with generally accepted accounting principles, and I want you to correct that and this is how I want you to correct it.

But does he have the authority to do that right now? No, he does not have the authority to do that at the present time. And members on this side of the House, and that side I would hope, but certainly members of the Public Accounts Committee are very well aware of that, Mr. Speaker, very well aware of that. It has been discussed in committee.

So if this Bill gets to the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, we will make sure that it comes back with a mechanism by which the accounting procedures of government agencies and departments and Crown corporations will be standardized, Mr. Speaker. No good, not sufficient any more to have different methods of keeping the books in different places of the government, Mr. Speaker. Just not acceptable.

So we would assure — I know that members on both sides of the House sit on that Public Accounts Committee — would make very, very sure that the accounting procedures are consistent.

An Hon. Member: — And they're not now, are they?

Mr. Anguish: — And they're not right now. That's correct as the member points out. They're not consistent right now. It's a whole hodgepodge of different methods.

So we would make sure that there was expert testimony before the Public Accounts Committee to correct that deficiency that's pointed out by the Provincial Auditor.

Now this Bill has room for that type of an improvement in it. There's no question that this Bill has left room for improvement. And I think that the House would only deal with a very narrow scope of the things that are immediately rushed into the Bill. But if that Bill gets to the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, that's our role, to make sure that the Provincial Auditor can do the job that he has set out to do — to serve the people of this Assembly, and we serve the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

The reason I can speak with confidence that I know that that Bill would come back with something in it, Mr. Speaker, is that every one of the committee members, on the Public Accounts Committee, all 10 members agree that there's a problem there with the accounting procedures. So I know that when I speak here today, I do have the confidence that the members of the committee would have such a provision come back in the Bill. And I can't give you the exact wording of it. It would be presumptuous of me to do that, Mr. Speaker, to give you the exact wording. But the committee members themselves . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I'm giving the hon. member some bit of latitude. In effect the hon. member has been suggesting proposed amendments. I must rule that he's out of order. The purpose of the committee — that is the

purpose of the committee, not the purpose of this debate — the purpose of the committee is to suggest any possible revisions or amendments or whatever they may have in mind.

We're discussing the narrow issue of the motion that reads:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

We're not discussing all the possible changes that might occur to that Bill in committee. We're just discussing that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred.

Mr. Shillington: — I recognize I'm just a touch late. I should have perhaps suggested comments before you began to speak. But the member is giving the reasons for the importance of the reference of this to the committee.

Now I'm not challenging the Chair. I'm seeking a clarification. He's giving the reasons why it is important that this matter go to the Public Accounts because the Public Accounts can consider matters of a sort, and these are examples.

So I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if you didn't mean to restrict his discussion of the reasons for the importance of referring this Bill to the committee, did you?

The Speaker: — I'll address your remark. I don't intend to restrict the hon. member's discussion in any way. Far be it for me to do that.

However I also have the duty as the Speaker to keep the hon. member on the topic under discussion, and that is what I am attempting to do. The hon. member is beginning to introduce possible amendments. Well, as you and I both know, there are any number of possible amendments which are not germane to the debate under discussion on this topic. Let me read the topic once more:

Your committee recommends to the Legislative Assembly that Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act, be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for clause-by-clause consideration.

That's where all those considerations take place. And today's motion to effect that, reading:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

So in no way am I restricting the hon. member's ability to speak on the topic. I'm only trying to keep him on the topic, not off it.

Mr. Anguish: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. I know that I have ranged off of the specific topic of the items under debate here, but I tried only to do that in terms of example rather than describe in detail the differences between this Legislative Assembly and a committee of the legislature, going into detail about that.

I tried, and I thought it would be more topical and convincing for the members opposite and for people to understand . . . that would pay attention to what's happening here this afternoon. I thought it would be better to use examples, Mr. Speaker, and maybe I should try and limit the use of examples I make to try and make it a more interesting intervention.

(1600)

The Speaker: — I want to clarify again that it's not the examples, it's that the examples aren't relevant to the topic under discussion. Because those possible amendments and discussions of all the possible amendments are during committee stage, if the Bill is referred to the committee. That's the point I'm trying to make.

Now as I said earlier, you may propose any number of possible amendments but I can't accept that as being relevant to the debate today.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I thought we had a clear understanding before, Mr. Speaker, but I'll certainly try and honour the ruling that you make.

You see there are great differences, I suppose, between this Assembly here, where the debate quite often gets heated and tempers run short and people have very strong opinions . . . We deal with a wide variety of topics, of legislation.

I guess the main roles of this Chamber here, Mr. Speaker, are first off to preserve democracy and make sure that we do have a democratic society in Saskatchewan. A second reason that we have this Chamber here is to approve the appropriations for budgets and review budgets of the Government of Saskatchewan that are supposed to serve the people of the province. And thirdly, the role of the Assembly I guess is to bring into place laws, to amend laws, change laws, delete laws — to deal with the law-making process of the province of Saskatchewan.

And I think that the Bill should go to the committee and make the committee role more meaningful because we don't have as many stages, and the process is more meaningful in committee as opposed to here. I know that members here would understand, but people listening today may not understand the different stages that a Bill has to go through before it becomes law.

In here in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, a Bill is brought forward usually by the government and with the blessing of the Government House Leader when he works it into his very busy agenda — just like Bill 61, which may be a topic here today. But that particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, has gone through first reading. And basically that means that the government member or government cabinet member has stood up and introduced that Bill and very little happens on it. Usually no debate, sometimes there's a vote, sometimes there's not a vote.

And then it goes into something called second reading, Mr. Speaker. And during second reading is quite often where we get the very heated debates on sort of the

general principles of the Bill that's before the Legislative Assembly.

And then we have of course Committee of the Whole, Mr. Speaker, meaning committee of the whole House, where you look at the Bill clause by clause. We certainly haven't got to that stage yet on Bill 61, the new tax increase Bill. So people haven't had the opportunity to see that heated debate on a Bill that they very much oppose, but they should have the access to see that being opposed, because people in this Assembly speak of the public will and the wishes and desires of their constituents, Mr. Speaker.

After Committee of the Whole, the Bill is reported back and we get into something called third reading. And after third reading, at some point, Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor will give Royal Assent, and that Bill is no longer a Bill. That Bill becomes a statute.

And I think usually when people in the public hear some of these terms, they sometimes become confused with it. But a statute or a law in the language we use is interchangeable, it means the same thing, Mr. Speaker.

The committee, Mr. Speaker, doesn't go through all of those stages. Mr. Speaker, let me explain the difference and why the committee would more appropriately deal with this Bill than the Legislative Assembly. I think you would recognize that the procedure I described, if it's a controversial piece of legislation, can get to be quite a cumbersome process that needs to be gone through. Especially, I think, if it's a controversial Bill like Bill 61, where this government wants to bring in the biggest grab of tax, the provincial goods and services tax, in the history of the province. So that will be a heated, heated debate, Mr. Speaker.

But in the Public Accounts Committee there aren't all those hurdles to go through, Mr. Speaker. And you don't get into the partisan political interest that members quite often in this Assembly stand up and grandstand on to be quite honest with you, Mr. Speaker. In that Public Accounts Committee . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'm going to once more intervene and I'm afraid I'm going to have to continue doing it. The member discussing procedure, procedure, certainly isn't on . . . That's not relevant to the sixth report as proposed by the Public Accounts Committee. The member is discussing procedure and wandering from the topic and I'm going to have to keep intervening. But I said earlier that it's a debate with a relatively narrow scope compared to what members are ordinarily accustomed to.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I understand you to continue intervening, Mr. Speaker, on this particular case when I was describing . . . And I'm not questioning your ruling at all. I was trying to describe the difference from this physical place here, this Assembly, this Chamber where we all come and meet, as opposed to what the structure is in the committee, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. I once more draw to the hon. member's attention that the issue he raises applies to all

committees. That is not what we're discussing today. We're discussing Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act be referred to the Public Accounts Committee for clause-by-clause consideration, and the committee's presentation of the motion presently under discussion that the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts by now concurred.

You, sir, are off the topic, very clearly, and I must ask you to move to your next point.

Mr. Anguish: — Well one of the major reasons, Mr. Speaker, why the Bill should be referred to the Public Accounts Committee is the ease with which the Public Accounts Committee can deal with this particular Bill. And it's vitally important to us in this case because it deals with the Provincial Auditor.

You see when the Bill comes before the committee — and I stress again, I'm sure all members will vote to have this Bill go before the Public Accounts Committee — when that Bill arrives before the Public Accounts Committee, it will receive the highest priority of anything that we deal with in the committee, Mr. Speaker, the highest priority. Because without the good services and the strengthened role of the Provincial Auditor, it makes our job more difficult in the Public Accounts Committee. In fact, if the role of the Provincial Auditor was allowed to deteriorate, Mr. Speaker, you would find there would be a day when the committee would cease to operate in any kind of a meaningful way whatsoever.

And I think that this Bill should come before the Public Accounts Committee, because the day is rapidly approaching when we will find that the committee cannot get the information they need because of constraints that are placed upon the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. And we think that we have such a vested interest in this Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act, that we want to see this Bill come before that committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill will be dealt with with a higher priority than it would be in the legislature. Now the debate here this afternoon is, should this Bill be continued to be dealt with in the legislature only, in this Assembly, in this House, or should it go to the committee, the Public Accounts Committee?

I'm making the argument this Bill cannot get the adequate consideration and respect and high priority it needs before this Assembly because of all the meaningful work that the government has to do, and members of the opposition have to watch and contribute to, Mr. Speaker. But I make the argument this Bill should go to the Public Accounts Committee because every one of the ten members on that Committee feel that it should go there, and they would give it the highest priority of anything.

And it would in fact be the only topic before the committee until we had concluded our discussions and our input into it. And we would have the opportunity to make additions to the Bill.

The Bill that comes before the Legislative Assembly . . . I think I could count on my fingers, Mr. Speaker, the number of times there's been a change in a Bill once it came before the legislature. And I tried to talk about the different stages a Bill goes through, Mr. Speaker. I've seen very, very few changes made since I've been a member of the Legislative Assembly, or in my time as a member of parliament, Mr. Speaker. Very seldom, if the government brings in a Bill, do they allow any changes to it, no matter how rational and how valid those changes might be.

But in committee, Mr. Speaker, I tell you it's different because you're removed from the realm of politics. And in that committee we know right now that every member on the Public Accounts Committee wants this Bill to come before the Public Accounts Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — We know also, Mr. Speaker, that it would be the only item dealt with until every member had voiced their concerns, suggested any amendments, suggested even possible deletions, Mr. Speaker, to enact, to amend The Provincial Auditor Act. Because we know how valuable it is to us and we know how valuable it is to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, because it provides strength to the watch-dog of the public purse which is the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

Now just the mechanism in the way in which the committee works makes it non-partisan, especially when you're dealing with a Bill like this that is so important to the functioning of the Public Accounts Committee.

This particular Bill, I'm sure that the member from Shellbrook-Torch River would have input into it. I'm sure that the member from Biggar would make input into it. I know that there would be interventions from the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster. The member from Wilkie sits on the committee, and I know he has some very strong concerns when it comes to the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker.

I know the very capable chair of the Public Accounts Committee, the member from Regina Victoria, would make an intervention on this Bill when it comes before the Public Accounts Committee.

I know that the member from Saskatoon South would have very strong ideas. He also happens to be our critic for the Provincial Auditor. So I think very appropriately the member from Saskatoon South — and very knowledgeable, a long-serving member of this Assembly — would make an intervention.

I know from working with the member from Regina Rosemont that he would make an intervention on this Bill when it came before the Public Accounts Committee. I know that I will make suggestions, Mr. Speaker, when this Bill comes before the Public Accounts Committee.

And you see, most of the time on a Bill like this we would agree to the changes that needed to be made because they're in the public interest. But this Assembly seems to be a forum more for dramatics, Mr. Speaker, quite often, than making change for good, for the good of the public

purse, Mr. Speaker.

So I think it is just imperative that this Bill go to the Public Accounts Committee and not to be dealt with solely before this Legislative Assembly, because it deserves more attention than what this Assembly, this House, could adequately have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we could start dealing with this Bill very soon. It's timely, Mr. Speaker. I see no opposition. There may be; I haven't checked with everyone. I see no opposition to the Public Accounts Committee dealing with this Bill immediately.

The next time we meet is tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee meets. We meet every Tuesday morning and every Thursday morning at 9 o'clock. We could deal with this Bill until it's completed, Mr. Speaker. That's the reason why we should get it before the Public Accounts Committee.

Another reason is, Mr. Speaker, in regard to timeliness, if for some reason the work of this Assembly, the Legislative Assembly was concluded, if this House adjourned or prorogued, we could sit intersessionally, Mr. Speaker.

There are provisions made. The authority is there. And even if this House isn't sitting, the Public Accounts Committee can sit to make sure that all the work is concluded on Bill 53. And I think all members would agree to that because they realize the importance of this Bill.

An Hon. Member: — And the seasoned member from Rosetown.

(1615)

Mr. Anguish: — We need . . . I'm sorry, I forgot to mention the member from Rosetown is also a member of that committee. I knew that I was short one member of the committee. The member from Rosetown is also on that committee. He's a former Speaker, very knowledgeable, Mr. Speaker, about the process.

Now I think it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see who the witnesses would actually be. You see, we have some expertise beyond the members of the Committee, Mr. Speaker.

We have before the committee the Provincial Auditor. Unless he's ill, or something very pressing, the Provincial Auditor himself, Mr. Strelloff, is at every meeting. The assistant auditor is also at every meeting and they usually have one staff person with them. So there's three people right there that have a great deal of expertise, Mr. Speaker.

They could each be called as witnesses before the committee. Can't do that in this forum, or at least it would be very difficult to do that in this forum. So therefore that's the reason why this Bill should go to the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker. Okay?

Let's look at who else you have in the Public Accounts Committee. We have a Clerk of the Public Accounts Committee, same Clerk that happens to be sitting at the

Table here right now, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the process and procedures, he provides a great deal of expertise that would be useful in looking at this Bill in the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker.

We also have Gerry Kraus, the Provincial Comptroller, and usually Mr. Kraus, the Provincial Comptroller, has someone with him at the Public Accounts Committee meetings, Mr. Speaker. They would provide a great deal of expertise.

And you see it's not just a mutual admiration society there, Mr. Speaker. I wouldn't want to lead you to believe that. Sometimes the comptroller and the Provincial Auditor may have a disagreement before the Public Accounts Committee, but they feel free to do that if it's a valid difference of opinion, because no one is going to reprimand them for that. If there's a problem there, they have a sincere desire, and members of the committee themselves have a sincere desire to see that those differences are resolved so that it's in the best interest of the public purse, Mr. Speaker.

So I've reviewed just the people who would be at the Public Accounts Committee, the normal stage of events. Those are the people who would be there, Mr. Speaker.

But we have the ability to call witnesses to give testimony to the committee which is a matter of record. There's a verbatim transcript just as there is for the House that's published after each meeting. We have it within a day or so after. And it's called the *Standing Committee on Public Accounts — Minutes and Verbatim Report*. So there's a record there as to what happens.

And if we were to call, as I mentioned earlier, people like Kenneth Dye who was the auditor general for the federal House of Commons, he could provide valuable, valuable information as to how we could change The Provincial Auditor Act to reflect the desires that people have, to reflect the desires that the public and this Assembly have, to make sure that there is sound accounting . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I'm sorry, does the Minister of Finance wish to say something?

Well the ministers are making interventions over there. I don't know why they would say that we don't understand SPMC (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation). And the Minister of Finance says they all agree, so let's vote. I just want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in this debate. And if the back-bench members opposite want to participate in this debate, I want you to feel free to participate in the debate and not be intimidated by the Minister of Finance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — I caution the back-bench members that the only reason he's trying to intimidate you is because he wants to force through by closure Bill 61, the biggest provincial tax grab in the history of the province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I'd ask the member to keep his comments on the motion. Order, the

Minister of Finance. I'd ask the member to keep his comments on the . . . Order. The member from Regina Centre, I'd ask him to be quiet while the Speaker is on his feet also.

The motion before the Assembly is:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

And I'd ask the member to keep his remarks to the motion that's before the Assembly.

Mr. Anguish: — Yes, I apologize to you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I do, I regret that you had to intervene, but I respect that. I guess I got carried away. Some of the members opposite were yelling across the floor at me and I was just responding to the comments they were making. But I know I shouldn't do that; that it's really proper for this Assembly for me to direct my comments through the Chair to all members of the Assembly. And I'll continue to try and do that, Mr. Speaker, but I tend to lose my train of thought if the members are too rowdy on the other side of the House. I'll try and stick to the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I was talking about witnesses coming before the committee and why Bill 53 would be more appropriately served by the Public Accounts Committee. But before I continue on to the importance of having those witnesses come forward before the committee in terms of providing expert evidence, I again reiterate that a major purpose in this debate here today is to give back-bench members the courage of their convictions to do what is right in terms of the accountability process in the province of Saskatchewan.

No longer is it good enough . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — No longer is it good enough to have members fear to say what they really believe because of intimidation by the Executive Council.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Enough is enough, and we have to correct that situation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — And this debate today is an important step towards strengthening that conviction of those members opposite to stand up and speak for what is right on this particular motion today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Now back to the witnesses, Mr. Speaker. The Public Accounts Committee can call pretty well anyone they want for expert evidence. And as I mentioned earlier, this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, can't deal with more than one piece of legislation at a time. You

know, they can work the agenda out so that one Bill comes in at the beginning of the day, maybe another one at the end, but to deal concurrently . . .

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

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, I've listened very attentively to what the . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I would like to ask the member from Moose Jaw North to be quiet so I can hear what the member has to say.

Mr. Hopfner: — I have listened very attentively, Mr. Speaker, to what the member from The Battlefords has been . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I'd ask the member for Regina North West also to be quiet while the Speaker is on his feet. Order.

Mr. Hopfner: — I've been listening to the member from The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker, and he has been in the last few minutes again been repeating himself over and over and over of things that he has . . . If you would look . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Allow the member to make his point of order.

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that you're going to be able to rule that he is becoming repetitious because it has been over and over and over again that he's been saying the same particular issues and of bringing his relevancy back to the Bill. I'm sure that you would rule in that favour.

Mr. Shillington: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the second time we've been around this Horn with the member from Lloydminster. The least that I think a member is called upon if he's going to allege repetition is to cite some examples. Surely if the member from Lloydminster is bored and bothered by repetition, he can think of one single example.

This is the second time he's stood up, complained about repetition, and sat down, unable to think of an example of repetition. I would think, Mr. Speaker, if nothing else he ought to learn by rote what it is that the member's repeating. And the fact that he can't think of an example suggests to me that his complaint is without any foundation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The point of order is well taken. Order. Order. The member himself from The Battlefords referred to comments that he's made previously. Yes. Order. But I will be listening very closely for any more repetition.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to give an example of why the Public Accounts Committee is more appropriate to deal with this Bill than the Legislative Assembly is. Now, Mr. Speaker, the example that I want to use, Mr. Speaker, is that this reference when it passes . . .

and I'm sure that when I'm done I will have convinced all members to support this motion. This Bill, Bill 53, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act, refers to several different Acts, Mr. Speaker. First off there's this Bill itself, An Act to amend The Provincial Auditor Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — The other Acts that are cited in the Bill and I'll tie the relevancy into this, Mr. Speaker — you have then The Chartered Accountants Act, 1986; you have The Certified General Accountants Act; you have The Management Accountants Act.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. The question before the Assembly is:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

And also that it be sent to the Public Accounts Committee for referral. I don't think it's the place here to go through the Bill point by point when it's being referred to the Public Accounts Committee to be gone through point by point.

Order. If the member from Regina Rosemont wants to interrupt the Chair, or the member for Regina Centre is interrupting the Speaker when he's on his feet and I'd ask members to refrain from that. The member from Regina Rosemont keeps chirping at the Chair, at the Speaker, and I would ask him once more to refrain from that.

(1630)

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, the reason this Bill should be referred, likely the most important reason — I shouldn't say the most important but one of the very important reasons — and I've listed several reasons here this afternoon to build my case as to why the Public Accounts Committee should deal with this Bill instead of the Legislative Assembly.

One of the most important reasons is that the Public Accounts Committee, in viewing this particular Bill, will have many pieces of consequential legislation that have to be dealt with at the same time. Now this House cannot do that, Mr. Speaker, but the Public Accounts Committee can. And part of the importance of the Public Accounts Committee being able to do that is that you get such a wide scope of the impact of this piece of legislation as it is consequential to other pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

And there is no mechanism really to do that in this House that is not cumbersome and time-consuming. So in the Public Accounts Committee, if you need to deal with six different Acts or maybe seven different Acts of the legislature at one time, we actually have the ability to do that where this Assembly does not have the ability to deal with more than one piece of legislation at a time, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that the number of people you can draw on, their expertise, by being able to deal with so many pieces of legislation at one time is an additional value as to why this Bill should go before the Public Accounts Committee. I think it serves this Assembly well. I think it serves members individually as well as collectively, and I think, major and most of all, it serves the people of the province of Saskatchewan well, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — If there was another mechanism, Mr. Speaker, we'd suggest it. But it seems to me that there is not a better suited mechanism of this Legislative Assembly than the Public Accounts Committee.

It wouldn't be appropriate to send it to the Crown Corporations Committee. It wouldn't be appropriate to send it to the Agriculture Committee which hasn't met for many, many years. It would not be appropriate to send it to the municipal affairs committee. It wouldn't be appropriate to send it to the Education Committee. It wouldn't be appropriate at this point at least to send it to the Regulations Committee. And it certainly wouldn't be appropriate to send it to the Committee on Privileges and Elections of this Assembly or, one of the members mentions, the Board of Internal Economy.

So I can't understand where else this Bill should go to if not to the Public Accounts Committee. I'm absolutely convinced that that's where this Bill should go to.

Now I suppose we could leave it because that's the alternative, is either over to the Public Accounts Committee or leave it to be dealt with in this Assembly. But if it's dealt with in this Assembly, the process is too cumbersome to really serve the public good in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — I know that the House Leader wants to get on with taxing us more and not dealing with this Bill anyway. So the only level of comfort that we have that this important piece of legislation to strengthen the watch-dog of the public purse in the province of Saskatchewan is off to the Public Accounts Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Members on this side of the House are very fearful, very fearful that this Bill will not again see the light of day unless we refer it to the Public Accounts Committee. Why won't it see the light of day again if it stays before this Chamber? Well because the government obviously has many higher priorities than to improve public accountability. What are you willing to do to hide what's going on in your government?

I ask all members to vote to send this Bill to the Public Accounts Committee. Don't leave it in the hand of the cabinet that wants to tax our citizens even more.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, this particular motion that

we have today, I mentioned earlier that I have mixed feelings on. I think I thought it through fairly well, and on balance I think it has to go to the Public Accounts Committee. But not if it's just a way for the government to get away from their responsibilities.

The opposition is going to hold this government to their responsibilities, Mr. Speaker. And one of those responsibilities is to stop taxing to death the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — People in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are saying this Bill should be dealt with expeditiously because they're concerned about the waste and the mismanagement in the province of Saskatchewan. And people are telling us enough is enough, Mr. Speaker.

People are saying, give the Provincial Auditor the authority to open the books of the province of Saskatchewan. And this Bill going to the Public Accounts Committee will make sure he gets that authority, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — I think we also have to look at what would happen if this Bill doesn't get to the Public Accounts Committee. If this Bill doesn't get to the Public Accounts Committee to be dealt with, people in the province of Saskatchewan won't know where we stand financially because the Provincial Auditor can't look at all the accounts of the province. That's what will happen if this Bill doesn't go. If this Bill stays before this legislature it will be swept aside, Mr. Speaker, because . . . Why? Because the government . . .

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

Mr. Hopfner: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize for having to stand in my place again and talk to this point of order. But the member in just his last couple few sentences, if you would, you will find if you research the verbatim that he has repeated this time and time again. He is starting his same . . . in the same time as he's starting new sentences lately, Mr. Speaker, he has been referring back to what he has said earlier in his own submission here in this Assembly. He's obstructing this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I've listened to the hon. member's point of order. I will make this particular comment. That the hon. member for The Battlefords has been called to order several times today for relevancy, and I think he should take note of that.

I don't think that the Chair or the Speaker can be expected to repeatedly stand and call the hon. member to order regarding relevancy. If he is having difficulty being relevant, yes, I'll make the appropriate decision.

Mr. Anguish: — Well I respect your ruling, Mr. Speaker, that was brought on by the point of order from the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster. And I guess I do realize that I've been called to order several times. I feel so strongly about this piece of legislation needing to go to

the Public Accounts Committee that I suppose I've strayed with some of my examples.

And I guess the other reason, Mr. Speaker, is that what's happening here today is a little unusual. I would have to admit that — that there is not usually lengthy debate on a report from the Public Accounts Committee. But there were a number of things, I think, that needed to be put on the record, and I have put most of them on the record.

In the next short while, I'll be doing a summary of the important items I think that I have pointed out here today, Mr. Speaker, and I hope you will allow me to do that summary without me being accused by the member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster as being repetitive. I think there has been very little repetition.

And I would remind members that for one to retain information, sometimes there has to be repetition to a certain extent because the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order, order. I believe that the matter has been dealt with, and I ask the hon. member to continue with his remarks as it pertains to the motion and the question.

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, has a major role to play. The debate here this afternoon is one as to whether or not the House, this Chamber, is better suited to dealing with Bill 53, or whether or not the Public Accounts Committee is better able to deal with Bill 53. And now the arguments that I've been making have been in favour of the committee dealing with Bill 53 as opposed to leaving it before this Assembly.

Now I believe that when this Bill arrives before the Public Accounts Committee, that there will be a system whereby we will go through a session where everyone will offer a general opinion on how we proceed, because it's not usual either, Mr. Speaker, I would point out, for the Public Accounts Committee to deal with pieces of legislation. We usually deal with the auditor's report and the *Public Accounts* of the province of Saskatchewan.

So the last time that a Bill actually appeared before the Public Accounts Committee was, I believe, in 1983. I'm sorry I don't have the exact month that that happened. But the last time a Bill appeared before the Public Accounts Committee was in 1983. Now that's a while ago, and I don't know if there are any members that currently are on the Public Accounts Committee that were there in 1983. There may have been one or two, but I'm not sure there were. In fact, I think there were not.

So I want to tell you that the first thing that will happen, the first thing that'll happen when Bill 53 comes before the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker, is that each and every one of the 10 members on that committee will offer their ideas. I think first off they would offer their ideas on what is good in the Bill and what they feel may be harmful in the Bill, and it will be sort of a harmful, helpful suggestion routine that will be gone through by members.

I think then we would be looking at each of the members offering their opinions as to what could be added to the

Bill to make it a more meaningful piece of legislation than it was coming into the committee because the committee certainly wants to improve the Bill . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. Why is the hon. member on his feet?

Mr. Hopfner: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I will apologize to the Assembly in having to raise the point of order, but I would indicate to you, sir, that the member is once again becoming very repetitious. Just exactly the last sentence he had used is he had already said it on different occasions during his remarks to the legislature. And again I say he's obstructing the rights of this legislature.

Mr. Shillington: — I guess we have this ongoing discussion with the member from . . .

An Hon. Member: — You weren't even listening.

Mr. Shillington: — Yes, I was listening. We have this ongoing discussion from the member from Lloydminster. If he's going to make a charge — it is elemental to any system of fair play — if you make a charge you provide specifics.

All the member did was stand up and say he's been repetitious in providing those specifics. I've been listening. It is true the member from The Battlefords has given us a thorough discussion of the matter, but that's different than being repetitious. I think he has not been repetitious.

And I say to the member from Lloydminster, it is not very helpful to stand up every five minutes and say: you're being repetitious. Provide the examples or I think your charge is without substance.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. The hon. member is referring to issues he has raised previously in his remarks. I think anybody who has sat in the House and listened would agree with that.

In this instance, in this particular instance, I was waiting for further clarification of his remarks, so I'm not prepared on this specific issue to say that he was being repetitious. However I will say that, generally speaking, the hon. member in the last while is becoming repetitious, and any fair-minded person including he, himself, will admit that.

(1645)

Mr. Anguish: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. The point I'm making right now — I'm going to do a summary very, very shortly of my remarks this afternoon — but the point I was making, I wanted to convince members on the government side of the House how the process would work so that they could be confident, when they vote to send this Bill to the Public Accounts Committee, that we would deal with it in a process that is workable, Mr. Speaker.

And I was describing the process — the process of having all 10 members have the opportunity first off to have their input into what they feel is helpful and what they feel is harmful about the Bill, what they feel needs to be added

to the Bill. And then, Mr. Speaker, I wanted them to know that each member could suggest professional, expert witnesses to give testimony before the Public Accounts Committee.

I think members of all sides of the House have to have that level of comfort that there is a process there that's adequate to deal with this Bill. Otherwise, my goodness, how could they have confidence in referring the Bill before the Public Accounts Committee as opposed to the . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Meiklejohn: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce to you and other members of the legislature a group of grades 4 and 5 students from Mayfair School in Saskatoon, which is in my riding. They're on a tour of the legislature this afternoon and have dropped in here to watch the proceedings for a few minutes. They're accompanied today by their teacher, Barbara Wright, and chaperons Kathy Schell and Val Garbe. So I would ask all members of the Assembly to bid the students from Mayfair School a very warm welcome here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I . . .

The Speaker: — I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I cannot recognize the hon. member. She's not in her seat.

Mr. Brockelbank: — I want to join with the hon. member for Mayfair in welcoming the students from Saskatoon Mayfair constituency. I've had a long association with that area of the city, one time as an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for that area, the first MLA for Saskatoon Mayfair, and later as an alderman serving part of that area. And I want to join with the hon. member for Saskatoon Mayfair in welcoming those students to the Assembly today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my colleague, the Education minister and the member from Saskatoon Mayfair, in welcoming the students from Mayfair School. As our party's education critic I have spent a lot of time in Saskatchewan in a number of schools and I've had the privilege of being in Mayfair School.

And I note that there is a young person in the group, Mr. Speaker, who is hearing impaired and in particular would like to welcome her. I'm quite interested in the whole area of deaf education and I'm pleased to see that we

have an integrated program at Mayfair School.

At present we are involved in debating a report that is going to be sent . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order, order. Some time ago we made an agreement that we would not involve hon. guests in the galleries. I'm sure that they will take a note of what we are discussing. I'd like to ask you to refrain from that.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted the young people to know what we were doing. But since that's not possible, I want to again on behalf of my colleagues welcome the students from Saskatoon Mayfair. We hope you have a good time at the legislature. This is the centre of democracy, so-called, in the province of Saskatchewan — and welcome.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Public Accounts (continued)

Mr. Anguish: — I also welcome the students from Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

The final point that I'm making here now, Mr. Speaker, is that members of the government side, and I guess members from our side of the House as well, should have some level of comfort that the mechanism, that the dedication, that the ability is there to deal with this Bill. Because if they don't have that level of comfort, of course members would want the known abilities of the Legislative Assembly itself to retain this Bill. I'm asking you, don't fear that the Public Accounts Committee cannot deal adequately with this Bill.

We have, in the Public Accounts Committee, a new spirit of co-operation there that's been unprecedented in the last four and a half years, Mr. Speaker, unprecedented.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — This motion before the House today came about unanimously supported by all members of the Public Accounts Committee. And that spirit of co-operation is important, Mr. Speaker. This Bill should go back to that Public Accounts Committee in that spirit of co-operation which does not exist in the Legislative Assembly itself. The partisan nature and our concerns about waste and mismanagement that are portrayed through this Assembly, voiced on members of government, does not exist in the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker. That has been done away with.

The Public Accounts Committee has been able to rise above the partisan nature to be able to deal with legislation such as The Provincial Auditor Act. So I think that with the input of members and if we're all assured that 10 members of the Public Accounts Committee . . . that we will have equal access, input, influence on what happens, this will come out a much better piece of legislation. It will be respected not only by members of

the committee who will feel good about themselves but it will be respected by this Assembly and therefore the people in the province of Saskatchewan, because it will be a much improved piece of legislation coming out of the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — One of the other reasons this Bill should go there, Mr. Speaker, is that there's no such thing as time allocation really in the Public Accounts Committee. We've seen in this Assembly a couple of cases where time allocation, or closure if you want to call it that, has been moved, which gives some question as to the validity of government that would do that.

But that won't happen in the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker. There's no one who would bring in time allocation or closure on the debate on this Bill in the Public Accounts Committee. Because we are there not to grandstand for constituents like some members on the government side have done, we are there for the constructive good of developing a piece of legislation which we think is paramount to the functioning of the Provincial Auditor in this province. There is no question about that.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that happens on the Public Accounts Committee, and the reason I think is very valid for this Bill to go before the Public Accounts Committee, is that the members are consistent in terms of who they are that attend the committee. The Public Accounts Committee is not like the Crown Corporations Committee where you can substitute for other members onto the Crown Corporations Committee.

The members of the Public Accounts Committee are there because they're appointed there by this Legislative Assembly and cannot be changed except by this Legislative Assembly. Therefore, if we come on Thursday morning dealing with this Bill 53, we will have 10 members there.

The member from Shellbrook-Torch River would be there, Mr. Speaker. The member from Cut Knife-Lloydminster would be there. The member from Rosetown-Elrose would be there, and likely a couple of other members from the government side.

And I know that the member from Saskatoon South would be there. I know the member from Regina Rosemont will be there. I know the member from Regina Victoria will be there. And I know that I would be there, Mr. Speaker.

And then the next day of Public Accounts, which would be on the Tuesday, there would be continuity because those same members would be there, Mr. Speaker.

It is an awesome responsibility of the members of the Public Accounts Committee to provide that consistency, and provide the good and clear dialogue and information and scrutiny that we do in fact provide in that committee. And that is another reason yet, that has not been mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, as to why this Bill should go before the Public Accounts Committee.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — There is at least one other reason that has not been mentioned yet as to why this Bill should go before the Public Accounts Committee, and that is to show the members of this Legislative Assembly that it can come back a better Bill than it was before. So that even further pieces of legislation will be referred to committee with a level of comfort that they will come back a more wholesome, meaningful piece of legislation to govern the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — So people in this Assembly and the public can see the process in action and follow it from beginning to end without a number of interruptions. All those interruptions, Mr. Speaker, that happen in this place, all the unexpected things that happen in this place . . . like today would be an unexpected event. There are very, very seldom, if ever, any unexpected events that happen in the Public Accounts Committee.

So the stable, sober, second thought of that Public Accounts Committee would serve any piece of legislation well. In this case it happens to be such an appropriate piece of legislation, I see no alternative but for all members to vote in favour of the motion that we have before us here today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anguish: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to do a very brief summary and then allow any other members to participate in the debate if they wish, or if we want to bring the Bill to a vote here this afternoon. I don't want to unduly delay the operations of the House here, but I started out by indicating the debate . . . I can see the members are getting a little rambunctious on the other side of the House, understandably so. And understandably so, Mr. Speaker, because at the initial outset I did mention that they had given notice to bring in closure on the biggest tax grab Bill in the history of the province this afternoon, and I can see them irritated by that.

I tried to make some points, Mr. Speaker, as to what else should have been in the interim report here, and I guess those were drawing a long bow. They were somewhat out of order, but I appreciate you did allow me to play some of those forward anyway.

Mr. Speaker, the important thing here is the role of the Provincial Auditor in the province of Saskatchewan, and to assure that through the good workings of the Public Accounts Committee, and not the partisanship of this Assembly, that we make sure through the Provincial Auditor — the watch-dog of the public purse — that the people of Saskatchewan are served in a way so they can see that they're being served, and they won't have to condone with hidden waste and mismanagement of a partisan government, Mr. Speaker. That's how people will be served. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.