

July 7, 1992

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's five individuals sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, that brought this petition to me this morning to present in this House.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister's office that she has someone to meet with these people later this afternoon, and I wish to thank the minister.

The petition is as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To the Honourable Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan
in Legislature Assembled:
The Petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of
Saskatchewan humbly sheweth:

That the Elbow school is a physically sound facility capable of accommodating all elementary school students of Elbow and Strongfield schools, and further that the decision to close this school demonstrates a lack of fiscal responsibility and a disregard for the quality of education for the children of the Elbow area.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government to reverse this action in recognition that maintaining both Loreburn Central High School and Elbow Elementary School would provide a maximum quality of education at minimal cost.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there's approximately 400 names on this petition, and it is a pleasure to table this in the legislature. They're from the Elbow area and also from the surrounding areas: some from Loreburn, Strongfield, and from Outlook and around the area. I won't read the names because there's 400. And it's a pleasure to present this to the Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special Committee on Rules and Procedures

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures presents the second report of the committee which is as follows:

Your committee recommends the following amendments to the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly*:

The first recommendation is for a rule change to establish a time limit on the length that the division

bells may ring during a recorded division. This change in the rules brings Saskatchewan into step with other Canadian legislatures, all of which have restrictions on the length that the bells may ring during a recorded vote.

The second recommendation is for a new procedure to provide a period of three sitting days during which consideration of a government public Bill might be postponed. The purpose of suspending a Bill would be to allow members an opportunity to further study the Bill, consider amendments made in debate, and to review public reaction.

Your committee recommends the following amendments to the *Rules and Procedures* and further recommends that the said rules take effect on the date this report is concurred in by the Assembly:

That the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* be amended by adding the following after rule 36.1:

“Length of division bells”

36.2(1) When the Speaker has put the question on a motion and a recorded division is requested under rule 36, the bells to call in the members shall sound for not more than 30 minutes.

(2) Notwithstanding sub-rule (1), where a recorded division is requested in the following cases, the division bells shall sound for not more than 10 minutes.

- (i) on a non-debatable motion;
- (ii) on a motion moved without notice;
- (iii) in a Committee of the Whole or Committee of Finance.

And further:

That the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* be amended by adding the following after rule 55:

55.1(1) Proceedings on a public Bill introduced by a minister shall, at the request of the official opposition, be suspended for a period of three sitting days following first reading either before or during second reading debate or during committee stage. Such request can be made only once during consideration of any Bill and shall be made orally by the member standing in his or her place.

And:

55.1(2) sub-rule (1) does not apply to an appropriation Bill.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I shall, at the conclusion of my comments, move a motion

that the report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be concurred in.

I want to address, Mr. Speaker, a few brief comments — and they will be brief — on the matter of bell-ringing, before I do. Those of us, Mr. Speaker, who choose to sacrifice careers, who run for office, who make the sacrifices that it takes to be here, do so I think because at the end of the day we believe that reason and the power of reason has the power to influence human events — that we are something more than just corks on a sea, tossed this way and that by the wind. We believe in the legislature. We believe in our ability to influence a course of human events by reason and public discussion.

The procedure of bell-ringing, Mr. Speaker, is at complete variance with that approach — at complete variance. It is in essence anti-democratic. It has, Mr. Speaker, been used only a very few times. It was first devised by the former member from the Yukon, Mr. Nielsen, in response to a Bill put forward by the Trudeau government containing a thousand clauses and touching upon several different Bills — a true monstrosity of a Bill which the federal opposition felt they could not deal with.

Mr. Speaker, it has been used a few times since but public opinion has been coalescing against this as a tactic because it does interrupt the work of the legislature, because it means this legislature can no longer function as a place of public discussion or a conduit through which public business can be done.

That is the reason, Mr. Speaker, why in a goodly number of Canadian jurisdictions it's never been used at all and the issue's never been relevant, and why in those jurisdictions where it has been used it has been . . . rule changes have been made to prohibit its use.

There is no question about where the public in Saskatchewan stand. The opposition members, the member from Rosthern, the member from Morse, admit public opinion opposes the use of bell-ringing. It is essentially anti-democratic and the public understand that. The member from Saskatoon Greystone admits the public are opposed to the use of this as a tactic.

That is why I believe, Mr. Speaker, it was in response to public opinion that you called the Rules Committee and asked them to consider the matter. We have done so, Mr. Speaker, and we in essence agree with public opinion and believe the public are right with respect to this particular procedure.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address my comments to the specific use of it on this occasion. Mr. Speaker, the members of the opposition who are engaged in this debate with me in such a vigorous fashion will recall that we believed in the spring that this would not be necessary. In January and February and March of this year when the Rules Committee was meeting, we did not believe this was necessary. And I didn't believe this was going to be necessary.

Mr. Speaker, what we have witnessed here is what we have witnessed from members of the Conservative Party virtually since 1982 — the irresponsible use of power.

The first controversial piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, to come before this legislature, they walk out on. We have no assurance that it's not going to happen on the second controversial piece of legislation.

The Speaker: — Order. Does the member from Wilkie have a question or a comment he wishes to make?

An Hon. Member: — Can I ask a question?

The Speaker: — You will have your turn to ask a question, sir. Later. And I wish the member would not continue to interrupt when the member is speaking.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — We have no assurance, Mr. Speaker, that this won't be used again and again. It was used on the first controversial piece of legislation to come before this legislature. And we have concluded, Mr. Speaker, that if the work of this legislature is to continue, it must do so without this procedure.

Mr. Speaker, the comments of members opposite have left little doubt that they feel this tactic is justified because they feel strongly about it. Mr. Speaker, this procedure in effect gives the opposition a veto. That is the effect of bell-ringing. It gives the opposition a veto. A parliamentary government cannot operate with the opposition, who have an interest in seeing government fail, have a veto over government activities. That is not the way this institution works. A congressional form of government, such as is utilized by our good neighbours to the south, operates very differently.

Mr. Speaker, we believe the time has come to outlaw this procedure. We believe we have massive public support.

I want to make one other comment as well, Mr. Speaker, about the opposition tactics in this regard. I have been asked by members of the media, what's the difference between this and 1989? I want, for members opposite, to point out that there are a number of differences, the most important of which was that the opportunity was used to show massive public support. Within a day after it occurring, there were huge rallies across the province. There were a hundred thousand names on a petition.

An Hon. Member: — Your union friends.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — And we believe that the . . . Well the member from Wilkie seems to believe it was only union men at the meetings. I want to say that there was a rally in your area where there aren't many union people, and there were a great number of people there.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ignore, if I can, the scurrilous comments of the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, there was a massive show of public support and I truly believe the government of the day changed its mind, not because of a 17 day walk-out, but because of a massive show of public support.

Mr. Speaker, we need to contrast that with what happened this time. What happened this time was that a couple of days later, from the golf course in Estevan, the now Leader of the Opposition stated that they weren't returning for an indefinite period of time.

No effort to garner public support. No effort to have any rallies. No petitions have been presented to this date. There was nothing to indicate any public support except a poll which I think nobody, no independent person . . . no independent-minded person gives any credence to the poll, and anecdotal evidence, and that's it.

The opposition, Mr. Speaker, simply want a veto over government activities. And certainly the opposition members have every right to use legitimate tactics to delay, to ask government to reconsider, and there are a number of those which have been available for a long period of time and which don't involve having this legislature stalled.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with one other brief item, and that was a comment which I made to a reporter who asked me whether or not this was being done in relation to the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) Bill. And I said no, it wasn't. This is being done because we believe — as I did not in the spring — we now believe the government . . . the opposition are going to use this whenever they feel strongly about an issue, and this parliament simply can't operate with the opposition having a veto.

(1345)

I was then asked whether or not the Bill might proceed, whether or not this might be suspended if we had an undertaking from the opposition that they wouldn't use it on anything but GRIP. I said no. I said that the procedure itself was improper and should be ruled out of order.

Apparently, Mr. Speaker, the reporter has gone to members of the opposition. I simply say that any comments made now about what . . . when you might use the tactic and when you might not use the tactic are coming far too late. The Rules Committee met over several days. There was no suggestion, no suggestion that this would be the last use ever of this tactic. Indeed all the language of the members in that committee suggested they thought it was legitimate and they thought it was legitimate to use it whenever they felt appropriate.

I want to, Mr. Speaker, before sitting down, point out that the amendments which have been offered are among the most generous in Canada. And no jurisdiction outside of Canada, to my knowledge, uses this bell-ringing tactic. Only in Canada has this occurred.

Mr. Speaker, we have offered . . . these rule changes will give to this legislature the same opportunity to return for a vote as exists in the House of Commons, where I don't think anyone suggests that the bell-ringing is a necessary tactic for the opposition to effectively function.

In addition to what is offered in the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker, we are providing a three-day hoist. We are saying, Mr. Speaker, that at any stage of the Bill, but only once, that at any stage of the Bill they may in effect suspend the Bill and the government can't return to it for three days. That doesn't exist anywhere else. We have gone the extra mile to ensure that this opposition can function.

Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of tactics available to the opposition when it thinks the government is wrong. You're always given one adjournment. That's almost always done, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Mr. Speaker, there is first reading and then 48 hours must elapse . . . sorry, 24 hours must elapse before second reading. Then there's Committee of the Whole. The whole procedure takes, at a minimum, the whole procedure takes days.

There is the time-honoured practice of a filibuster, and it has been used with great effectiveness in this legislature. I recall in the mid-'70s the then Liberal opposition began a filibuster in January and finished . . . began a filibuster in December on potash taxation and ended in early February. And those 10 or 12 members, as I recall it, carried that debate during that period of time. At the end of the day they did not have a lot of public support for what they were doing and the filibuster came to an end.

Mr. Speaker, those tactics are still available. None of that has been ruled out. What we are saying here, as other jurisdictions have said, is that this tactic which has members holding up the House and issuing statements from golf courses about when they will and will not return to government to do the public business, is simply not satisfactory.

I want to address a brief comment about the position taken by the member from Saskatoon Greystone in the committee. She stated, Mr. Speaker, that she was opposed to bell-ringing, found that the motion dealt with it in a fair fashion — I think that's a reasonable summation — but did not like the timing, and was therefore going to abstain. Mr. Speaker, I think the public are going to equate an abstention with an abdication of responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I recall many years ago, the late Tommy Douglas appearing on national television being asked by a national reporter: isn't it true the CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) are just Liberals in a hurry? Mr. Douglas's response was: any Liberal in motion would appear to be a Liberal in a hurry.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are some things which simply don't change. We have the member from Saskatoon Greystone vigorously, with determination, making sure she's seen to be on both sides of the issue — both for and against it. And that's what an abstention is.

One could take her argument, which may be sincere, may well be sincere, that she finds favour with the motion but is opposed to its timing. That might be an argument for voting in favour of it with some qualifications. That could be an argument for voting against the motion. It is not an argument for abdicating leadership. At the end of the day I do not believe the public will support those who abdicate their responsibilities when the going gets tough, and this isn't an easy issue.

Mr. Speaker, for those reasons, because there are other alternatives available to this opposition and there are more alternatives here than there are elsewhere, because other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, have abolished this as a tactic, I therefore move:

That the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be now concurred in.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Normally I get up and I'm glad to get into a debate and go with the blows as it were. But I think what we have seen today in this legislature bodes ill for the democratic process. I do think that it is a sad day for the people of Saskatchewan when we have a government with its massive majority being able to ramrod and railroad this legislature along the narrow path that they have determined.

And the method and the procedure in which it has been done shows utter contempt, disregard, and the height of arrogance by this massive majority government, toward the democratic process.

And I was amazed as I sat and I listened to the member from Regina Churchill Downs. I couldn't believe the words that were coming forth from his lips. And I thought for a while that he was, in his droll, dry way, entertaining us with his wit. Because it was funny in a sense that he would make such a diametrically opposed position that he had a year ago — diametrically opposed, totally contrary, flip-flop.

I mean, Mr. Minister, how can you make those statements that you are making today when I have before me copies of *Hansard* and the comments that you made in the previous bell-ringing episode of 1989? And I would just warn the public and those people who are interested in this debate that what you're going to see in this legislature today, I believe, will almost defy explanation. Because I suspect that members opposite will be rising in consort, if they have the courage to get up and speak on this issue, and will be doing exactly the same as the member opposite, the associate Finance minister, has done.

It's deplorable. It's a deplorable situation when we have a government like this coming in and saying, we're not going to stay with tradition in this House. We're not going to operate under the normal operating rules that this House has operated through since its inception, I would say — and I challenge someone to find and prove me wrong — and the basic fundamental premise under which this House operates which is in the spirit of co-operation.

This House — and I say this to the House Leader — this House cannot work unless you and I have an element of faith and trust in each other. And we have had that. And I think we've done a pretty darn good job of co-operating and communicating together. And the House has been working well.

But there's only one reason that this House has been working well, and that's because we've had that spirit. And that spirit was elucidated by the . . . and I don't want to bring the Speaker into this, but during the times when we had the Rules and Procedures meetings. And we sat down as a committee — you had a preponderance of members there. You could have railroaded, you could

have ramrodded, you could have done exactly then what you did today, this morning, but you chose not to. And you included the member from Saskatoon Greystone.

Now we sat down as a group of individuals representing the three major parties of this province and said, the rules of the legislature should be changed. We agreed. And we sat down and said: how will we do this? Well the only way in which this House can operate is by consensus — not total agreement. I mean I haven't got my head in the clouds. We know that we can't have total agreement. But we can have agreements that we can all live by, that we can live by. And we agreed upon that.

And then we decided that what we were going to be doing is those issues that it will be difficult to come to an agreement with, we will put aside. We will agree to disagree for now. One of those issues was bell-ringing. And we said, let's not let that issue jeopardize the rest of the procedure.

And then we spent, Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure how many meetings but literally tens of hours of meetings where we came to a resolution of many of the items that were of concern to us, where we thought that if we adopt these procedures the House will operate more effectively.

And we've been operating during this session with these new rules. And I think we've been fairly pleased with many of the innovations that we have. Members' statements, for example, I think is going over fairly well. And there are other rules that we have done and we have adopted and that we will concur in, I'm sure after the 50 session . . . trial period is over.

And that's how we operate. And that's how we can continue to operate in this House. But when you take an isolated issue, albeit important, such as bell-ringing and say, whoop we're going to take that one out of the closet now because we have need . . . There's another issue driving us. We have need to address this issue because it's standing in our way of accomplishing what we want to accomplish now.

And then you bring up the bell-ringing issue on a unilateral decision, using your majority over the protestations of both of the other parties present, and you rammed it through. And we have it in the House now, and we're debating it. And it ain't going to work. It cannot work; it will not work. Because that is not the spirit of the democratic process.

We're not naïve. We know the government will have its way. But you cannot take the bell-ringing issue and hold it up to the public and say: this is the issue of the day; this is the issue of the moment. It is not.

And I say to all members, and I say to the public: the issue that we are debating here this afternoon is not the issue of bell-ringing. Bell-ringing is not the issue. The motivation for you folks bringing this forward in this high-handed way is GRIP. Make no doubt about it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — GRIP is the issue. Your court case against

the farmers, your court case for breaking contracts with 55,000 farmers in the province — that is the issue. That is what is driving you. And you will not use this legislature to accomplish that.

Now I agree with you, and I've said that all along. And I agreed with you this morning as well in committee, that bell-ringing should be looked at. I don't think any of the opposition parties have ever said no, we're going to close our eyes to that; bell-ringing is not something that we are prepared to do any research into. We've not said that.

And I am well aware of some of the studies that have been done and have been run in your local paper here that says, so-and-so-many per cent of the people oppose bell-ringing. Of course they do. Maybe I do too. But let's take a look at the issues that are involved.

Let's bring forth the reason why the bells have to ring, and immediately you get a different response — immediately.

Now I have been out in Saskatchewan talking to the people that are most directly affected by this — most directly affected — and that is the farmers. But it's not only the farmers that are expressing concern to me. You folks there that think that you're hidden inside the city, safe walls of the city — the folks there are recognizing that what is happening here, what this bell-ringing issue is about has the great potential of affecting them as well. So it's an issue across the province, but particularly the farmers.

And I went and I took some of this time to go to the SARM meetings, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, to find out was there support for the bell-ringing; were we on the right track as far as the farmers were concerned. And do you know what those . . . invariably, I have not had one person come up to me and say, stop the bell-ringing.

(1400)

And I've been at parades, I've been at auction sales, I've been at events throughout my constituency. But not only in my constituency, I have been in North Battleford, I have been in Saskatoon, I've been in Kelvington, I've been in Wynyard. I have been where the SARM had its annual or semi-annual regional meetings.

There was support. There was solid support. But one question that I was asked by the leaders of that organization was this. You know, they said, when Bob Pickering was minister of Rural Development he came to a few of our meetings. He did. When Neal Hardy was minister, he never missed a meeting. He never missed a regional meeting in all the time that he was Rural Development minister. Because he was concerned and he wanted to find out and have his pulse . . . his fingers and his hand on the pulse of what was out there in rural Saskatchewan.

But do you know what they told me? The Minister of Rural Development has not been at one of these meetings. Not one. And I'll guarantee you he wasn't at the three that I was at.

But do you know what is more disconcerting — and you say we don't have support for what we're doing — that at not one of those meetings was there an NDP (New Democratic Party) MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly). They were conspicuous by their absence. Not one of your folks had the courage to get away from your bunker mentality and go and face the folks, not one of you. Not one of you rural folks were out there to any of these meetings.

Do you know what a SARM meeting is? Have you ever been to one? That's where you get the pulse. That's where you get the feeling of where it's all at. But I guess when you develop a bunker mentality you haven't got the courage and the convictions of what you're doing to go and face the folks.

Don't tell me there isn't support for bell-ringing. Bell-ringing as such, we can argue about that. That's fair game. But when you add the issue that is involved, it's totally a different story. And don't tell me, member from Churchill Downs, that there's any equivalency between what is happening today and what happened in 1989.

The fight in 1989 was because you folks did not want the Saskatchewan people to be able to participate in the economic activity of this province. You said no to bonds. You said no to share offerings. Yours was a philosophically, ideologically driven traumatic experience when we gave the folks of Saskatchewan the opportunity to participate financially. So that is why you . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I called the members to order before when the member from Regina Churchill Downs was speaking. I asked the members, please let the member from Rosthern speak.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now let's take a look at the concomitant side of the issue. We have had the energy issue which you folks threw a scare . . . scare tactics into the people of Saskatchewan. Because now they're out there, we taught them — well, I shouldn't say we taught them, I don't want to be patronizing on this — but we gave the people of Saskatchewan the opportunity to become used to the financial activities of the world. Not that it had to be some kind of a high financier going to New York and so on to do that, but the common folk in Saskatchewan could also participate. That's what we were doing. And you were ideologically hidebound to prevent that. That's the difference.

And what are we doing today? The issue is not bell-ringing here today, folks, the issue is the GRIP program, the GRIP program. And the reason we are standing firm on this is because you were asking this legislature here to legislate a lie.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I ask the member to withdraw that word "lie" from his materials. He knows that that is unparliamentary.

An Hon. Member: — He didn't call anybody a liar.

The Speaker: — Is the member from Arm River

challenging my decision? I asked the member from Rosthern to withdraw the word "lie" from his materials.

Mr. Neudorf: — I withdraw that remark, Mr. Speaker. It's just that it's become a habit, when you read the newspapers and so on; this is where you see it all the time. But I withdraw that.

They are asking us to legislate an untruth, something that we all know is not a fact, it's not the truth. The crop insurance contract signed by these farmers said March 15, Mr. Minister. March 15, any changes made you were supposed to notify them by . . . in letter, in writing by that date. You didn't do that. We all know that you didn't do that. The world knows that you didn't do that.

And the court . . . the judge threw you out of court and said you haven't got a case to stand on. So what do you do? You said, the Minister of Agriculture said, we'll fix that. We'll legislate it. We'll say that we did that anyway, and we'll pass a law in the legislature of Saskatchewan saying that we sent that letter out.

But we can't have that done. We will not allow you to do that. Because what you're trying to do is break the law. You want to break the law and you want us to be party to that. You want to change history, tamper with evidence. These are the kinds of things that you are going to be trying to do with this Bill.

And if I'm wrong, say so. Say that that retroactivity is not in there. Mr. Minister, I will sit down if you will get up right now and say that's not in there. It's a done deal . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . You see, there you go. You can't, you can't. So there at is where we are.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent the last few moments trying to make the point that the issue here today is not bell-ringing, but rather that the issue is GRIP; it's GRIP-driven.

Now the minister from Churchill Downs seemed to be quite sanctimonious in saying how the use of ringing of the bells was somehow undemocratic, that it couldn't be used and it shouldn't be used. And I warned the public about this. I warned the public about the flip-flop that we were going to be seeing here. And he said in *Hansard* on June 7, 1989, and he said this:

We oppose this because it is out of keeping with the traditions in this House.

We oppose the stopping of the bell-ringing. He said, we cannot allow the bells to stop ringing. He says, we oppose that because it's not in keeping of the traditions.

We think those traditions have served this Legislative Assembly very well and should be maintained.

And should be maintained, Mr. Minister. How short a memory we have. Mr. Speaker, he continues, and I quote again, Mr. Speaker:

. . . we are told by others (this is the minister speaking) who have researched the subject,

there's no instance in Saskatchewan history, in the history of this legislature, where changes have been brought about unilaterally as it is being done now.

Referring to our previous situation.

So what did we see the same member doing today in committee? What did we see him doing? He continues:

Before I take my seat I will repeat my defence of the tactic, but I say, even with respect to bell-ringing . . . (that there may be some time to consider that.)

And I grant you that.

But these are the types of comments, Mr. Minister, that you were making. You continued on:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I'm on page 1704. You said, sir:

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was pointing out in summary form that a parliament acts as a check on executive power . . . a parliament acts as a check on executive power.

You, sir, are the executive power. The rest of us are parliament; we serve as a check on you. Those are your words. I agree with you. That's the correct procedure. That's democratic process.

And then you continue, Mr. Speaker: "the bell-ringing is very much . . ." and I repeat that. This is you speaking, sir, you that just spoke to the public and I request the public to try to remember what you just said. But this is what you said on June 7, 1989:

Mr. Speaker, the bell-ringing is very much within that tradition, very much within the tradition of providing some effective limits on the exercise of executive power — very much within the parliamentary tradition.

That is what you said when it suited you. Today you are saying other things because times have changed and it suits you differently.

I just want to, Mr. Speaker . . . I'm searching here for some supporting evidence of the next point that I'm going to be making here, and that is that I want to spend a little bit more time talking about the procedures within the House, the consensus that is necessary for a House to operate. And I've already indicated to what the member from Churchill Downs has said about consensus, about unilaterally changing the procedure within the House to suit the government of the day for that one particular issue.

I have some other changes that I want to bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker. And this is the May 31 . . . The member from Saskatoon South is speaking during this time back in May 31, 1989. And he is reading from an article from the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*. And I can only

but hope that the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* is going to see fit to run the same type of article on this situation today, that there will be prove to be some consistency. But we'll have to wait and see on that.

But the member from Saskatoon South is quoting. The Saskatoon "... *Star-Phoenix* has an editorial which says, 'Motive questionable' — motive questionable." The motive of our government of the day was being questioned in so far as the motive behind what caused the bell-ringing. And we're of course referring to the bell-ringing that the NDP would have refused any change.

But it says, both sides will have to come to some compromise, and I want to pick up on that point at the conclusion of my remarks. Both sides must come to some compromise.

There does not appear to be any pressing need for a rule change.

I'm quoting from the *Star-Phoenix* article, as the member from Saskatoon south was quoting.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to go on with the editorial, and it says:

Saskatchewan is no worse off because the bells jangled for a record 17 days over the SaskEnergy issue.

That's the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* talking.

My colleague says in fact they're better off, and the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* ... agrees with them.

Now, and I want to continue on the quote:

In this case, a legislative rule allowed the public to become more directly involved in democracy. The government needs to make a stronger case for changing this rule.

That was when we were sitting over there and the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* was saying, and I will repeat:

In this case, a legislative rule allowed the public to become more ... involved in democracy. The government needs to make a stronger case for changing (the) rule.

Today we saw and heard the chairman of our committee downstairs saying that bell-ringing was undemocratic. Bell-ringing was undemocratic is what the chairman of our committee said. But I want to quote, I want to quote the member from Saskatoon South of May 31, 1989:

Mr. Speaker, here was a rule, here was a rule that was not a detriment to democracy, but it furthered the process of democracy.

Bell-ringing, we're talking about bell-ringing.

Mr. Speaker, here was rule (that), here was a rule that was not a detriment to democracy, but it

furthered the process of democracy. It gave the people an opportunity to become involved and to tell the government, no, we don't want what you are putting forth ...

So we seem to be having here a change of positions on many individuals' part in this Legislative Assembly as fits the situation. I think, if I recall some of the things that I said in the last debate — maybe some of you will have the courtesy of quoting me — but I think there will be a string of consistency there where I have never said we should not have a look at the situation of bell-ringing.

(1415)

And under the works and under the procedures that we are involved with right now, and under the duress of the situation, I can only but say again, it will not happen. Because I want to further throw back at you some of the comments ... and the reason I'm doing this is not because I have a personal vendetta against the member from Prince Albert. But the member from Prince Albert, and I don't know his constituency for sure, but I do believe that he is the Deputy House Leader, was in committee this morning and making arguments as well that were diametrically opposed to the stand that he took in 1989.

And I just want to refer to a few of the comments that he made in 1989 where he said in *Hansard*, this is on May 29, 1989, the member from Prince Albert ... if anybody help me out. I don't want to attribute it to the wrong Prince Albert member ... (inaudible interjection) ... Thank you very much, sir. Prince Albert Carlton said:

It's a kind of sad thing, Mr. Speaker, to see that the traditions and customs of this legislature will be changed unilaterally (unilaterally) without the co-operation, in this case, of all of the people who are elected by the people of Saskatchewan.

That's what he said when it suited him. You see, he said ... Oh my goodness, I guess the member from Churchill Downs and the member from Prince Albert Carlton were thinking along the same wave line because the member from Prince Albert Carlton said also:

You see, in a democracy we have a series of checks and balances. One of them is this bell-ringing mechanism.

Mr. Member from Prince Albert Carlton, I don't remember you saying that this morning. Have you changed your mind with that? Because you continue on, and this is a different part:

Without that alternative voice (I'm quoting again), Mr. Speaker, we would not have a democracy as we know it. We would have a system of government as is known in countries that have dictatorships ...

So what you're saying there is that if we don't have bell-ringing we will have a system of democracies ... of countries rather, that have dictatorships or in the communist bloc countries where there's just one party, no opposition. And you continued, Mr. Member:

So our job . . . here in the opposition is to make sure that that point of view is heard.

You went on, you went on on May 29, and you said this:

Every once in a while, when the government loses touch . . . it is the duty of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, sitting on this side, to bring them back to reality. If that bell-ringing process was not here, I don't know if that could have been accomplished (that).

That's what you said about the bell-ringing — an integral part of the democratic process according to what you said then. And that, sir, is not what you were saying this morning. And you continued:

And it is my contention, Mr. Speaker, that bringing this legislation to limit bell-ringing is going in the wrong direction.

. . . I believe that by limiting the bell-ringing we're actually doing a disservice to democracy as opposed to opening up our democracy.

Then why, sir, did you make a motion in that committee that would be akin to doing a disservice to democracy? That's your own words in *Hansard*, sir.

. . . it is my contention, Mr. Speaker, that bringing this legislation to limit bell-ringing is going in the wrong direction.

It's doing "a disservice to democracy." That's what you said May 29, 1989.

This morning you rammed through a motion that does exactly that — a disservice to democracy . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I hope you get up, sir, during the course of this debate and defend that apparent contradiction.

Mr. Speaker, the issue . . . Well, pretty weak, the member from Swift Current said. I'm expecting you to get up, sir, and give me a strong contradictory viewpoint. I don't think you can. I think you're one of the honourable members of this legislature here that's having a great deal of trouble swallowing what's going on here. I really think you do.

And if you don't, I'm very disappointed. And I think there are a lot of you people in this legislature who feel that way.

When the member from Churchill Downs concluded his remarks, there was a lot of one-handed clapping going on. The body language, the body language is something that we watch, just as you watch us. And it said a lot. There are uncomfortable folks over there.

And I'll tell you one thing: a lot of this problem that we're having today is motivated, is motivated by the member of Finance. I know how the system works. He goes into cabinet, he goes behind Treasury Board walls, and he gets an earful from his officials about what a tight situation he has. And then he goes into cabinet, full cabinet,

convinces them. Then you have your caucus meeting and the Minister of Finance and certainly the Premier, certainly the Premier, throws the fear of deficit into you.

And everything, everything then is eligible as a means to that end, everything is eligible as a means to that end of conquering the deficit. And you don't care whom you trample under, which farmers you cause to go bankrupt, which jobs are going to be lost as a result of it, or which rules and laws of the democratic process have to be broken in order to accomplish your end.

I'll give you another example of this. Let us not lose sight of the fact that we are talking about GRIP. This is a GRIP issue. This is your means to that end and you're not being very steady, for want of a better word, about how you do that. You're not being very consistent in how you're doing that.

Because I would like to quote to you, page 1186 in *Hansard*, July 3 — not very long ago — July 3, 1992. I think the hon. member from Kindersley was questioning the Minister of Rural Development. And he was asked a question. And the Minister from Rural Development said this:

And we are prepared to look at possibly even extending an opt-out longer if we can get the Bill back into the House.

You, sir, said at that point, we need to get the Bill in the House before we can adjust the program to meet the needs of the farmers who want a longer opting-out date. You said we can't do that because the Bill isn't in the House. That nasty opposition is holding it up.

You went on to say:

The opt-out that was extended by the court has been discontinued. If there's any further opt-out, it will have to come through . . . legislation.

That's what you said, sir. And you said: "I don't know how much more clearly I can say (than) that."

Before you can extend an opt-out clause, you threaten the farmers that the Conservative opposition is holding up this Bill and we will not be able to extend that opt-out clause. That's what you said right here in question period. Well whoop-de-do, Mr. Minister.

Then I was just given this before I walked into the House. Haven't even had time to fully digest it. But some of the things that I find out now are:

Darrel Cunningham (quoting, Mr. Speaker), minister responsible for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance . . . announced today farmers will have until July 20 (to opt out) . . .

You have made a decision to go for that. I will read the rest of it:

"For the protection of (the) producers, there must be a firm deadline . . ."

Now isn't that ironic, Mr. Speaker? The minister says, "For the protection of the producers, there must be a firm deadline . . ."

Well, sir, and I say to members of . . . to the government. There was a firm deadline for the protection of producers. That deadline was March 15. March 15 was a firm deadline. You ignored it.

And now because you ignored it and you're finding yourself in trouble in the courts, you're coming back into this legislature and saying, whoops, we got to do away with that bell-ringing because we have a deadline to meet, a firm deadline. You're talking here about the fact that farmers need protection with a firm deadline. It was there, Mr. Speaker.

You go on to say:

"We have made a commitment to farmers that the 1992 GRIP will be in place. It is cheaper for farmers and cheaper for the province, and it is more tuned into the marketplace."

This is the sentence I want to emphasize:

"Despite any stalling tactics that might be used, the changes to GRIP will be legislated this summer, so farmers should know . . . what their deadlines for opting out (are)."

I want to repeat this. Despite any stalling tactics, changes in GRIP will be adjusted this summer.

Mr. Speaker, I started my comments this afternoon talking about the arrogance of members opposite; talking about their willingness, their willingness to unilaterally make massive, dramatic changes to how this House works. And then we see further arrogance now by the member and the minister of Crop Insurance where he says, it doesn't matter what the people of Saskatchewan think; it doesn't matter what the opposition thinks; we're going to ram this legislation through the House just as we rammed the bell-ringing through the House.

I don't want this to be interpreted as being a threat. But when the House succumbs to this kind of pressure, it can only be considered in the most negative of terms. I do not think, ladies and gentlemen of this Legislative Assembly, that it has been well served today by government members opposite. I don't think so. I sincerely believe that in your heart of hearts you know that you have not done the right thing.

I'm not talking about the bell-ringing as a long term. That's not the issue. But using this, using the legislature, using your massive majority to thwart the will of the people, I think that is going to be a legacy that's going to come back and haunt you. And I hope that it has become fairly apparent to everyone that as the member from Rosthern, I am going to do my utmost to see to it that this Bill will not become law.

Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to make comment on several of the things that have transpired with the government and opposition members over the last few weeks. So what I wish to do of course is to reflect for a while upon what has happened and brought us up to this date.

We have gone through a number of things in this legislature which have caused some height of emotion on both sides of the legislature, one of which of course is the legislation that was being proposed and brought forward on GRIP. That resulted in the opposition members leaving this Assembly, just as once upon a time the government members — many of whom of course were here as opposition — had done in 1989. They too felt very passionately.

I'm in a very different set of circumstances, Mr. Speaker. What I really did need at the time that the opposition walked out was a certain amount of time to become more reflective and understanding, to meet with legal counsel and others to find out more about what this really meant, if indeed the proposed legislation contained some of what the government . . . the opposition members expected that it did.

And what I did do at that time was to walk out with the opposition members, and then within a day and a half, I returned. I returned because I felt that it was important that this is the place in which we do our business, that the Assembly, the workings of this Assembly should take place and that we should have been able to put aside the differences of one Bill and to be able to continue forward with the workings that are before all of us.

And we are here for a purpose. We're here to work on behalf of the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan.

What happened subsequent to that time with the 18 days of walk-out, with people's emotions growing even stronger and stronger, is that the Speaker came forward and I think gave a very compelling argument for why it is we should be in the legislature. He suspended the Bill — something I think that there was an enormous feeling of relief and a consensus from members in this legislature that you, as Mr. Speaker, had indeed done the right thing.

The one thing that in fact I felt very strongly about was at that time, Mr. Speaker, you also mentioned that there was an urgency, an urgency to call together the Rules and Procedures Committee and to review bell-ringing of this legislature.

That concerned me for one reason. It concerned me because of the timing — that emotions were still running high. There was not any real resolve about the legislation at hand. And that it was going to appear to those in the Rules and Procedures Committee that there was some interlacing between these two specifically different entities.

(1430)

On the one hand, the responsibilities of the Rules and Procedures Committee to look at, review, and hopefully

suggest some very helpful changes to the workings of this legislature in order to make us do our work with greater credibility and perhaps greater ease, and to mix that somehow with the emotional issue of the day was going to undermine what I believe to be the credibility of that committee. And it has been with great disappointment of course that this has transpired.

I believe that the members of this Legislative Assembly should think very carefully about what has happened here today because the member from Regina Churchill Downs has talked about what he sees as my abdicating my role in leadership. And I of course cannot concur with that because I'll tell him what I believe my responsibilities are.

My responsibilities are to be a principled person; my responsibility is to tell the truth; my responsibility is to be an open-minded person and consider all sides. My responsibility as a member of the Rules and Procedures Committee is to be an active member of that committee and to work in the best method that I know how. And the best method that I know how is to work according to proper process.

The member from Prince Albert Carlton spoke at some length about public confidence, Mr. Speaker. He stated that the reason for which we have to make the change in bell-ringing is because public confidence is at an all-time low and that the public really wanted a change to this particular way of our legislature functioning, or not functioning, as the case may be.

I have been on record for some time that I believe that we should limit bell-ringing, and I very much supported the member from Prince Albert Carlton in what he proposed as far as suspension of Bills was concerned. However, there is something called proper process. And what we should be motivated by is not simply the end, but the means by which we achieve our ends. And that's what I had the gravest amount of difficulty with in the Rules and Procedures Committee.

It has been with great pride that I have been a participant on that committee, a committee that is worked by consensus, a committee that has been able to demonstrate to the citizenry of this province that three political parties can come together, work together, and achieve a real end. And I'm proud of that. I was proud to be a member of that committee.

What concerns me most is that I think that the workings of today, the decision of that committee to run not by consensus but by majority rule, has now tainted its function from now until the end of this legislative term which will be perhaps four years hence. And that is going to be a tragedy for the people of this province and this Legislative Assembly, that I don't think that people will work as well together because of the decision that was made by government to change the Rules and Procedures Committee and the method by which we achieve an end.

I believe in political reform, and I'm committed to positive change, particularly the kinds of change that can come by updating the rules and procedures of this Legislative Assembly. And it really saddens me that the

NDP majority has chosen to undermine the integrity of the Rules and Procedures Committee. I can only hope that the work that we do in future is not going to be, I think, seriously changed as a result of this.

Public confidence is something that needs to be restored, but the way to restore it is not by doing things this way. The way to restore public confidence is by adhering to proper process. The way to restore public confidence is to make people feel that politicians are trustworthy and that their word means something. The way to restore public confidence is when people see all-party committees able to work together in the best interests of all of the people and put their partisan politics aside.

And public confidence will be restored when members like the member from Regina Churchill Downs and the member from Prince Albert Carlton will not say one thing in opposition and another thing in government. What people want is consistency. And I hope that by my stand that I took this morning in stating that I very much support the content of the motion but what I cannot support is the absolute undermining of proper process of the Rules and Procedures Committee, that I could not in any way, shape, or form do anything but abstain from that vote.

A 55-member majority government, Mr. Speaker, is going to get its own way regardless. But there is a way of reconciling differences, and I truly believe there was a way of reconciling the impasse that was at hand over the proposed legislation.

If we're talking about leadership, let's talk about leadership. The power lies in the hands of a 55-member majority. And the House Leader, Mr. Speaker, could have done many, many things to have come to some resolve and negotiated with the opposition. What indeed could have happened here was the Rules and Procedures Committee could have been struck to come together at a later date, and we could be rejoicing in the change that has taken place today. We could be happy about the limiting of bell-ringing. We could be pleased and coming together as a group in solidarity about suspension of Bills, and we could have felt that we were very inventive, very creative, very thoughtful, and very forward-looking in the change that had taken place.

That is not how we are today, Mr. Speaker, and I have great regrets about it. I chose to do what I did today because I would not give credibility to what I saw as voting on a motion that was in fact being proposed in a way that undermined proper process. And I would not vote versus the limiting of . . . in favour of limiting the bells and in suspension of Bills, simply because of the way in which people were making this happen. We wanted to be able to have a committee that could function well.

And I'm just wondering whether or not any of these government members ever really do think about proper process, whether they really do care about thinking through seriously the kinds of things that are at hand. And who does think for themselves over there? All I've seen is all the ducks fall in a row every single time. I'd like to see people stand up and actually speak for themselves for a change. And that just doesn't seem to happen.

If people really want to know what the common people want, the people of the province of Saskatchewan want one thing, Mr. Speaker. They want common sense. And what they don't want is to be held to ransom all the time by politicians who simply care more about the end than they do about means by which we do things. And I hope in future that the Rules and Procedures Committee will be able to work in concert with one another in spite of the fact that we felt very much hijacked this morning by the majority of government members.

It is with great regret that in this Assembly we can't applaud a change to the rules, we can't applaud a limit to bell-ringing, we can't applaud a suspension of Bills. It's unfortunate that the government chose to do what they did for what I believe are all the wrong reasons. Thank you.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a sad day for Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, when I was contacted back in 1976-77, if I would be interested in running as a nominee for a candidate for the constituency of Arm River, I thought about it for, I guess, several months. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that when I made my decision to let my name stand as a candidate . . . a nominee for a candidate, I never thought that after 15 years later that I would see a sad day like this in Saskatchewan — I would see a government that has been so arrogant as this government has been in this session.

The deputy minister of Finance stands to his feet, Mr. Speaker, and he made several comments about how he loves this legislation and how he believes the legislature should work. How does he possibly think, Mr. Speaker, how could he possibly think that railroading the rights of the opposition right away from them is democracy? How could he possibly believe such a thing?

Why didn't he stand to his feet and say what he really believes? Why didn't he stand to his feet and say, we are going to fix you, Tories; we are going to fix you, opposition, because we're in a jam. We're in a GRIP jam. We've been gripped, and we have to get out of it. We made a blunder last spring. We came out with GRIP '92. It turned out to be wrong.

And I've had many members over there, Mr. Speaker, that admitted to me that it's wrong. But the reason why they can't do it is . . . if the Minister of Finance had of stood to his feet, the deputy minister, and said, well the truth of the matter is this government is short of funds and we don't want to give it to farmers . . . That's the truth of the matter.

If he had of stood to his feet and said, I believe in this legislative democracy, I believe in it, like he said, but we're going to have to just slip away from that for a little while, we're going to have to get the GRIP Bill through, we're going to have to legislate this GRIP Bill so the farmers will lose their court case . . . and that's what's more important. Because it happened, Mr. Speaker, right in the Rules Committee, it happened that they said, well we can always try it for a week or two or maybe to the rest of this session.

So you'll see, Mr. Speaker, that later on in this good old province of Saskatchewan that when people find out

what this sad day's all about, that there'll be the pressure on them and they'll be meeting back at the Rules Committee again and we'll have a change. It won't be 3 days; it'll be 30- or 60- or 90-day hoist. We talk 60 days; they talk 3 days. And it'll be a change.

But first they have to get the GRIP Bill through. We know that. But why couldn't they, Mr. Speaker, why couldn't they have been truthful to this here Assembly? They haven't been truthful to the people in the province of Saskatchewan. They haven't been. But at least you could have been truthful . . . and you've elected people along this front row. You could have stood up here and been gentlemen and men and said exactly the facts, not misled this here Assembly. You've been misleading the Assembly by using the rules and regulations.

You don't ever, never . . . intelligent, respected people that have been elected don't go change the rules in the middle of the game. You just don't do things like that.

We've got, Mr. Speaker, there's a quote here from the House Leader, and it's May 18, 1989, when we were talking about a motion along the same lines. And this is a quote from the House Leader:

. . . take this stupid motion out of here and we'll deal with the issues that the people voted us to come here . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, talk about hypocrites. I've never known that I ever thought I would see that my friend from Shaunavon would ever have a turn-around like that. In May 18, 1989, he says:

. . . take this stupid motion out of here and we'll deal with the issues that people wanted us to come here . . .

Well what would . . . I don't think I could stand to live with myself if I had done something like that. When I was elected by the good people in Arm River in 1978, I made my stand. I told them at my nomination where I completely stood morally and politically. I said, I'll carry any message to the legislature but don't ask me to do something that's not right. It must be right.

Well what happened to the member from Shaunavon? How come he's such a hypocrite?

An Hon. Member: — Member from Shaunavon?

Mr. Muirhead: — Well he was the member from Shaunavon. Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about the member from Shaunavon and that's where he was representing when I came here in 1978, the member from Shaunavon. Then he was representing in Elphinstone about 1989 when he made this motion.

Now let's just think seriously about this. Here's that hypocrite, along with a bunch more that back him; anybody that backed him is in the same position exactly.

. . . take this stupid motion out of here and we'll deal with the issues that the people voted us to come here . . .

Then on May 17, 1989, the day before, another statement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, until now, as I indicated, this Assembly has not made these kinds of changes without all-party input and consent on any rule change. As I say, this has been a strength of our system. (that) . . . has protected the majority from ramming through procedures without minority input and approval. And this is an important . . . the importance of this tradition cannot be underestimated, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This has got to be preserved as an important tradition.

Throughout the history of the Assembly, substantial consultation on rule changes has taken place through the mechanism of all-party committees which are given a mandate by this Assembly. Rule changes have, for the most part, been accomplished through consensus without division. And there are many examples from 1985, 1981, and 1986, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And this was . . . and excuse me, Mr. Speaker, but I'm reading the words here and it says: Bob Pringle, May 17, 1989.

(1445)

Then there's another one the same day, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about anyone that's on that side of the House today that is backing the front row on this here mechanism to get rid of GRIP, pay the farmers on the '92 GRIP so they make sure some of them will lose their land, and then they will.

Mr. Speaker, there will be many farmers that won't survive if they don't get a good crop. And the crops on about 75 per cent of this province have slipped away badly. And there is not going to be a good crop unless we get miracle rains in all areas.

But also the same day, Mr. Speaker, there's another statement here and it says Glen Hagel, May 17, 1989.

We're debating this motion, not because it interfered with the government's plans but because the government is hurting.

Well I guess, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I ask the member: what is he quoting from that he is quoting the actual names of people? It seems to me that those are not part of your quote. And if they are not part of your quote then the member should not be using the actual name of the individual, but the constituency that they represent.

Mr. Muirhead: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's *Hansard* I'm quoting from, but the name I guess that they put on apparently was the name instead. And I apologize for using their names.

We're debating this motion, not because it interfered with the government's plans but

because the government is hurting. And it's hurting over the public response more than anything else.

And when we consider these kinds of motions having to do with the conduct of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we have to put them into their context as to how they served the democratic process, and most importantly, the people of Saskatchewan.

If there's anything that I know about rules of the game, Mr. Speaker, there's a very clear rule, and that's this: you don't change the rules in the middle of the game.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker — I can't believe my eyes, just looked up there and it was Mr. Speaker there and looked back up and there's a change up there. Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Talk about changing the rules in the middle of the game. Here we have a government that is arrogant. Never thought I'd ever see the day that I'd see a government as arrogant as this, that they only think of one thing, they know they're in a jam, so they're changing the rules in the middle of the game.

The Rules Committee, which my colleague the member from Morse is on that committee, and they've suggested that we should be talking mid-session, when the House is not sitting, about changing the rules, and they've had many meetings discussing it. And they should be discussing it and changing it then. You just don't ramrod a Bill through or a motion through to change it in the middle of the game.

And I know that there has to be some individuals in that side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that know this is wrong. And I would like to be a mouse in the corner at the caucus meetings because I can tell you that we know what's happening, is the Minister of Finance, like my colleague from Rosthern states, it would be coming from him because he's the one that's getting the pressure put on him. Don't pay those farmers. We didn't get elected by farmers. We must have . . . we have to pay them their '92 GRIP and we'll save millions, multimillions of dollars, and let's don't worry about it because there's a federal election coming up and we'll just force the Tory federal government to give some cheques out and the farmers will win and we'll win. And that's the idea because I've heard that from many members on that side.

Going on with the quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker: "Nobody would ever suggest that it's appropriate to change the rules in the middle of the game." Now we've heard the members from that side say it in the last few days. And now this is their own quote back in 1989.

Let's take an analogy. Let's consider, let's consider, Mr. Speaker, we're into the ball season and the Toronto Blue Jays were playing ball here in Saskatchewan last week. And let's just say the member from Rosthern suggested, the Premier got hit with a pitch in the head — I'm not sure if that's true or not, I'm not sure if that's true; the member from Rosthern can confirm that himself. But how

ridiculous it would be in the middle of that ball game, Mr. Speaker, if someone slid into second base, someone slid into second base and there was a close call, and the Blue Jays came running out in the field and said that because the umpire had called their slider out, their runner going into second base, came running out in the field and said: well you made the right call and we don't like the rule. And all the Blue Jays stood up and jumped up and down and wailed and they ground their teeth and they hollered and cried tears on the pitcher's mound and said: we're not going to continue this game until you change the rule. You called it right, you called it according to the rules, but we don't like the rule. Wouldn't that be absolutely ridiculous? That's a statement from a member sitting over there representing one of the Moose Jaw ridings now.

There's another . . . a long one here. And I want to read that into the . . . it's very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I read this one in. This is a name that I can use because he's not a member here now. And it's from the former speaker, John Brockelbank, May 18, 1989. He sat in the Chair for many years, that you're sitting in. He was an honourable man. And this is what he said when he was here in 1989 as just a back-bencher on the opposition side.

It is . . . with a great deal of sadness that I rise to take part in this debate. I have been associated with this Legislative Chamber now for many years, and it gives me a heavy heart to take part in this debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's how I feel today. It does give me a heavy heart to be even speaking on such a motion that we have before us today. And when my heart lifts is when I take a look at the deputy Finance minister and the minister because I start to understand why it's happening. It's their greed and their greed for success. That's why these kind of things are happening. They know they've made a mistake. They know they've made a serious, serious mistake when they promised the GRIP last spring and now they have to cover their tracks. And they're doing it at all lengths.

In all the time I've thought about this Legislative Chamber, Mr. Speaker, I have never, never thought that I would see happening what this government is doing today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, someone said: who wrote that speech? I took it from *Hansard* from the former speaker, John Brockelbank, word for word. This is *Hansard*. A good member from this House and a man that I have a lot of respect for said, who wrote the speech. Just in case he didn't hear me to start out, this is a statement in *Hansard* by the former speaker, John Brockelbank.

Never, in any thoughts, that I had about this Legislative Chamber, had I thought a government would attempt to do what this government is doing today.

Now doesn't that do something for the people sitting around this room, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Doesn't it bother you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to the people sitting here, that here's a John Brockelbank who was a Speaker, and he comes from a family of . . . his father was a member of

this here Legislative Assembly for a good many years. And they're saying that this was wrong, wrong when we were trying to do something like it.

But when we were trying to do was deal with bell-ringing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We were dealing with the bell-ringing. But now we're not dealing with bell-ringing. And I want to make that very, very clear as I speak here today, that as the member of Arm River makes his statement that we are not, not dealing on bell-ringing, we're dealing strictly on a GRIP Bill.

We're dealing with the Minister of Finance so he can save some money. He knows that it could cost him if this crop slips away, it could cost like multi, multimillions more dollars.

We know that, and I understand that. But don't, don't stand to your feet as you go throughout this province and say to the good people of Saskatchewan when you're out campaigning that I will . . . we're going to do everything we can for farmers. We'll do more for farmers than the Tories ever did. We'll go to Ottawa and we'll get money. We will improve the GRIP program to their liking. We will change the GRIP program. They changed it all right. They changed it so it doesn't cost them so much money.

Now that's why we're sitting here. That's why we're in this here precarious situation today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because this government has got themselves into an awful jam and has put us in a position where we're all going to regret — we're all going to regret. We're going to regret that we're sitting here with only 10 and the terrible things that . . . watching what you're doing over there as government and we haven't got the power, with 10 of us, to outvote this here big power chamber over on the other side — this big power-house over here — that we can't outvote them. All we can do is just keep on doing what we are. Fight the fight as long as we possibly can.

I want to go on with the quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to review briefly my experience with rules committees in this Chamber. I want to go back to 1969. I was a new member of the Legislative Assembly, and you might say a side-line participant at the beginning, but in 1969 a rule change was made . . .

It was not done in 1964 or '65 or '66 or '67, but (it was done) in 1969, after the members had been sitting in the Assembly for some period of time, had become experienced with the rules, and then they drew off a committee of members of this Assembly . . .

In 1969 I was a relatively new member in this Legislative Chamber, and I appreciated that report that (the) . . . committee, that all-party committee, set aside from the heat of the moment on any particular issue, had time to deliberate and consider what should be adaptations for the rules to run this Assembly. There was no rash move to change the rules in the Assembly or to change the rules arbitrarily. There was co-operation, and as the Speaker said, a harmonious relationship

among the members of the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely say to you, Mr. Speaker, that what's happening before us today is not a harmonious situation. We're not working out with co-operation. The Rules Committee have been meeting for a long time and nobody will ever tell me that something couldn't have been worked out very easily to have this bell-ringing stopped and work out some mechanism for the opposition to be able to contest Bills that are of a contentious nature.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why is this happening? Why is this happening? As I've said it's happening because this government has to stop. They have no other choice. They've found out that when we let the bells ring for 18 days before, for 11 sitting days, and you, Mr. Speaker — which I congratulate you for it — you brought us back in here. And you made a statement from your Chair, Mr. Speaker, and you said you would pull the Bill and asked that cooler heads would prevail and that people would get together and solve this problem.

Well how much getting together was there? I like to just say to the members of this Assembly, how many times did they get together to try to solve the problem? They got together right away to start talking about changing the rules. But did they get together to talk about the GRIP? Was there one meeting, was there one meeting, Mr. Deputy — or Mr. Speaker, sorry — Mr. Speaker, was there one meeting set up where the two House leaders and the whips sat down and said, how do we solve this problem for the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan? How do we solve it?

The farmers out there, the majority of them, wanted 1991 GRIP. I understand from polls agreed on from both sides that it wasn't quite as strong as in my area. My area is about 80, 90 per cent wanting the 1991 GRIP. When you take the province, it's about a 60/40 in favour of the 1991 GRIP. Then as it got drier, people started to realize that the 1991 GRIP was not that bad a program. It just needed to be improved on in a little different manner than what this here government did by the 1992 GRIP. The 1992 GRIP, Mr. Speaker, just completely took all guaranteed coverages away from them. They got the crop insurance . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member is getting off the topic entirely. I will permit members . . . if they see the possibility of linking this resolution to GRIP, I will allow that. But I will not allow members to get into the debate on the actual GRIP '91 or '92. That is not within the purview of this resolution.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, can I go on a point of order? On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, when the member from Churchill Downs, when he was speaking, he brought GRIP right into it and some details of GRIP. And so did the member from Rosthern. And this whole rules, this whole rules at the Rules Committee, it's all been talking about . . . any time I talk to any member, Mr. Speaker, it's been talking about GRIP and this rules . . .

(1500)

The Speaker: — The member has made his point. I've made my decision that if you see that there is a link between GRIP and the resolution before us, you may state that there is that link, in your opinion. But you may not get into the details of GRIP '91 versus GRIP '92. That is not part of this resolution. The resolution simply says that the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be now concurred in.

In that report there is absolutely no mention of GRIP. And I ask the member to please desist from discussing the advantages or disadvantages of GRIP '91 and '92. That is not part of this resolution.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, then I will just put it this way, that the rules motion, how it will affect us in the future if we have any Bill come towards this House — I don't care whether it's the farm Bill or the GRIP Bill — how it can affect us and how it could stop us from talking and expressing ourselves for a length of time on a Bill.

And it will stop . . . the rules, the way they have it, if we have this here GRIP Bill, Mr. Speaker, and we're not . . . don't even know what we're talking about for sure. We're going to have to hear it through the media and through speculation that the GRIP Bill, what it states. And we're saying, Mr. Speaker, what the . . . the GRIP Bill is going to affect the court case. And that's why the rules . . . I'm saying that's why this rules motion has come towards the House, so it can stop the GRIP Bill.

If you want me not to get into the details of the GRIP, that's all right, Mr. Speaker. I go by your ruling. And I'm just saying that any time that this legislature, that the heavy-handed people of this legislature, states that we have heard enough from you, we have had enough from maybe other Bills that's coming to this House, that will be tabled in this House, we don't want to hear from you, we only want to hear from you for three days or whatever it is, and you can toss it out for three days, well three days, Mr. Speaker, is just like no days at all. It's not fair, Mr. Speaker. It's the worst thing that's every happened in this province of Saskatchewan.

We'll have a Bill, have first reading, and it'll sometime be several days before it even comes back for second reading. And then they'll be some motions on second reading, and then they'll be adjournment. And sometimes it's not brought back up for several days again. And the same thing has happened here.

We heard about the GRIP Bill, the farm Bill. We heard about it for six, seven months. But finally it hits the House. We've been sitting here now since early June when the farm Bills were tabled. We've been back in here. We're on our second week but nobody's bringing these important Bills forth, so they're not really too important, I guess.

So then when they have second reading, and we debate that and then they vote it off, Mr. Speaker, and they go into committee, then we talk about them for several days. We talk about them — maybe some cases on a minor, not such important Bill — only several hours or whatever, and they become law.

All right, Mr. Speaker, in this particular case with the Rules Committee change, we have the right at any point — the government or the opposition — I guess it would have to mean anybody could stop the Bill for three days. So if it can sit for three days going from first reading to second reading, from second reading to Committee of the Whole for days. And this here arrogant, arrogant government says, you get three days to go out and talk to the people in the province of Saskatchewan. I mean it's got to be the most arrogant thing I've ever heard about, Mr. Speaker.

I want to continue and finish this here quote from the former Speaker, John Brockelbank, in case, Mr. Speaker, you didn't know this quote that I was reading from *Hansard*. And he's not a member of this House so I can use his name, and I'm about half-way through his remarks, Mr. Speaker. He says:

In 1969 I was a relatively new member of this Legislative Chamber, and I appreciated that report that that committee, that all-party committee, set aside from the heat of the moment on any particular issue, had time to deliberate and consider what should be adapted for the rules to run this Assembly. There was no rash move to change the rules in the Assembly or to change the rules arbitrarily. There was co-operation, and as Mr. Speaker said, a harmonious relationship among the members of the committee.

In 1976, Mr. Speaker, (as Mr. Brockelbank continues to state) I have here a report, it's the third report of the Special Committee on the Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly, November 22, 1976. And I must admit that I was more intimately involved with this committee than I had been with the previous one, and as a matter of fact, I served as chairperson of that particular committee.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, consideration of the rules down the road a bit from the first committee, which is in 1969, now 1976, considered by an all-party committee outside of this Chamber, deciding what amendments, if any, should be made to the rules of the Assembly. It worked well. Members were satisfied with the procedure. There was no rush, no pushing, no shoving. There was respect for the parliamentary system, and the rules reflected that.

Later, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to chair a further committee of this Legislative Assembly. And their report was tabled on April 21, 1981 . . .

. . . the third time in my experience in this legislature, where an all-party committee was established to decide if the rules of the Assembly needed amendment . . . The amendments were brought forward and accepted in the spirit of parliamentary harmony . . .

Now, Mr. Speaker, is that what's happening here today? There's a former Speaker of this Assembly, a well-respected man, Mr. Brockelbank, and he said, it

worked well without no pushing, no shoving, and no hurry. What's the hurry?

We have the chairman or whoever's been speaking, one of the members of the Rules Committee, he seems to be the only one doing the speaking. And they have a caucus once in a while, right from their Rules Committee, and they go out and talk about it and come back in and they talk about whether there's going to be any move between three hours and 60 days, and they just couldn't seem to . . . they couldn't agree. But they didn't try to agree.

They could have agreed. Nobody need to tell me that somebody couldn't have sat down and do, Mr. Speaker, what the Clerk of this Assembly suggested.

The Clerk of this Assembly had a real good suggestion. But why didn't somebody talk about it? Why wasn't it enlarged upon? Because we were just breaking. I was there, Mr. Speaker, when the Clerk of the Assembly said just when we were adjourning, when you asked, Mr. Speaker, for a short adjournment, when some of the members of the Rules Committee wanted to have a caucus and discuss about some of our solutions.

And the Clerk of the Assembly very nicely said, if I could just give a suggestion. And I may not be quoting her. I have the *Hansard* here but I may not be quoting exactly right. But the gist of what she was talking about, that maybe we could have this 30 minutes to an hour of bell-ringing or whatever the committee comes up with. But then if you have this once in a 10-, 15-year stand-off where you don't agree, that perhaps we could get on with the work of the legislature and this could go out to a committee for hearings throughout the province to see what people think about it.

Now why didn't somebody, Mr. Speaker, talk about that? We did. Why didn't somebody want to take the suggestions and get at it. It was the Clerk of the Assembly that said, here's a suggestion. The NDP didn't agree with what . . . we didn't agree with what they were suggesting with the three-day hoist. They didn't agree with our 60 days.

It would have been so easy to do, Mr. Speaker. So easy just to say, well our chairmen or our representatives from both sides or all the three parties could have said, well look, we can't agree, but we've had a suggestion from the Clerk. Now why couldn't that have been discussed? Why can't it be discussed yet? Why do we have to have this ramrodded through?

Because you people know that there's only two things that can happen here. That when we talk for a day or two or three, we express our views that are opposing this terrible, terrible thing that's happened to Saskatchewan, the worst thing that's probably ever happened in any legislature in any place in Canada — maybe North America, where something like this has happened. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't mean the rule changes, the light of the rule speeches itself.

What they're really talking about there, changing the rules to stop the bell-ringing and get some other mechanisms for people to have their voice heard on

controversial Bills. I don't mean that. I mean using the Rules Committee because of the GRIP Bill. That is what's so terribly wrong with this. I can't believe that you're doing it. I can't believe that you're saying to people in Saskatchewan, we can do what we want.

I've heard people say that the NDP are going to just come out here and they're going to just walk right over Saskatchewan this first year. They're going to do all their dirty things. They're going to break all their promises and try to have, I guess, people not like them. I don't think they want that. But they're going to do all their dirty things in the first year and then hope people forget in the next two or three years.

Well it's our duty on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that people don't forget. The Conservative caucus will have to in the next three years make sure that all these things that's happening on this Assembly, all the types of things that they've been doing and the types of Bills they've been bringing in, the types of arrogance by not asking questions about the things that's been happening, and we'll have to make sure that the people in the province of Saskatchewan are continually reminded. I think some of the people in my area, Mr. Speaker, some people that have never voted for me and they're so angry with this government that they won't need much reminding. They won't forget.

Mr. Speaker, as I've talked to several people on the weekend about this rules change, I talked to as many people as I possibly could. I was to a 40th wedding anniversary in this city, Mr. Speaker, and there was about 150 to 200 people at it. And there were very, very few people that, I would say, were farmers from that area. That was a city group of people.

And I couldn't believe. If this had have been last summer, I wouldn't have wanted to even told anybody I was a Conservative MLA because they would have said, oh you and those Tories. Well I tell you, as soon as they recognized me as who I was, an MLA, I'll tell you it's a different story now. They said, tell us, what's this all about, about this rules change? Are you satisfied with it? I said yes, we want a rules change. We'd like to see the bell-ringing stopped, as long as there's mechanism to protect the opposition so we can speak on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

But I said we're not happy with this particular rules changes because they're doing it to get their GRIP Bill through. And they said, what is wrong with the GRIP Bill? And I said, well let me explain to you. They said, we've talked to some people and they said the 1992 GRIP is not so bad. And most of them didn't understand it.

I said, don't talk about . . . let's not talk about it, whether it's '91 GRIP or '92 GRIP. It's the type of legislation — and we haven't seen Bill, but we've been definitely told and the media knows, we all know that it's going to legislate that the farmers got a letter on March 15, 1992.

And what's more, Mr. Speaker, when I explained how this all was working, there wasn't one individual that could stand it. There wasn't one that . . . don't let them away with it. They said to me . . . and I know people that I doubt

supported the Tories in the last election. Some of them might have been Liberal, but I think most had been NDP. Well we ask you to stand up for our rights; don't let this happen.

As far as I can recall, Mr. Speaker, of talking to people . . . and I tried to talk to some people in Ottawa, but I talked to an MP (Member of Parliament) over the weekend and they told me that as far as they know, going back right to England from the first time that there has been a government in England, and then as the Commonwealth formed throughout the years and Canada was one of the . . . we're the youngest country among them all . . . that this type of a Bill has never happened in the history of the Commonwealth . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Sure, retroactive Bills, Mr. Speaker. That's happened and we've agreed with them.

Sometimes you have a Bill that takes a little too long to get through the House and it's a housecleaning Bill or it's a Bill that's important. And we agree that the Bill maybe got passed and it becomes law on a certain time in June or July and retroactive back to January 1 of that year. That's just hypothetical dates or whatever, Mr. Speaker. We won't get into the details of that. But people haven't complained about that.

But when you tell anybody in this province, anybody, that the rules change are being forced upon you to have legislation get through this House — because if this passes, if we quit speaking, or ever we're through, we let the bells ring for weeks or whatever, we have that right. We had that right, Mr. Speaker. We can walk out of here. We walked out for 18 days before and we know that we maybe have to, we may have to for the sake of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, let the bells ring for the rest of the summer. We may have to do that.

And we know that we won't be called back in, Mr. Speaker, because we had your word that this would be the only time that you would interfere. So we know that it'll be between the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I would appreciate if the member from Arm River would leave the Speaker out of the debate and the decisions that the Speaker has made. And he knows that he's out of order in commenting on a decision that the Speaker has made.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But that's where it's at, Mr. Speaker. It's sitting right out here, what the people of Saskatchewan want us to do. Do they want us to talk on this Bill, voice our opinions, and then just let it go? And if we do, I guarantee the GRIP Bill will be in here, first reading; it'll be on the whites likely tomorrow or the day that we quit speaking on it. In comes the GRIP Bill on the whites, and it'll be railroaded through.

And then what happens to the farmers that's in the court room? What happens? We know. I've talked to enough lawyers about this and they all agree that if it ever becomes law, this here Bill's ever tabled in this legislature by the help of the Rules Committee, that what's going to happen, that the judges will have no alternative but to say no to the farmers that's in court with them pertaining to the '91 or '92 GRIP.

And that is serious, and it is serious. But what's really serious is how they're doing it. Mr. Speaker, it's how they're doing it. I can't believe that we have such . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, we've only heard from one member over there, and I'm sure that if something is as important as this, that over the next day or two in debate, or three or four . . . Mr. Speaker, we know that something as important as this, that there has to be many people get to their feet and express why they're doing this. Somebody must back the front row.

Because it's the House Leader and the Minister of Finance and the deputy minister of Finance that has caused all this problem. And we've had the Minister of Agriculture — I almost feel sorry for him; he's just pushed into this kind of a thing — and the minister of Crop Insurance. They know better than that. It's their people that say that it has to happen.

What's happened, Mr. Speaker? What's happened to democracy in good old Saskatchewan? What's happened to it? Is this democracy, what we're talking about here? To take this Rules Committee and say to the opposition, your wishes mean nothing — absolutely mean nothing. We can outvote you; we can do what we want.

And I know you don't want to really do that, but you have to because of this Bill. And you don't want to be embarrassed by the bells ringing for 18 days. Because you know as well as I know that your phones must have rang just like ours did, saying, when are you, Mr. Government, going to get in control? When are you going to get in control? When are you going to put these Tories . . . When are you going to do it? When are you going to stop them?

(1515)

So the pressure was on the government, Mr. Speaker. It was on the front row. We got to get control. So when the House did come back in, when this House came back in, what are we going to do? We're in a dilemma. We're in a dilemma. We're in a serious situation. Because here we have the two House leaders who were supposed to sit down and talk some compromise over the GRIP program. They didn't do it. They just got straight to the Rules Committee.

Now what's happened to them? Why did they do this? Why are you people doing such a terrible, terrible dictatorship thing in this? These are the kind of things that I used to as a young man watch over in Russia happen. They wouldn't even happen there today. I don't think that over in Communist Russia that their laws would be any different than what you people have done here this last few weeks. The things you have done would be no different. Because to have a dictator just up and dictate to you, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what these people are. They are dictators.

They are trying to dictate their wishes on the people of the province of Saskatchewan and say, you 10 little jerks over here, you don't mean nothing. You don't mean a thing. We don't care about you. We don't care about the Legislative Assembly.

When the member stood there from Churchill Downs and said how he loves this place, and how he believes in the democracy of this here Legislative Assembly, then turn around and put in a motion like this. Why he ought to be ashamed of himself. If that was me I'd be crawling home in the back alleys to get home, and I wouldn't want anybody to see me. It's the worst despicable thing I've ever heard in my life.

Anyone that's a part of this Bill over there, anyone that's a part of this rule change should be absolutely ashamed of yourself, and I don't care who you are — good or bad. Why didn't you get control of the front row? Why didn't you? Because I know some good individuals. I'm looking at one right across from me — a good individual. Why didn't you get to that front row and stop them?

The member from Quill Lakes, he says, what about him. He's a member, Mr. Speaker. He's a member that's been representing this House for a good many years. And he must have the will of his people — he must have. He wouldn't be elected if he didn't have his people voting him in.

But I challenge that member, Mr. Speaker, to go home to the streets of his town and call in the farmers in every town in his riding and say, what do you think about the rule changes in the GRIP program? I challenge him. He cannot do it. He cannot do it, and he won't do it, the same as all you members.

The member from Rosthern, as he stated that we had the farm meetings throughout the province, that there was farm meetings, and meeting with councillors, and you didn't have the fortitude to even show. You wouldn't even show up and listen to them. It's a railroad job. And every last one of you should be so ashamed of yourself that you should sink down low in your seats, lower than you can get. Because it's the worse thing I've ever known to ever happen.

As I said in my earlier remarks when I started to speak, when I was elected . . . when I was asked to run as a nominee for a candidate and I said . . . when I did say I would run after several months, I said yes, I will try it. When I was running for a candidate, when I was running for an MLA, and then I was elected, I never thought a sad day like this would ever, ever happen in the province of Saskatchewan.

I never thought that we would have to have a Bill come into this House that would be so bad that we'd have to ring the bells on it. And we have all this big story from these people over here that we got to stop all these bells from ringing all the time — all these bells from ringing.

I've been here, this is my 14th year, and we've had two Mexican stand-offs since then. That's all we've had, over the energy Bill and this one. You going to tell me that intelligent people couldn't have sat down and worked out an agreement? But no, you couldn't do it. You've done something that's never, ever, ever happened before in history. It's never happened before.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how I can enlarge enough on the parliamentary democracy that's been slipping away

in the last day or two in this House, and especially today.

When I heard from one of the media this morning that they were sure this was going to happen, I said no, it won't happen. I don't believe they'll do it. I believe that they'll pull it and talk about it and come up with some kind of a solution so we can get on with this legislature.

Now I want each and every one in this, that's in the government side in this House, that if we . . . we'll be speaking on this Bill for one or two or three days or whatever, but I'll tell you the phones are going to be ringing. Because I have contacts all over this province and I'm going to be asking the people of Saskatchewan out there — farmers, retired farmers, business men, people from all over: what do you want us to do, give in to them or let the bells ring? What do you want us to do?

And it's a terrible thing to have the bells ringing on a bell-ringing motion. To have the bells ringing on a bell-ringing motion doesn't go down well with me. It doesn't go down well with me. It doesn't go down well. But having said that, Mr. Speaker, we're left in a position of no other choice.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Quill Lakes, I'm sure that he'll be getting to his feet and he'll be standing up and telling us how great this motion is, that he believes in dictatorship. I'm sure he'll be standing up here and he'll say that: I want to say to the member of Arm River that he is a dictator . . . that we are dictators and we are going to dictate a rule change upon you and we're going to do it. And I'm sure he'll do that. And I'm waiting with . . . I'm just waiting with anxiety that you get up and say — put it on the record — because the member from . . . and I know the member from Quill Lakes well enough to know.

I know him well enough, Mr. Speaker. I know that he chirps from his seat and I know that he's bothered badly about this Bill. Because it bothers him. I see when he gets talking to his colleagues there a little while ago, when they whisper together they get so quiet and they look so sad-looking and you can see all the people around there talking one to another. They're saying, boy, what's going to happen when we've done the worst thing that we've ever done? We've done a terrible, terrible thing in Saskatchewan and how can we handle this? How am I going to go . . .

How many people over there, Mr. Speaker, will even go home to their ridings on weekends? I wonder how many can go home and look their people in the face and said, we're . . . They say, what's the bells ringing for? If that's what happens, Mr. Speaker, if that's what happens that the bells have to ring over this, and they're going to say: the bells are ringing because of the Tories. Then they're going to say to you as an honourable representative: please tell us why the bells are ringing.

And so are you going to be able to tell them the truth? They'll have to tell them the truth because they're honourable elected officials. They'll have to say, well we got ourselves into such a position that we went and decided to change GRIP, we decided to put in a different type of a GRIP program, and we had to . . . we made a mistake. The Minister of Agriculture didn't get a letter out

to the farmers in time saying that your GRIP program is going to be changed.

We can't go out and tell them that, but I think the member from Quill Lakes will tell his people that down in the south-west corner of this province, that by the time they changed it, there were some farmers already were planting their crop. And they were planting their crop under the '91 GRIP program, borrowed their money under the '91 GRIP program.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I've asked the member not to get into the details of the GRIP program, that it's not part of this resolution. There is nothing in the report. There's nothing in this resolution pertaining to GRIP. It's simply concurrence of the rules and procedures.

I ask the member to please stay away from discussion of the GRIP program.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about the rules change, what would we be even having a debate about if we weren't bringing other Bills into it? We have to, Mr. Speaker, with all reverence to you, Mr. Speaker — and I'm not going to get into the details of the GRIP program, and I didn't get into details. I'm only talking about why it's come in here, why this rule change is here.

I feel that we have a right in this Assembly to say that this rules change is here because of one thing and one Bill and one happening. And that's because of the big blunder of the Minister of Agriculture made on the GRIP Bill.

Now that's why it's here. And if we haven't got that to debate, Mr. Speaker, why the Bill is here . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think the member understands well my decision. I have indicated to him that he is allowed to make the link between the rules and GRIP, but if he gets into the details of either GRIP '91 or GRIP '92, I will rule him out of order. That is not part of this resolution. And I don't want to warn the member again.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, I again go back to the member from Quill Lakes. When he goes home this weekend, he'll have to explain whether we've solved this problem or whether the bells are ringing or not; he'll have to explain to them why the bells are ringing.

So let's say that then he's got talk about . . . it's because of the rule changes. But, Mr. Speaker, they're going to say what rule changes? Well the rule changes are going to be, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be that we bring a Bill to this here legislature and if you got sometimes through first, second, third reading, Committee of the Whole, that you can hoist this Bill for three days.

And somebody's going to say to him, Mr. Speaker, three days? What does three days mean? Because this is three days that you've been home on the weekend, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and you've only got to half a dozen of us. How are you going to get throughout the whole province and ask what they think about any Bill, about any Bill this government brings forth? What is three days? I mean, my goodness, Mr. Speaker, three days has

got to be the . . . It's an outrage.

I don't think there would be any problem whatsoever if the House Leader and our House Leader and our whips had sat down in this last day or two. And they didn't have to be at the Rules Committee. They could have just got somebody's office here and said, what do we do here? Are we going to let those . . . bring that rule change in? Or are we going to have agreement ahead of time?

(1530)

Well now, wouldn't it have been nice, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't it have been a nice situation and a co-operative spirit, if the government wants us to co-operate and get along. And I like to get along with people, and I know we all do. But why couldn't we have had our House Leader and the Government House Leader, Mr. Speaker, meet and with maybe some other representatives from the caucus and also the member representing the Liberal Party . . . could have sat down and said, how do we come . . . what do we do here? Wouldn't it have been easier to talk and talk and talk until they come up with a solution rather than doing it in the manner we're doing it now?

There will never be a solution in the manner we're doing it now because all we're going to do is we're going to stand up and speak. And you'll have some speakers, I'm sure, defending your dictatorship type of Bill. You'll be standing up and saying, yes we're no different than the communists over in Russia that brings dictatorship in. You'll have to stand to your feet and say that. You'll have to stand up and say that because that's what it is. It's a dictatorship Bill that I never thought would happen in the British Commonwealth or this great country of ours. I never thought it would ever happen, never thought the day would ever come.

But why didn't they do that? Why didn't that happen? Why didn't you get your people in? Why didn't you talk to the officials? You had the . . . Mr. Speaker, they had the . . . the Clerk of the Assembly had more experience in the running of legislatures than anybody on both sides of the House. And the Clerk of our legislature suggested a good suggestion at the Rules Committee. Why didn't they further that? Why didn't we sit down and do that?

No, you couldn't do it. You couldn't even talk to her. You couldn't talk to us privately. Because you know if you ever got one on one, that you'd have to say, well we're in a bind, and we just got to save the money. We can't afford to pay the farmers on the '91. We've got to pay them on the '92 GRIP, or this province can't stand it.

We know that the Minister of Finance dictated to you people. And you, the member from Quill Lakes, know quite well that it's all dollars and cents. It's dollars and cents. And you stand here and you always say blame it on the Tories, why we're so short of money. Blame it on the Tories. When you know quite well that the last debate I was in with the Minister of Finance, that we got admission . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member is deviating completely from the resolution that is before us, and I ask him again to please stay on the resolution.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, where do we go from here? Our members are going to . . . Where do we go? Our members are going to stand up and they're going to speak. They're going to talk about this Bill. They're going to talk about all the things that's happened. They're going to talk about all the members.

I went through and I talked about several members, what they said in 1989, how it talks about it in the Rules Committee. Where are we going from here? Can there not be cooler heads, Mr. Speaker? When today is over, surely tonight that someone can sit down with our side and your side and the member from Greystone — sit down and solve this dilemma. Because the only way that . . . it's going to be a terrible thing for Saskatchewan. That if we have to talk for several days and then you don't come up . . . And that's what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to talk and we're going to express our views about this terrible, terrible thing you've done on Saskatchewan. We're going to talk about it and talk about it and then eventually we will . . . There's no amendments can come in. We have no mechanism whatsoever, I understand. Mr. Speaker, there's no mechanism for us to bring a motion in here. I understand that. So when the 10 of us are through talking — and the member from Greystone has already talked — so then it's over with.

We only have one alternative then — that's give in or let the bells ring. So before those bells ring, before they do, I say very sincerely to all the members of this legislature — very, very sincerely — let some cooler heads get together and solve it and come up with some kind of a solution, a solution where you can have a place for a mechanism for controversial Bills to go. There has to be some way.

An Hon. Member: — This is the place.

Mr. Muirhead: — There has to be. Mr. Speaker, one of the members over there says, this is the place. Yes this is the place. It should be done right here. But it can't be done with bringing a rule change to this legislature without very little discussion on it.

It's been discussed for several years, Mr. Speaker, about changing the rules — about changing the rules — but not changing the rules in the middle of a dilemma and the middle of a fight, in the middle when heads are hot about trying to get this GRIP Bill through. And that's where it's all at.

Don't sit there and say that we're all sincere to Saskatchewan. Because I say to Saskatchewan out there that these bunch of arrogant people are not sincere to Saskatchewan with this rule change. If they were, if they were, Mr. Speaker, if they were sincere about this rule change, then they would have sat down with our individuals on this side of the House and cooler heads, and come up with an answer to this serious, serious problem.

Mr. Speaker, the House Leader, Mr. Speaker . . . I'm suggesting that there's ways that we can solve our problems here, that the House Leader, tonight or

tomorrow or whatever, meet with these people and come up with some kind of a compromise here. But don't let it be . . . Like I spoke one night here — last Thursday night, I believe, Mr. Speaker, you were there — at a Rules Committee, and I said, let's be very, very careful what we're doing because the changes we make today, we don't do it just to solve today's dilemma we're in. It has to be for the future. It's for ever, maybe. Rules change don't happen that often. You don't change rules just to suit what's happening today. The rules of this legislature have been there a long time, and it takes a long time to change it.

And I agree, there's got to be a mechanism to stop the bell-ringing, even though a lot of people don't understand bell-ringing out there. They think that, oh well, this is a terrible cost. We had the House Leader say when the bells were ringing before that it cost 27 or \$28,000 a day, when somebody from the Clerk's office or the Clerk had to say that wasn't right, it was \$1,000 a day. And so many people out there think that we all get paid, and we don't get paid; our per diem, we don't get it when the bells ring.

But it's the mechanism that it's not necessary — it's not necessary when we all come here to do our 70 to 100-and-some days of work. I've been a member that's been here a long time, and we seem to have the feeling here now that if we can't get all the work of this Assembly done in about 25 to 40 days, somebody's stalling. So we got to have rule changes. We got to have something to happen.

How come this here Assembly here adopted that we get the average sitting for a session is 70 days? And I have sat up to 127 days here. How come, Mr. Speaker, this has happened before? Why do we have to have rule changes to change these rules, to speed things up? And then it won't take so long because you know, Mr. Speaker, that by changing this rule change it won't be such a thing as a long debate. We won't be able to debate on the farm Bills or the labour Bills that's coming in.

First thing you know, Mr. Speaker, we'll have rule changes saying we're going to shorten estimates. We're going to have rule changes that you're going to be stifled and you can't talk in estimates. Our members don't even answer the questions in estimates now. They just sit there. And that's why there's no estimates passed. We haven't got one. We've been here 40 days and haven't passed any estimates — not one has been passed.

So if the ministers would answer the questions it wouldn't happen. But we get blamed for stalling the legislature. We're at 40 days and we're to blame. If the people would answer the questions, you wouldn't have to run down to the Rules Committee and see how we're going to shorten things up, how we're going to have only three days on a Bill. Well that's got to be the worst thing I've ever heard of, is three days on a Bill — three days.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Quill Lakes is chirping again and says, what do they do in Ottawa? Well I'll tell you, we're quite satisfied with one day, two days, three days, but have some hearings for longer than that. I don't want the bells ringing either, but you've got to have some hearings on controversial Bills. There has to be . . .

(inaudible interjection) . . . I don't want bell-ringing. I don't like it. I have to explain . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I'm sure there'll be plenty opportunity for other members to get into the debate. Order. I recognize the member from Arm River, and I wish the member from Arm River would direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr. Muirhead: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What is your point of order?

Mr. Muirhead: — Well are you telling me, Mr. Speaker, that this is going to be a new precedent set, that never again will we be able to reply to someone else's remarks? It's been done in history.

The Speaker: — I think the member knows well that it's also tradition that you direct your comments through the Chair, not at any particular member in the legislature. That's always been a tradition in this House, and a member that's been here for 15 years ought to know that.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Quill Lakes should know better than what . . . speaking from his chair all the time. And I say that to you, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Quill Lakes has been here a long time too. And I'm sure that the member from Quill Lakes, Mr. Speaker, when he goes home, that he's going to . . .

I won't be talking about him any more, but he's always the one that . . . He's the one that said that, Mr. Speaker, that in Ottawa — and I will talk about the bell-ringing episodes in Ottawa — they have a mechanism where these Bills can go to. They have a stacking process. We haven't talked about a stacking process here. This here Rules Committee hasn't brought in . . . They haven't thought it out.

What's going to happen if maybe in the next election they only got a one majority, like Manitoba's got a one-member majority? Mr. Speaker, what would they do in Manitoba right now if a vote came at the legislature there and there happened to be two or three ministers in Ottawa? They didn't bring in a mechanism here to how to handle such a thing as that.

They only thought about today, just today. They only thought about what are we going to do to get out of the mess we're in today. That's all they thought about. And that's what I'm saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that there must be a mechanism. There must be some mechanism and cooler heads that can sit together here and solve this dilemma that we're in.

Mr. Speaker, there's members on that side of the House that have been here a long time. They've been elected for quite a few years. And there's some new members that've been elected in '82 and '86, and returned in '91. So there's members that have had some experience. And I wonder if they, Mr. Speaker, really understand.

I wonder if the Rules Committee took back to their caucus and explained the seriousness of all this. I wonder

if they know how serious this here rule change is. I wonder if they realize that we're talking about changing direction in the province of Saskatchewan. I wonder if this has been discussed with their back-benchers. I wonder if they understand it all. We only got a caucus of 10, so we're able to sit down and discuss these things, and we know the seriousness of it.

But I'm wondering, Mr. Speaker, how serious they are about it. I wonder if they know that when all of a sudden democracy is taken away from you, that the right for we as an opposition . . . We're sitting here as an opposition and goodness only knows over the next three years what kind of Bills are coming forth. We don't know.

And a three-day hoist period on it? That doesn't give any time whatsoever for the . . . you can have a Bill come in, presented, and passed in a very short time. And you cannot get that message out to Saskatchewan.

In my 14 years I've been here, there has been quite a few Bills that has hit this here . . . and I mean usually one or two a year, sometimes more. And when people speak from Saskatchewan, through their MLA, through their representative, and they bring back to this Assembly, they come back to this Assembly and say in their caucus or whatever that people aren't liking that Bill, and I see many Bills get pulled. They slip away, because it gives the people of the province of Saskatchewan a right to have time to voice their opinion.

And so what this arrogant government is doing, Mr. Speaker, what they've done is they're not keeping the 10 members on this side shut up. They're not putting the skids just to us. They're telling the people in the province of Saskatchewan you're not going to have a say any more in this province. There's no more say for you because you're going to have to . . . when a Bill is tabled in this House that there's going to be . . . you're going to have to have . . . I don't know how you're going to do it because nobody has the mechanism to get on television and get all these things out there.

The government could even have done that. They could have done something so they could get the people of Saskatchewan knowing each and every Bill, what's happening out there so they can speak and get to their MLAs and get to have meetings and have hearings out there.

But no. There's this government that's going to keep it so quiet, that we're just going to be like little mice over here, that we got our three days to sit and decide whether we're going to . . . what we're going to do about this Bill. And then first thing you know while we're getting information from the public — no, this is a bad Bill for Saskatchewan, it's going to hurt us. And then it's too late to voice our opinion. She's all over.

So this is a serious, serious situation, Mr. Speaker, and I don't know where it's going to end. I don't know because we've had so many dictatorial things happen. It's been dictatorship of the worst kind that's happened since November of 1991.

(1545)

And I never thought it would happen. I never thought that these kind of things would happen. But to end up today that we have to stand here and speak and voice our opinions and I just never believed that such a thing would happen.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier, the Premier of this province, the now . . . used to be the minister of Justice, used to be the deputy premier, I wonder if he knows what's going on. I wonder if he knows how serious this is.

He's been so busy in Ottawa, and I understand he's busy over the constitution. But I don't think he's probably had time to . . . I wonder if they've even contacted him to tell him this terrible thing that's happened here. Because I surely can't believe that the Premier of this province who has made the promises he has, would be in favour of a motion that was made this morning in Rules Committee is already into this House by 1:30 in the afternoon and we have to debate something that could affect everybody's lives in the province of Saskatchewan. And it's going to affect them for a long, long time.

I wonder if he's down in Ottawa today. I think he must be back there again. And the Minister of Justice, he's a good individual. I wonder if their own caucus has even told them, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if they understand the seriousness of it.

I understand that there's been an odd conversation, a few conversations between our leader and the now Premier. And we had good feelings about it, that maybe something could come of negotiation. So when the two leaders, the member from Estevan and the member from Riversdale have had conversations stating that, you know, that was maybe a good idea and that may not be too bad an idea.

And then we've had . . . our House Leader has talked to some of our people and said, well that may be a solution. But all of a sudden it's taken away from us. It don't seem to materialize. Why, why won't they, Mr. Speaker, why won't the members opposite sit down and talk about this. You can't do it at a . . . you got to get together with a small group of people and sit down and say, where do we go from here. Where do we go?

What happened to this same motion in 1989, Mr. Speaker? What happened? We couldn't agree. So we didn't get the bell-ringing changed. We're the ones that wanted to have the bell-ringing changed in 1989. And it was this government . . . our government that said, let's do something about it. But it didn't happen. We didn't get those rules changed because we couldn't get an all-party agreement. We needed an all-party agreement at that time. We knew that. We knew that the opposition sitting here must agree with the government or it wouldn't work. Now why can't we, Mr. Speaker, why can't we have that same co-operation today that we can get an all-party agreement.

When you're going to have something so serious as this, something that affects the lives of a million people in this good province of Saskatchewan, something so serious, how can you just have a debate from this side and a few people from that side and then all of a sudden it's

happened. How can we do that? Because it's hard to retract and change it.

It's been recommended on the Rules Committee, it's been stated, well let's try something for so many days. Let's go for . . . we even suggested that we go for all the rule changes should be tried for 50 days. We didn't even live up to that. This is just being forced upon us without people with cooler heads sitting down and talking and talking about this.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close my remarks with this. That to me, a senior member of our caucus and a senior member of this Legislative Assembly, that I feel it's one of the saddest days of my political life, and that I ever thought that any government that was born and raised in Saskatchewan, which most of these people are, would ever bring such a motion to this Legislative Assembly.

And I'm just asking, Mr. Speaker, that cooler heads will do something over this next day or two to come up with some co-operative answers that we can all agree to and work out a solution so these bells don't have to ring and so we can go ahead and do work of this Legislative Assembly without all this here fighting and scrapping. It's not necessary to fight and scrap.

We don't care whether you're sitting on a city council down here, whether you're sitting on my rural council at home or a town council, there's always people that don't agree. There's people that get to be enemies for not agreeing, but they come to a solution. They have to come to a solution.

Well now we couldn't come to a solution, Mr. Speaker, on the GRIP Bill. We weren't able to come to a solution. So to come to a solution on the GRIP Bill, we have to have a rules change.

So my last words are, please, I ask the front row members, please do something in this next 24 to 48 hours before this becomes a serious, serious precedent in our great province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Obviously none of the members of the government have got the courage to stand up and debate this Bill, or this motion before the House. I was wondering if any of them did have the courage, after all the chirping I heard from their seats. But obviously they feel more comfortable hiding behind their desks on this day of infamy in the province of Saskatchewan than they do standing on their feet.

It's not often, Mr. Speaker, that you find a New Democrat hiding behind his seat. They've had a propensity in this province, at least in my political career, to stand up and talk at great length. I can remember the member from Rosemont doing about 16 hours, and the member from Moose Jaw doing 13. And there was a great amount of sort of one-upmanship in the former opposition caucus as to who could talk the longest, who could filibuster the longest, who could uphold the democratic rights and traditions of the people of Saskatchewan by standing on their feet for hours on end.

And after the conclusion of that particular debate, then we had great amounts of discussion about bell-ringing in this legislature. And as my colleagues have read from *Hansard*, nearly every member that sat in this House in the New Democratic Party between 1986 and 1991 were on their feet at great length defending the democratic principles of this particular House, defending the rights of individuals to say and have their say and go out and influence public policy. And they made all sorts of statements that happily are on the record today so that they can be reminded of the things that were said in this House a short time ago.

The Associate Minister of Finance was very verbose at that time in talking about his defence of democratic principles and how this House should never undertake rule changes unless they were by concurrence of the members of the Assembly.

Well, Mr. Speaker, today we've had it proved to this Assembly and the folks of Saskatchewan that our happy little Rules Committee is nothing but a sham. Before this legislature met, we had the Rules Committee getting together in the spirit of co-operation. We had a lot of pronouncements from the newly elected government about being open and democratic and how they were going to fundamentally shift the rules of this province so that people ultimately would have a greater say in their government.

And so the members of the legislature that were on the Rules Committee sat together, and I think there was some due diligence there. And they went through a process that culminated in a report to this legislature that said we are going to start on the process. And we agreed to some things and disagreed on others, but nothing was ever fundamentally shoved off the table that it couldn't be referred to during the four years that this committee would sit and represent the members of this legislature.

Tough questions have to be addressed over a period of time. The history of the British parliamentary system is one of a slow progression that ultimately leads to good change. Our system, our fundamentals, are based on the ability of people to stand and debate and not use physical violence upon one another in settling their disagreements. We have the opportunity to view other legislatures around the world. Most recently, I believe, we had incidents in Formosa and Taiwan where legislators came to physical blows on the floor of their House.

That isn't our tradition, Mr. Speaker. That isn't the way we settle our differences. That's why we have a Rules Committee that ever since this province came into being in 1905, the rule changes have happened by consensus. And I do agree with all those members of the NDP who stood on their feet in 1989 and said you shouldn't have rule changes brought in unilaterally by a majority government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we all know, those of us that were in that House at that time, those unilateral changes weren't made. They weren't made because consensus was not achievable. We didn't have the undemocratic situation

arise, even though some of us, some of us in the heat of debate, in the heat of political battle in this province, thought it would be right and justifiable at that time to bring in such a rule.

I have always fundamentally believed, Mr. Speaker, and have said to the folks in my riding time and time again, that I don't believe the taxpayers of this province should pay to put gas pipelines in the ground. But that's simply my feeling about it. I don't think taxpayers should have to do that. I think investors, the same as they do in every other province and territory in this country, should do that.

But that's a philosophical difference that we have in this province that we stand on our feet in this House and debate. And there were no rule changes brought in this legislature to take that philosophical difference and the ability to debate that difference away from us.

But now we have a government, a newly elected, large majority government that has got itself in a bind. And they've got themselves in a bind with a large segment of our population, a segment of our population that was the foundation of our province, that darn near every person in this province is either related to or has in its history people who work the land. And we all know the difficulties that those people have gone through, particularly in the last decade. And they have increasingly come to rely on the taxpayer of Saskatchewan and in Canada to sustain themselves in their everyday lives.

And along with that reliance, along with that reliance, has come the need for Saskatchewan men and women involved in farming to be involved in contracts, to become involved in insurance programs, to become every bit as much a paper-pusher as any small-business man in this province in order to sustain them and their families in their everyday life.

So when they get into that situation, Mr. Speaker, they have to rely upon legal tenets, legal codes. They, because they sign these contracts, are subject to the law. If they break the tenets of those contracts, they can be removed from the program. They can have their farming careers put in jeopardy if they break those contracts. You can't cheat on your seeded acreage report. You can't lie to the government about how much grain you've got stored in your granaries. You have to comply with the letter of the law.

Mr. Speaker, that increasing reliance has meant that these programs have become more difficult for the average Saskatchewan farming couple to understand. So the only thing that they can rely upon in many cases is the goodwill in the handshake of their crop insurance agent.

And that is what the fundamentals that we're talking about today, Mr. Speaker, in debating this motion, are. It isn't the fact that this bell-ringing problem that has been with us for decades has to be solved in a matter of hours. I am sure that if the GRIP problem wasn't with this legislature, that our Rules Committee over the course of the next four years would have come to a solution on this problem.

But we have another problem before us, Mr. Speaker, and let no one in this Assembly say that this particular motion is anything but the government's attempt to solve that problem. A news release put out today, Mr. Speaker, by the minister responsible for crop insurance — this very day that we go into this House, debating the fundamentals of our democratic principles in this House — a news release that says: despite any stalling tactics that might be used, the changes to GRIP will be legislated this summer — will be legislated this summer. Whether it changes the evidence in court, whether it takes the right of individuals to sue the government away, it will be legislated this summer and farmers will have no option.

(1600)

This very day that we debate this motion in this House, the minister of Crop Insurance lays it out clearly to the people of Saskatchewan where this government is coming from. Summer is half-way through, Mr. Speaker, and if he's going to meet his self-imposed deadlines, that means that he and his colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, are going to ram through this distasteful piece of legislation to take away the rights of people in the courts of our land. And that is what we're dealing with here today.

You know, Mr. Speaker, if this House was going to get into some fundamental rules changes that made it more democratic, I can think of all sorts of things that we could have talked about. We could have gone, for instance, to our Mother of Parliaments and looked at what they have done in the last 10 or 15 years to resolve some of their problems. The place from whence it all began probably could have given us some tenets upon which to build a better legislative process in Saskatchewan.

I mean when we see, Mr. Speaker, one of the most powerful, democratically elected leaders in the world brought to heel by her back-benchers — and I speak of Margaret Thatcher and the question of the poll tax in Great Britain — you know that they must have a system that truly has some democratic tenets to it.

When the now Prime Minister of Great Britain, John Major, could go against his own party and his own prime minister on a question of national defence — a large question of the British government of the day — and stand in his place and speak against his government and his party, take his seat, be re-elected, re-enter cabinet, and today be the Prime Minister of his country, then I suggest that we have a system that is worth looking at.

Because maybe some of these New Democratic Party back-benchers that were recently elected, with those kinds of rules — particularly the ones from rural Saskatchewan — would feel the courage to get up on their back legs and in this Assembly and say, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Minister of Crop Insurance, you have some fundamental flaws in what you are doing, in what you are presenting to rural Saskatchewan.

Maybe those are the rules that we should be looking at, Mr. Speaker, so that we don't get ourselves in this box of bell-ringing. Maybe those are the kind of rules that the Rules Committee should be studying with some due

diligence, and bringing back a report to this legislature and saying, we, in studying other precedents, have found ways that we can become more democratic, that we can better represent the people of Saskatchewan, that we can become better MLAs.

It was interesting to hear, Mr. Speaker, the member from Churchill Downs refer to the House of Commons several times, that this was the ultimate salvation for people in Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't suppose the House of Commons — at least from some of the comments that I hear around the piece — has any more credibility on questions of democracy some days than what we do. That's why people like Preston Manning — and I quote from today's *Leader-Post* in an article by Dale Eisler — why someone like Preston Manning can go about the land with the Reform Party and make significant inroads at the costs of the traditional political parties in our country.

Mr. Manning often tells a joke at his rallies, and I quote from the *Leader-Post*. The joke goes like this:

“What's the difference between a catfish and a politician?”
And the answer is: “One is a bottom-feeding, scum-sucker, and the other is a fish.”

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the motion that we're dealing with today talks about the folks other than the fish. And I would suggest maybe that most of them on this particular day are on that side of the legislature. Because that is why people — and Mr. Eisler goes on at great length in this article today — why people have lost confidence in their politicians and their political system.

It's because we as politicians don't take the time to do our due diligence, that the Rules Committee of this legislature, before it unilaterally votes a motion with a massive government majority to change a rule that has been with us since Confederation, would not take the time to go to some place and look at the rules such as they have in Great Britain or other jurisdictions that allow members to truly represent their riding, to truly be consistent, to come to this House and have the ability to say to Executive Council, we don't think you're doing things right; that we don't have the ability perhaps of premiers and prime ministers to dictate to the back benches, to say that you will never amount to anything in my government if you don't follow my wishes.

People in this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, want fundamental change in their elected officials, but they don't want what we're seeing in front of us today in this legislature. They don't want a government that says, I will change the evidence in a court case. They don't want a government that says, I sent you a letter, and because I didn't, I'm going to use my legislative majority to right a wrong. That doesn't build confidence. That only gives Preston Manning more opportunities to talk to more people, and say that politicians generically are the scum of the earth.

And I'm sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that people in this province of ours, who like all of us don't like bell-ringing, would've hoped that we, as elected officials, with a

responsibility thrust upon us to be the Rules Committee of this legislature, would not in four or five days time unilaterally come up with a rule change simply because a couple of ministers of the Crown have got themselves in a jackpot; even though they were forewarned ahead of time by the people that they're supposed to represent, that they were going to get in a jackpot, simply said, well it doesn't matter, we'll use our majority and we'll ram it through. That's not what people in this province want. They didn't want that from a new government. They wanted a government that would go out and truly do the right thing, not driven by some agenda from the front bench.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Premier, who in 1982, 1981 was the deputy premier of this province, the minister of Justice, and involved in a constitutional round at that time, saw fit to be in the kitchen of a hotel, along with Roy McMurtry and John Chrétien, and they dealt the cards that night, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They dealt the cards as to the way that our constitution would come home to Canada from Great Britain.

And when they dealt those cards, one of the fundamentals that came up on top — the ace that came up on top, and it was referred to time and time again — was that the ability of the executive branch of government to have its way with Canadian people will be for ever more changed this day. That we are going to shift our emphasis so that every man, woman, and child in the country of Canada will have their day in court. That we will fundamentally shift from the executive branch of government to the judicial side of our society.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not sure the jury is in on that decision, but the cards were dealt that night. Our Premier, today's Premier, dealt those cards, and he said, you will have your day in court. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the shoe is on the other foot. And this Premier and this government have got themselves in a legal bind with some of the people they represent. And instead of saying, all right, we messed up, let's let the courts settle the issue, let's give people in Canada according to the constitution as dealt by the now Premier, they said no, we can't take that chance.

We can't take the chance that we might be proven wrong, that we might have to offer Saskatchewan people the opportunity of choice, that it may cost the treasury some more money, that it may cost the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation some more money, but that the people out there who thought they had a contract — which they signed over a period of three years to guarantee their livelihood as farmers in this province, that they thought they had those rights, and that no government would try and change the evidence in a trial . . . in a hearing, that would guarantee those rights.

So what we have is a rule change proposal to this Assembly that fundamentally goes against what our now Premier dealt for us in 1982. The same man who is now on the constitutional trail again — we hope representing the people of Saskatchewan with that fundamental basis that he achieved in 1982 to back him up, that men and women in this province will have that day in court. And he is negotiating on our behalf further changes to our

constitution — the Canada clause and what will happen to our Senate — so that people ultimately have more rights, so that our democratic principles are furthered, so that the Senate of our land will have a greater opportunity to provide the checks and balances to the executive of government in the House of Commons.

And those are things that all Saskatchewan people, I think, fundamentally agree with. But they are built on the tenets that he brought forward and others in 1982. And now in his own Assembly, his own government, his own political party is bringing forward a rule change so that they can break those very tenets.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find that unacceptable. I think most people in my constituency will find it unacceptable. And I think once the full impact of it is known to Saskatchewan people, their concept of what is fair, what is right, will mean that they will say it is unacceptable.

Does it mean that the contracts that each and every one of us in our everyday lives signed can be broken by this government simply because some minister messes up? Does it mean that the contracts that are signed with the various unions, the contracts signed with various groups, third parties, NGOs (non-governmental agencies), can be broken because one of the ministers forgot to do something? And then they'll use their majority to right the wrong? Is that the way it's going to be for ever more after this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Assembly? Because that's the message that these people are giving. And their reluctance to stand on their feet and debate this question obviously shows that's the way it will be.

We have a tremendous reluctance over there to stand up and defend this thing. But no, no, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we get the chirping, but nobody on their feet.

The Minister of . . . Associate Minister of Finance said, you know in 1989 we took our political party and we ran around this province and member after member stood on platforms and said we're going to make this province ungovernable. Well it was bad enough when they were on the opposition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they threatened to make the province ungovernable. And now they're government and they're doing a darn good job of it. And I believe by bringing in a motion such as this that we even give these people more credence to make this province ungovernable.

(1615)

The member said you guys, during your walk out, haven't done anything substantial. Well I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a big difference between myself and the member from Churchill Downs. Because I would never go stand on a platform in this province and say that I was going to make the province ungovernable. I would never incite people to go to the doors of the legislature and kick them down and break in like members of the New Democrats feel quite comfortable in doing. I would never think of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I don't believe that is what people expect from elected officials of this legislature.

But I will tell you, Mr. Associate Minister of Finance, that there are 35 petitions going around my riding. I expect your home community of Greyburn will sign on quite heavily . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, we'll see when I start presenting them in this legislature, Mr. Associate Minister of Finance.

And those petitions are going around and they will be presented in here, I give you every bit of assurance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as they will in every other riding in this province. Because it's getting drier and drier out there and people are becoming worried about how they're going to pay their bills.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for us in this legislature to say that we are going to change the rules so that this government can make up for its shortcomings, so that that minister of Crop Insurance can get off his petard, then we are not doing what is fundamentally right, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know this minister, and I hope you allow me the latitude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk about the minister of Crop Insurance a bit because I think it does relate to this question in a big way. This minister has been throwing out deadlines to Saskatchewan farmers time and time again. He said, June 25 is it, boys. After June 25 I can't do anything more because the Tories, the Tories have walked . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The business before the Assembly . . . Order. The business before the Assembly is the motion that the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be concurred in. The Speaker has ruled on a number of occasions this afternoon — and I think we should respect his ruling — that references to other matters other than the rules may be alluded to but should not be specifically addressed. And therefore I would encourage the member to stick to the debate at hand.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I most certainly will follow your guidance, and if I had been allowed to continue . . . The minister was talking about the bell-ringing that we recently went through, that this legislature recently went through. The minister of Crop Insurance was saying that he could not do anything further in his job as Crop Insurance minister because the legislative process was at a standstill because of bell-ringing, that any further deadline movements could only be achieved if the legislature came back to work and he was allowed to bring things through here.

Well lo and behold, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've now had the deadline changed to July 20. And I didn't . . . unless I missed something in the last couple of days, I didn't notice a Bill coming through here. I didn't notice any motions by the minister of Crop Insurance. But, you know, a few short weeks ago he was saying the bells are ringing; I cannot do anything as minister to extend the deadline. And now, bang, it happens.

So what I gather from that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the minister of Crop Insurance was looking after his hide. He was looking after his political hide. It had nothing to do with the well-being of the people that he has been sworn

to represent — the oath that he took as minister of the Crown on behalf of. It had nothing to do with that. His political skin was on the line, because he's gone and extended the deadline and there's no bells ringing, at least not yet, anyway.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's the same old story. These people say one thing and do another, say one thing and do another. There have not been any negotiations on the issue that caused the bell-ringing in this legislature, I can assure you. There were lots while the bell-ringing was going on. And when the Government House Leader said, there have been many negotiations afterwards, I wondered who he'd been talking to because it sure as heck wasn't me. In talking to the other members of the opposition, it wasn't them. And the member from Greystone assures me it wasn't her.

So I didn't see any serious consideration from the Government House Leader of how we would sit down and negotiate a change to the problem at hand — the problem that the member from Rosetown and the member from Canora have got this Assembly into. I didn't see any effort to negotiate our way out. I didn't see the federal Minister of Agriculture being pressed by anyone to come and help us solve our problem. No.

Because I think what was happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the front rows of this government were saying, we are going to get ourselves out of this problem another way. We are going to unilaterally change the rules of this Assembly. We are going to use our majority in a way that it has never been used before in the history of our province. And we are going to get ourselves out of this box without negotiating with anyone.

We're not going to negotiate with the people that have taken us to court. We're not going to negotiate with the members of the opposition. We aren't going to negotiate with the federal Minister of Agriculture or the Prime Minister or anyone else. We're not going to use the time honoured tradition of negotiation and consensus. No. We're going to fundamentally change the rules of this House so that never again, even when we mess up in a really bad, ugly way, will we have to be accountable to anyone.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find that totally unacceptable. The question of bell-ringing has been on the minds of Saskatchewan people, it's true. But the question that's caused the bell-ringing has been on a lot more minds, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As the member from Rosthern alluded to in his remarks, while those bells were ringing some of us did take the opportunity to talk to the people that are the leaders in rural Saskatchewan. I was at one of those SARM district meetings, about 125 folks there, all elected like me. All elected because they stood for something. Maybe not the same level of issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you and I deal with in this Assembly, but people that have gone out, put their name on the line, and got themselves elected to public office.

And I'll tell you they were some upset that neither the minister responsible for Rural Development in this

province nor the Minister of Agriculture, for the first time in living memory of some of those older councillors, would not avail themselves of the SARM district meetings, would not come and listen to what elected people, the people that are always at the bottom end of the off-loading, would have to say on the issue.

And you multiply 125 times 125 times 125 all through six meetings, because that's how well they were attended. And the members of the opposition were there in twos and threes at every one of them. Not one New Democrat. The bells are ringing. The issue is GRIP. Not one New Democrat has the courage to go out and see what the elected folks in rural Saskatchewan have got to say for themselves.

Where was the Minister of Rural Development? If he believes so fundamentally that the bells were the issue, I would have thought he would have taken the opportunity to converse with the people that he has duly sworn to represent as a minister of the Crown. Those 8 or 900 people that took the time to go out to a SARM district meeting would have liked to have had the minister there to express his views on the issue. But no, he hid in this building. He hid in his office because he didn't want to hear the truth.

Because I'll tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those people took the member from Riversdale at heart when he dealt the cards in 1982 and he said that every man, woman, and child in this province would have their day in court. They took him at this word. They took him at his word. And that is why the member from Canora hid in his office while the bells were ringing instead of conversing with the people that he is duly sworn to represent.

And where, during the same period of time the bells are ringing in the province of Saskatchewan for 18 days, is the Minister of Agriculture? The guy with the two university degrees that tells everybody he's smarter than they are in rural Saskatchewan — where was he during this period of time? The bells are ringing; it's on people's minds.

Was he out meeting with the livestock producers? No. Was he out meeting with any of the folks that sat on the committee that supposedly okayed all of his changes? No. I mean you would have thought, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . The bells are ringing. Okay? The bells are ringing in the province of Saskatchewan because of what this minister has failed to do and is attempting to change. And you would have thought the first place you'd run to to get some back-up, to get somebody to help you out of your problem, would be the very folks that he claims got him into it in the first place.

But was he doing that? Was he talking to Hartley Furtan? Was he talking to the canola growers? Was he talking to any of these guys that's supposedly, you know, made the changes?

The bells are ringing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. No. Not one place where he could be held accountable, not with one group of people who wanted to know what was going on. And the bells were ringing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And where was he? Well we're not sure. If he wasn't

hiding in here, some said he was in Newfoundland. Others said he was some place else.

And now this Assembly is being called upon to fix this minister's problem through a unilateral rule change. I mean I don't know how any rural MLA in this Assembly can stomach being part of this process, how they can possibly go into their ridings as that crop wilts day by day and say that this minister that has hid from Saskatchewan people for months now would rather let the bells ring, would rather let the bells ring in this Assembly than back off his arrogant stand on GRIP . . . continues to hide from them.

How can those members allow that to happen? How can the member from Kinistino, the member from Yorkton, the member from Nipawin, how can they not grab that minister by the scruff of the neck and drag him out to some community hall and stand him up on a stage in front of real live farmers and say, come clean?

The bells are ringing, you know. We got a major problem here. We got a court case going. We got the potential for liability suits galore.

I mean he wouldn't even come out and say, well the truth be known the Minister of Finance told me to fix the problem, and I kind of messed up while I was doing it. And now I'm in a box, so I've got to use the legislature to get myself out. I mean if he even said that, I guess it would be something rather than hiding, rather than let the bells ring.

(1630)

I mean in my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, any conscionable member of this legislature would feel that compromise, co-operation, some sort of give and take is preferable to using that ultimate tactic in this legislature. I mean I heard New Democrat after New Democrat in this House in 1989 tell me that. I heard every last one of them get up on their feet and tell me that was the case; that no government should unilaterally change anything because they reserve the right to use that tactic. I mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could stand here and read verbatim for a good two hours.

The member from Churchill Downs's verbatim alone on that issue which I reviewed earlier today runs to some 14 pages of *Hansard*. Totally legitimate to stand in this House and quote verbatim of that debate in 1989. But I don't think that serves the purpose, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I as a government member was told over and over and over again by them that they had to reserve that ultimate right.

A majority government much smaller than what we face today, a majority government in its second term, and yet New Democrats felt so strongly about it that they stood on their feet for hours on end saying that they had to reserve that right unto their opposition so that Saskatchewan people would be protected.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, no one was in court. No one was going to lose their job. SaskEnergy could have been privatized, and for the guy out there working the pipeline

I don't suppose he'd have missed a minute's work. I don't suppose there'd have been a single court action anywhere. You and I would have still had the gas in our house. No one in court.

This situation is far different. By changing the rules in this Assembly we take the right of court away. We perhaps take the livelihood away. We take away the ability of people to educate their children. We take away the ability of rural communities to survive in our province because the dollars don't turn around in them. We take away the ability of farmers to have dignity. That is the potential down side to what we are addressing here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. People signed a contract and went out and did things. They rented land. They bought machinery. They did all sorts of things. And then the bells were the only alternative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to preserve that.

Someone who signed a contract in good faith and at the end of the day . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I've listened to the member carefully, and I've given the member every benefit of the doubt. But I must inform the member that he's straying from the subject at hand. And I would encourage him to address his remarks to the motion that's before us and to try and observe relevancy.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I guess what I'm trying to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that a certain segment of our society are very wrapped up in what we're doing here today. They have expressed a very strong desire to have their day because of contractual arrangements that they have made in many aspects of their life. And the fact that there is no tool available to their elected representatives, to the members of the opposition if this motion passes, for them to have that day in court is a very, very sad day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for our province.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice, May 29, 1989. The highest law giver in our province.

I am going to try again, Mr. Speaker, as previous speakers have done, to explain to you, and through you to the members on the government side, why what they are doing, why what they are doing is clearly wrong — trying to explain that we can and should approach the question of rule changes in the normal, traditional way, and why that's a good idea; and in particular, trying to explain why we shouldn't be doing this rule change at this time, in this climate, and in this particular way.

And I wouldn't expect anything different, Mr. Speaker, from the member from Fairview, a man that has been charged with the government of shepherding Saskatchewan's position on the constitution through the process that we as Canadians are now involved in.

I think the member from Fairview has a very succinct and rational way of outlining difficulties. And I would suspect that he is saying much the same thing to some of the members around the constitutional table. I wish he were

here today. I wish he were in this Assembly. Maybe this nonsense that we have going on today by the government wouldn't be happening if the member from Fairview were here.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. I think the member from Churchill Downs, Regina Churchill Downs knows full well when the Speaker is on his feet, you do not interrupt. I think the member also from Thunder Creek knows that he's twice now referred to the absence of a member, and he knows that that is unacceptable. And I ask him to refrain from doing so.

Mr. Swenson: — My apology, Mr. Speaker. I didn't intend on referring to the member from Fairview in any way that would take away from the very important job that he is doing for Saskatchewan people. But I was trying to make the point that I think on questions such as this he always has the ability to put it in a perspective that all members of this House should appreciate. He's that type of individual.

And certainly I don't think the member from Churchill Downs had that sort of rationale with him today when he stood in this House and brought the government's position on the motion forward, because they're diametrically opposed to what our Attorney General thought and felt just a short time ago.

And I quote again, Mr. Speaker, from the same day:

. . . Mr. Speaker, these are not the rules of the government; these are not the rules of the Minister of Justice; these are not the rules of the cabinet; these are not your rules, Mr. Speaker. They are the rules of the Assembly. These are my rules; these are the rules of my colleagues on this side of the House every bit as much as they are the rules of the government members.

Again the member from Fairview in 1989.

Mr. Speaker, what we're debating here is fundamentally different than what the member from Fairview talked about such a short time ago. And I don't know how this government can seriously, seriously look at itself, given my remarks about what our Premier was involved in 10 years ago; given the fact that he's involved in the same process. His Minister of Justice feels this way, and yet we have this government coming in with a unilateral rule change to the democratic rules and principles of this House that we have lived with since Confederation. All because a couple of the ministers of the Crown have messed up.

Now I think the easiest solution, Mr. Speaker, and maybe it's one that isn't available to the Premier, but I would think with such a large caucus that maybe the easiest solution would be simply to get rid of those two ministers, and sort of take the heat off out there a bit with Saskatchewan farmers and their families and say, look it, I've got a couple of new ministers here that are a little brighter and a little sharper and they won't try and mess you around as bad.

Maybe that'd be the ultimate solution. Rather than having

a rule change brought in that will affect this Assembly for maybe decades, I'm sure he could find a couple of people that would be more competent and perhaps they could negotiate some type of change that would strike a deal.

Maybe get a couple of new ministers that would meet with the folks in the court room and say, look it, I think this'll work or that'll work and I'll go see the guys in Ottawa and we'll work something out. Maybe that'd be the easiest solution rather than bell-ringing, Mr. Speaker, or worse yet, bringing in a motion that absolutely negates the ability of the opposition to give people their day in court.

There's lots of options and solutions here. There's lots of opportunity for the House Leader. I know that the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition had a short chat. And I'm sure there was options discussed at that time that would negate possibilities such as this from happening. I'm sure it would be preferable to everyone in this House that those type of negotiations take place.

I mean if worse came to worse, I guess, Mr. Speaker, we could change the Rules Committee. I mean if it was a problem of personalities or a problem of stubbornness on behalf of some members, I'm sure that if that was the problem, then each caucus could meet and we could change the members. I don't believe that that's the case with my caucus.

But you know, if that's what this Assembly needed was a complete change of members in order for us to get on with doing as tradition has dictated to us in this Assembly, then I think that would be a reasonable solution. That's something we could all live with. We could have a new Rules Committee. We could sit down and try and come to some kind of a compromise so that we don't have this unilateral decision by the government.

I mean when you think about it, Mr. Speaker, if this precedent is followed, how many committees of this legislature have been struck recently that haven't sat either for a great long time or have been newly constituted? If this is the precedent that will be followed, where the seven government members will simply ramrod every one of these committees, we are in for a terrible time, Mr. Speaker, in this House. Your ability to make this place function in any reasonable manner will be in great jeopardy.

If the environmental committee and the Municipal Law Committee and all of . . . the Constitutional Committee, a big one that is before us, a committee that is charged with coming into this Assembly with some options for us as members and for voters in this province as to whether we should hold a referendum or not — if we're going to have the same heavy hand, if we're going to have unilateral decisions made and not listen to people, then this Assembly won't work. It simply can't function under those circumstances.

And I, for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, didn't hear that option discussed. Last Thursday they have their first meeting, and it is now Tuesday and it's a done deal — a done deal. I would have liked this committee to come forward and say any place in the British parliamentary

system where a move this drastic was done in a matter of four days with a weekend in between. A done deal.

How long did it take the House of Commons to do away with bell-ringing? I say months and years, Mr. Speaker. How long did other jurisdictions take to make the decision? Probably at least one session while members discussed it.

An Hon. Member: — Not accurate.

Mr. Swenson: — Well the member from Churchill Downs says, not accurate. Well then get one of these other folks up on their feet and tell us what the precedents were then. Tell us about the precedents in the House of Commons and in other legislatures. It would be nice to hear those precedents. It would be nice to know the time frames.

I have the member from Regina Rosemont. I reviewed his verbatim from 1989 on bell-ringing and how he felt about the rights of members of this Assembly, and how that right should be preserved at that time. Maybe the member from Regina Rosemont will give us the precedents in other provinces of how they managed through consensus and co-operation to change the rules of their Assembly. I'm sure that members on this side would love to hear it.

(1645)

But that's the kind of thing that I think your Rules Committee should do as they walk through step by step, arriving at a reasonable solution. As I said earlier in my remarks, you know, maybe the Rules Committee would have spent more valuable time looking at the British parliament so that members in this House would truly feel free to stand and express their wishes instead of having bells as the ultimate tactic.

Because I think anything, Mr. Speaker, would have been more fruitful for the Rules Committee than some hurry-up offence so that the minister from Canora can get his deadlines met. That's simply unacceptable. That simply won't give any member of this House the freedom to represent his constituents in a truly democratic fashion. That's not how it's done.

That Rules Committee, if it was deadly serious about solving this problem in a proper manner, would have taken the time to look at the other options. And those options cannot be discussed thoroughly in four days time.

I mean, it seemed, when our members reported back to the caucus this morning, that it was all a foregone conclusion about what was going to happen in there. And I just, as a member of this Assembly, find that unacceptable, how anyone could have a preconceived notion in a few days time, that this is how it was going to be. It simply doesn't work that way in this Assembly and never has — never, never has. And yet that is what we have before us today.

The member from Rosthern, in his opening remarks today, I think said it all when he said this was the most undemocratic motion that had ever entered the floor of this Assembly. And I cannot, Mr. Speaker, think of any

precedent — in my memory at least — of Canadian parliamentary practices where such a thing has been done.

It'll be a black mark on Saskatchewan's record, that we are the ones that will be held up across this country as being the ones who would act this way; that our mark in the parliamentary journals of Canada will be that we, in a four-day period of time, unilaterally changed the rules of our Assembly when knowing full well that the motive behind it was to deny Saskatchewan people their day in court.

That's the kind of thing . . . They might even put a little asterisk beside it, you know. Sort of like when Roger Maris hit 61 home runs, you know, and Babe Ruth hit 60. And he broke the record, but it was in more games. Maybe we'll get a little asterisk beside our province in the parliamentary journals of our country for the quickest change in the rules of an Assembly, you know.

And I'm not sure that that's particularly what I want to be remembered for, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to know . . . I'm not particularly proud of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that I was part of a bell-ringing episode either, because I think it brought me down to the level of other politicians in this province that I didn't really want to be brought down to.

But I guess the fact that we've both done it now — and that only leaves the Liberals to go, Mr. Speaker — means that we probably should be able to sit down and analyse the problem as mature adults. We should be able to come to some sort of conclusion, because the tar brush was on both of us, you know, that we should've been able to reach a conclusion that had a reasonable, reasonable chance of acceptability — acceptability on the floor of this House, amongst people who are charged with partisan feelings most of the time but, more importantly, acceptable to those that will come behind us and fill these seats as they represent people in our province.

That the legacy that we would leave to the people who will fill these seats in subsequent elections would be a set of rules that everyone would feel comfortable with; that the rule changes were accomplished without the rancour and the hard feelings that are going to accompany this one; that every committee of this legislature will be tainted over the term of this government — because it will be; that the ability to co-operate and achieve will be lessened because of these rule changes.

That isn't much of a legacy to leave, Mr. Speaker. That's not something that I particularly wanted to be remembered for. It's not something that any duly-elected member of this House I think should aspire to, but that's what we have before us.

If the members of the opposition simply throw up their hands and say it's a done deal, that's the legacy — that's the notation in the history books, that's the notation in the parliamentary journals. That'll be it.

For some members of this House who may only serve one term — and there's always lots of them, and as I look around I can pick out quite a few that I'm sure won't be back — that'll be it. This will be it. I was part of the

Assembly that unilaterally changed the rules to cover one of my minister's backsides.

Now I'm not sure that's why you get elected to the legislature of Saskatchewan. That's not why you leave your farm and your family for four years to be a member of the legislature. That's not why you can't go to your kid's ball game or your kid's hockey game — so that you got a legacy like that. That just isn't in the cards, or it shouldn't be, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why I'm saying, if it is a problem with that Rules Committee, with the personalities involved, with the approach that those members have taken, then before this Assembly commits this ultimate act, maybe we should get 10 more members of this Assembly who don't want that legacy on their record to take a crack at it.

Maybe we should do a little more due diligence. Maybe we should check out other jurisdictions to make sure that the next time an issue as strong as this in another government who may have a different majority, a different make-up, a different split between rural and urban — that when faced with the problem, when faced with the problem, Mr. Speaker, that the rule change, the legacy that we leave before them will fit the problem, will fit the problem, Mr. Speaker. That the next time the issue is big enough, is big enough to have members feel this strongly, and be it a year from now or 10 years from now, that the rule changes that we have brought to this Assembly, that will be beside our names, is one that those elected members down the road will judge to be competent, to be fair, to be democratic, and to fit the Saskatchewan mode. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe for a minute what we are doing in this Assembly with this motion is the kind that I want to leave to other legislators down the road because it is tainted. It is tainted to the point that it should never see the light of day. And that taint will never be removed from it. It will always be there.

There isn't one rule in this Assembly, not one as far as I know, that has not been achieved through consensus and co-operation, from our very first premier through the devastation of the 1930s, when all about us other governments were using heavy-handed powers, the jackboots rang on the cobble-stones of Europe. Joseph Stalin slaughtered his own farmers. Asia was in turmoil.

In the 1930s in this province no government brought in unilateral changes to the rules to ram something through this Assembly even though our people were starving. The dirt was blowing. People were on relief. Was there a rule change brought into this Assembly unilaterally by any government to use the heavy hand? No.

During the Second World War when conscription was a crisis and every legislature in the country was faced with problems, was there the heavy hand of a rule change brought in? No.

And now in this legislature in 1992, all of a sudden, 87 years into Confederation, this government feels it is necessary to do that, to deny people's day in court, to change evidence, to change history. And I say, Mr. Speaker, that that isn't a good enough reason — that is not a good enough reason to break all the precedents of this

legislature.

That government can take that document in its draft form and lay it on the table in the court room and have it judged in that form and make their arguments, as their lawyers say, and there won't have to be any bell-ringing in this Assembly.

That option was given to the government: simply take your draft Bill and lay it on the table, enter it as a draft Bill as evidence along with everything else you have and give people their day in court as our constitution predicated in 1982. But they won't do that. They would rather desecrate this Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, that option seemed so simple — so simple.

Well, Mr. Member from Prince Albert, you're going to have lots of opportunity to stand up and give one that's exceptionally bright and lucid and all the rights reasons, and I hope you take that opportunity. I hope you take that opportunity because it's going to be beside your name as well as it's going to be beside mine. And if you have any credibility as a member, you'll want to make sure that you're on the record, make sure you're on the record for doing this deed in the legislature of Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I realize that it's almost 5 o'clock and I have many things I would like to say regarding the Bill and motion before the House, so I would just give the Speaker the opportunity or I will begin my discussions on the Bill before the House.

Mr. Speaker, the motion that's been presented to this Assembly this afternoon is certainly a motion that I think any person with any moral conscience, regardless of whether they live within the province of Saskatchewan or in Canada or any part in the world in a democratic nation, would find very offensive and reprehensible.

It is just, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, very inconsiderate of any party, any political party regardless of their political persuasions, to take advantage of the massive majority they may have at any time to effectively change . . . or change the rules, change the procedures, of any legislature or any business without the consultative process that has worked over the many years, not only in this Legislative Assembly . . .

The Speaker: — It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 7 o'clock this evening.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.