

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, I have reviewed the following petition pursuant to rule 11(7), and it is hereby read and received:

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse the action of closing the Elbow School.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and privilege today to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly, His Excellency, Ambassador Wen from the People's Republic of China who is with us here today. Along with his His Excellency Wen is Mrs. Wen, and also Mr. Bi who is the second secretary of China.

They're with us here today to look at economic development projects in Saskatchewan and relationships between our province and the People's Republic of China. As members will know and many members of the official opposition, that the long-standing goodwill between China and Saskatchewan is being enhanced today and we look forward to doing many projects as we have in the past.

I want all members to join with me in welcoming His Excellency and group here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Government House Leader in welcoming the ambassador and his delegation to the legislature today.

I had an opportunity to have breakfast with the ambassador yesterday. And we reminisced and talked about the many opportunities that we've had in Saskatchewan to host people like Mr. Wan Li who is chairman of the People's Congress, and have delegations come into the province and exchange information and have successful projects between Saskatchewan and Canada and the People's Republic of China.

So I want to welcome the ambassador here and also say that he and his colleagues are welcome back in the province of Saskatchewan at any time in the future.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and fellow members of the legislature, I want to take this opportunity to commend our Premier on the leadership role that he has shown in the present

constitutional negotiations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — His attitude of co-operation or honourable compromise was obviously an important and very much needed example of leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we live in a country that has so much going for it that it is hard to believe that we could be on the brink of throwing it all away. Around the world Canadians are highly regarded for our accomplishments but also for our consideration of others. We are seen as a peaceful, sensible, and co-operative nation, and by and large I believe that to be an accurate reflection of Canadian people.

The constitutional debate has too long been used for political manipulation and means of power brokering or one-upmanship. To that end our country's leaders up to now had done a poor job of reflecting our wishes and concerns in attempting to amend the constitution.

Mr. Speaker, Canadians are tired of the process of smoke-screens and hidden agendas. The Canada conferences that were held last winter prove that if people enter into the debate with a sincere desire to listen to others and resolve to overcome barriers, and problems can and will be solved.

The Speaker: — Order. The member's time is up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hamilton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While we contemplate new partnerships to make us stronger nationally, I would like to share with you that last evening I was honoured to be present and bring greetings to the Chinese ambassador to Canada, Ambassador Wen and Mrs. Wen.

Ambassador Wen tells us of our strength and the partnership we have developed with the People's Republic of China. Last night at New Canton restaurant the ambassador was met by all of the Chinese associations and groups in Regina, by special visitors also from Moose Jaw and Balcarres. And it's the first time that all of the groups have been together. The people of Chinese heritage in Saskatchewan add strength to our business, academic, and multicultural community. We are richer for their presence and their contribution to the life and work of Saskatchewan.

Yesterday Ambassador Wen and Mrs. Wen toured a Saskatchewan farming operation and an elevator site. Today they have been introduced to you by the minister responsible for Economic Diversification and Trade. And they will also visit a potash mine and be going on to Saskatoon. With the tour of the potash mine I think it is significant and suggestive of the special relationship that has developed in recent years between China and between our province.

Potash is one of our major resources and one of the keys to our economic development. It is a commodity much in

demand in China and as such is a real sign of a growing relationship.

Our trade and resources such as potash has also led to . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to bring to your attention and to the attention of the House, Mr. Speaker, a wagon train which is moving through south-eastern Saskatchewan. This wagon train and trail ride retraces the footsteps of the Boundary Commission of 1872 and the path taken by the North-West Mounted Police as they moved west into western Canada in 1874.

The wagon train started on Saturday from Coulter park in Manitoba where they had arrived last year from Fort Dufferin. And they will proceed on to Roche Percee near Estevan. And next year they hope to carry the wagon train on to Wood Mountain. This year there are 31 wagons and over 200 people participating in this event.

On Monday I had the opportunity to meet with and to address the group at Winlaw Park south of Gainsborough. Another one of the guest speakers that were there, Mr. Speaker, was State Senator Orlin Hanson from North Dakota.

I'd like to congratulate the committee on all the hard work they have done in making this a success. And especially I would like to congratulate Mrs. Olive Murray of Estevan and Mr. Mike Bartolf of Oxbow for the hard work they have put into it. I wish them well on their journeys and good weather. And I just hope that Mrs. Olive Murray's horse remembers to head west rather than east, as it did on Saturday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we talk a lot about co-operation. And some might say we talk about it too much. I would say not so, Mr. Speaker. In my home city of Saskatoon, three important events show that the spirit of co-operation isn't a mere slogan, but rather it's a prescription for community action.

The Partnership, which is Saskatoon's Downtown Business Improvement District board, has been working with individuals, businesses, clubs, and tourist organizations to make Saskatoon the place to be this summer. In the words of the song by a not-so-young rock group: it's a hot time summer in the city in Saskatoon.

First, The Partnership and the *Star-Phoenix* co-operated in staging the second annual Grand Prix go-kart races. These go-karts are about the size of field mice and they go as fast as mosquitoes on a hot summer night. I was privileged to drive in one of the races, Mr. Speaker, but due to the dastardly driving manoeuvres of Kent Smith-Windsor, the executive director of The Partnership, I wasn't able to win.

For my second example of co-operation in Saskatoon, I need only mention the Saskatoon Jazz Festival which also took place last week in Saskatoon. They have an array of talent every bit as varied and creative as any we'll see in this country. Indeed, the Saskatoon Jazz Festival has become the beacon for the musically hip all across Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, this coming weekend The Partnership is also organizing the Player's Ltd. Powerboat Championships. For the . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member's time has elapsed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Serby: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Recently I had the opportunity to address approximately 500 Kinettes and Kinsmen at the district convention in Yorkton.

The Kinsmen Foundation, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan was established in 1971 to assist Saskatchewan people with physical, mental, and social disabilities. The major thrust of the foundation is the last-resort funding for programs and quality of life issues for people who are disabled. Telemiracle 16 in March of this year raised some \$2 million which will be spent in 1992-93.

The foundation, in partnership with the Department of Social Services, funds approximately 30 per cent of the sheltered workshops in our province, activity centre construction, and provides basic furnishings for group homes. Each year the Kinsmen Foundation provides another 1.5 million to support agencies, organizations, and individuals as a funder of last resort.

Today we see the Kinsmen Foundation working in all of our communities across Saskatchewan, like SCEP (Socialization, Communication, Education Program) Centre in Regina, Cheshire Homes in Saskatoon, the Red Deer nursing lodge in Porcupine, Prince Albert homes, just to name a few.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in applauding and commending Governor Rossler of the Kinsmen, and Kinettes in this province for the work that they do in enhancing Saskatchewan and the quality of life in our province. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon. Darrel Cunningham and the Saskatchewan Water Corporation . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott: — . . . for the responsible stand and forward-thinking position in announcing that Saskatchewan should not be an exporter of water on a major scale. Not only in Saskatchewan but in Canada as a whole, our fresh water resource is one of our most

precious resources. We need to manage, utilize, and protect this important resource for today and future generations.

In the past we have not placed much importance on our water. For an example, it was not even on the negotiating table in the far-reaching Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement until the serious oversight was quickly and loudly brought to the attention of the free trade negotiators by concerned Canadians. There was widespread suspicion and considerable evidence that the Rafferty-Alameda dams project was a part of an overall future water diversion and export project.

I am sure that none of us think we should sit on significant fresh water resources while our friends to the south are dying of thirst. However, I believe that Saskatchewan's policy on water export should clearly identify that our water is valuable and will not be squandered and sold at fire-sale prices and wasted.

What we need is a water-use policy in Saskatchewan. Such a policy should include all aspects of water use, management, and conservation, including wetlands, ground waters, lakes, and rivers. And we also have to look at pollution and contamination.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to Health Care

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you and members of the legislature. I direct, Mr. Speaker, my questions to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, I believe even you will find it hard to deny that you, your Premier, and all of your NDP (New Democratic Party) colleagues sold yourselves as champions of the health care system during your term in opposition and particularly during the election period.

Every time the former administration, meaning us, attempted to streamline the health care system the NDP — led by you, Madam Minister — sounded the death-knell and trotted out inflamed rhetoric and exaggerated claims that this was the end of medicare in Saskatchewan. Madam Minister you did that. I am sure you are familiar with your own cries of protest, Madam Minister, but even your own barrage of political inflammatory won't recognize that fact.

Madam Minister, I ask you: since you have gained power a short eight months ago you have done more to dismantle the health care in this province than any previous . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The member has talked well over a minute and I still have not heard a question from him. Would he please put his question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister I ask you: because you have dismantled health care more than any other administration in the history of this province, wouldn't you consider this a complete breach of faith, another broken promise to the citizens of

Saskatchewan?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, in the last budget we increased the funding for home-based services by some 20 per cent; something that should have been done in the last 10 to 12 years when they were in power, but they refused to move on it.

We established boards in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert which have gone a long way already to increasing the co-operation of health care institutions and health care workers in those cities, and which have gone a long way to increasing the efficiencies in the health care system. And we'll be seeing more from these boards in the years to come. It has been considered a very positive move in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

We have done a number of things in the health care area. For example, the setting up of a utilization commission that will take a look at the services that are available to Saskatchewan people and whether or not we're getting the best services and the best procedures for the taxpayers' dollars.

We have done this, Mr. Speaker, in a short period of some eight months or whatever the time period is since November. We have done all that. It has been positive reform in the health care system. It's been viewed by health care workers as being necessary, and they're simply very pleased to see a government taking some leadership.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you have done a number of things to the health care system of Saskatchewan. You have cut funding. First time in the history of Saskatchewan that I know that that has happened and that is in spite of the rhetoric that you said you would never do that, Madam Minister.

You, coming back to my original line of questioning, use scare tactics. The greatest public relations gimmick of the decade, Madam Minister — you used medicare. You would go about scaring the sick, the elderly, believing that the big, bad Tories would take away their nursing homes or prescription drugs or access to hospitals. You told them that you would increase that kind of funding and that people wouldn't have to worry about health care under an NDP administration.

Well we reduced the level of coverage for prescription drugs. You said people would have to choose between . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Does the member have a question? I think the preambles are getting much, much too long. I would ask the member to please state his question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, can you tell this Assembly what other promises in health care you intend to break?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, there have been a

number of things that have been introduced into the hospital system in the last few months, since this government has taken power, that were long overdue. For example, the movement towards more community-based services, more home-based services, and more day surgery.

Not only will this save the people of Saskatchewan a fortune in terms of health care costs, but it will also improve the quality of health care services in the long run as we have the opportunity to develop health care reform in this province.

I want to say that this government wants to create a high-quality health care system that is more efficient than the one that we've had in the past, that contains costs, and that moves towards more health promotion and disease prevention.

This government has been left, this government has been left with a huge debt — a legacy of debt by the former government — some \$15 billion, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, every time hospital budgets were held or were increased at the rate of inflation by us as the former administration, you jumped in the front of the cameras and screamed, foul. In fact, you trotted out the NDP medicare manual and said that people were going to die because we were only giving small increases to the health budget.

And that's truly amazing, Madam Minister, because once you scared people into believing your rhetoric and getting them to vote for you, you turned around and gut funding to hospitals and nursing homes.

Madam Minister, another broken promise. Will there be any promises you made in health care that are going to be kept by your bungling and inept government?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, when the members opposite were reducing funding to health care, they had no plan. They had no plan and they had no strategy. It was simply a question of going in and providing hospitals with inadequate funding. The difference between their government and our government is that we are working on developing and implementation of a long-term strategy, and that began in November of 1991, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — We are developing a long-term strategy to deal with the institutional sector in Saskatchewan and to deal with home-based services, Mr. Speaker — long overdue in this province, and something that is recognized right across this country by every single province. The direction that Saskatchewan is going, the rest of the country is going as well, Mr. Speaker. But they are still 15 years behind the rest of Canada in their thinking.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, let me correct you on one point. This opposition, while in government never reduced health care funding — never, never.

Madam Minister, perhaps one of the most infamous medicare tactics was uncovered during the Assiniboia-Gravel by-election where your Premier, now Premier, sent out a letter to the constituents saying that if the Tory was elected we would close all five hospitals in the Assiniboia-Gravelbourg. And I know the anxiety that that created amongst the sick and the elderly, the anxiety.

I worked in that by-election. I was partly responsible for defeating your candidate and giving the citizens of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg a good Christmas present in the form of Jack Wolfe. Madam Minister, can you . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Will the members please allow the member to ask his question. And I wish the member would put his question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly put the question.

Madam Minister, can you tell this Assembly, given your funding cuts, given your record of breaking promises, can you tell us whether you now intend to close any nursing homes or rural hospitals in this province?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, what this government intends to do is to come forward with a long-term strategy, which we have been talking about over the last several months, that will see us move towards the integration of health care services on a small district basis — not the size of the Murray Commission districts but on a smaller basis. The health care sector . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I have just interrupted the members to allow the member to ask a question. Now I have to stand up and ask the members to allow the minister to speak. Could we please allow the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — We are going to be improving the health of Saskatchewan people through the implementation of a long-term strategy that requires community involvement and community input into co-ordinating and integrating services on a small-district basis. We are not going to get involved into their silly politics which simply is to try and make an issue out of something that doesn't exist, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new question to Madam Minister. You, Madam Minister, are the ones that have created the issue, and that is what we are exploring here in this question period this afternoon.

Madam Minister, let me ask you then a very simple question, and it requires a very simple answer. And I'm sure you're capable of doing that, Madam Minister. Is it not true, as we've suspected all along, that your wellness model, your wellness model is merely a cover-up for

breaking yet another promise, that it's a sham, that it's a charade, that it's a cop-out, Madam Minister?

The Speaker: — Order. Let the minister answer the question. You've asked a question; let the minister answer it.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, no wonder this province stood still in the health care area for the last 12 years. The fact of the matter is the movement, the wellness approach, talks in terms of moving towards more community-based services, towards more co-ordination and integration of services, towards more disease prevention and health promotion. That's what we've been talking about. That's what we mean by wellness. We mean a completely integrated approach in a very broad sense. That is what the rest of Canada is talking about, Mr. Speaker. That is the direction that health care is moving across this country, and we're asking the members opposite to get off their dead horse and . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A simple question, Madam Minister, a simple answer, no preamble. Is your wellness model not a façade under which you will be closing or radically changing rural hospitals in our province?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — No it is not a façade, Mr. Speaker. What the wellness approach is intended to do is to improve the quality of health care for the people of Saskatchewan. It is a direction that we have to move in terms of the health care area. There is no question about that.

The members opposite can say what they want. They can play the games that they want. The fact of the matter is, is that the wellness approach will improve the quality of health care for the people of Saskatchewan over the long-term period.

Reform however, Mr. Speaker, does take a long time. It doesn't . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Obviously, Madam Minister, a preamble is necessary to get some answers out of you. You say playing games. You, Madam Minister, are the ones that are playing games with your promises and then your broken promises where you are doing exactly what you always said that you would never do, Madam Minister.

Now, Madam Minister, I want you to admit that you have plans — you have plans, Madam Minister — to close or convert rural hospitals in Saskatchewan in direct contradiction to the many promises that you made prior to and during the election. Will you admit that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is we will be coming forward, I would imagine fairly shortly but it will, you know, I don't know . . . I can't give the legislature a time frame, with some information as to what we will be asking communities and districts to do, which is to get together and organize their health care services on a district basis — perhaps about the size of a home care district. That is what our thinking is.

However we will want to be consulting with local communities about what their health care needs are and how we can best meet their health care needs. So we see this process as being developmental, as being community oriented, as being consultative.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will in the months to come be going out and talking to communities about all the range of health care issues that affect us today. We'll be talking to them about what sort of facilities they feel they need; whether they need improvements here, whether their facilities are performing the functions that they want them to perform. It will be very consultative; there'll be a lot of community involvement on this process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You talk about time frame, Madam Minister, that you're not able to share with us this afternoon. Well I hope to, as critic, help speed up that time frame a little bit as we go along here.

Madam Minister, the issue that I'm raising right now is a very serious concern for rural Saskatchewan, indeed all citizens of Saskatchewan. And I would ask you to give us the straight goods on the question that I'm asking you.

Now I know it's difficult for you to come up with those kinds of answers while you're busy eating crow. But, Madam Minister, will you confirm — will you confirm, Madam Minister, that in closing or converting these hospitals that many rural jobs will be lost; that nurses and physicians may be a thing of the past in many rural communities, Madam Minister? Will you confirm that and tell us how many?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, when we talk about eating crow, I want to remind the members opposite there's only 10 of them sitting on that side of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — They are eating crow on the \$15 billion deficit that they left this province and virtually bankrupted the future of our children. And if they aren't, they should be. Because I get the distinct feeling as I sit in this legislature every day and listen to them that they are trying to absolve themselves of any responsibility for the horrendous situation they've left the people of Saskatchewan in, in this province.

And they should be ashamed of themselves. Through their mismanagement and incompetence, they have created a debt that makes it necessary for this government

to take steps in many areas that are very difficult decisions.

And I want to remind the members opposite that this . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, will you tell us which of the hospitals will be closing?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I have said repeatedly in this legislature — not just today but on other days — we are going to be going out to communities and talking about their health care needs and involving them in the process of health care reform. That's what we will be doing, Mr. Speaker. So I want the members opposite to know that clearly.

I am answering the question that we will be talking to communities about what . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — I asked you, Madam Minister, when will we know which one are the ones? You're refusing to answer.

Madam Minister, will you also confirm that you have been studying the concept of placing doctors in salaried positions instead of the fee-for-service arrangement that we've had in the past, that we've had since the inception of medicare? Can you confirm that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — We are having negotiations with the medical profession with respect to what kind of forms of payment would be acceptable and that could be implemented in the province. We have no intention of moving to a salaried system where all doctors are put on salary. We are, however, exploring alternative forms of payment, which we have spoken about before in this legislature even when we were in opposition. So we are having discussions with the medical profession in that regard.

I also want to say this. That right across this country — right across this country — provinces are exploring alternative forms of payment for the medical profession. They are experimenting with them in other jurisdictions. And I think it's time for Saskatchewan to once again show a little leadership, have discussions with the medical profession . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I don't believe in the last 15 or 20 minutes this afternoon that you've been giving the citizens of Saskatchewan the straight goods. You've been dancing and side-stepping and twisting in your attempt not to answer the questions that I'm asking. And I think I'm asking very legitimate questions.

But, Madam Minister, will you confirm, in direct

contradiction to statements that you made while you were in opposition, that you will be firing all health boards in the province and will implement a regionalized health care system, and that contrary to your opposition to such an idea, you will be giving these new districts taxing powers? Would you answer that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, that is just simply ridiculous. We are not going to be firing any health care boards. What we will be doing is this — I hope here's what we will be doing — is that we will go as we did to Saskatoon and Regina and Prince Albert and we will be talking to people about the possibility of forming one board, which they did in Saskatoon and Regina.

That will not necessarily mean that the remaining boards no longer exist, but through the input from these facilities and from these communities, we hope to come up with one board instead of 500, as there are in the province, one for each small district. I think that's a good idea.

Your own Murray Commission said that there should be movement in that direction. Everybody in the health care field knows we should be moving to some sort of co-ordination and integration on a district basis. It's just a question of how large these districts should be. We believe they should . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, you brought up the topic of the Murray Commission, and I know and I have a lot of quotes on you, Madam Minister, and your complete opposition to what the Murray Commission was recommending, your complete opposition. And I tell you we've got your quotes. You're on record as opposing many, if not most, of the recommendations on the Murray Commission.

Now, Madam Minister, will you admit now that you have done a complete flip-flop from your days in opposition; now you are looking at the Murray Commission and saying, oh, by golly, it's not so bad, we're going to implement those recommendations? Will you confirm that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are simply hopeless. I indicated here that it's their Murray Commission that recommended organization on a very large district basis. My next statement was, was the debate was over the size of the district, and we disagree with Murray's district sizes. And we have said that repeatedly, and we say that today. We think the organization should be on a smaller basis, Mr. Speaker, on a smaller basis. The members opposite know that. They know what our criticisms were with respect to the Murray Commission. And they're right that we did have a lot of criticisms with respect to the Murray Commission.

With respect to taxation, I want to say this, because that was in the member's former question which I didn't have a chance to address . . .

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

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, you know full well that the issues that I have been raising this afternoon are exactly those that you are planning and scheming to implement. Madam Minister, individuals are so appalled by your bungling that we are in command of a lot of the information that you're talking about.

And I'm just going to say to you, Madam Minister, like your NDP crop insurance plan only works if there's a good crop, your NDP wellness plan only works if you are well. That is the fundamental issue at stake here.

Now, Madam Minister, I ask you, I ask you if you have a plan that is going to be divulged to the public of Saskatchewan soon. And if so, when? When are you going to do that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is that we have been meeting with stakeholders as we develop the wellness approach. We've been meeting with stakeholders on a regular basis. We will be coming forward with a ministerial statement when we have that information together. It is not going to be a blueprint or a plan that's imposed on the province. It will require a lot of community consultation and input.

We will be coming forward. It is not a blueprint that is imposed on the province. It will set goals and guidelines and general directions, Mr. Speaker, that we will want the community to give us input on and to discuss. And we will be coming forward with that hopefully in the next few weeks.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order, order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 67 — An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act, repeal The Surrogate Court Act and make Consequential Amendments to Certain Other Acts resulting from the Amalgamation of the Surrogate Court and the Court of Queen's Bench

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move first reading of a Bill to amend The Queen's Bench, Surrogate Court Act.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

Bill No. 68 — An Act to amend The Education Act

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Education Act be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the Bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, as it relates to questions put by members, item No. 40, I hereby supply the answer.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader supplied the answer.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

The Speaker: — Order, order. Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Before orders of the day, I've got a couple of motions dealing with absence from the legislature, I'd like to move — or one of them.

The Speaker: — We'll have to return to that. Does the member have leave to return?

Leave granted.

MOTIONS

Granting of Leave for Members to attend Conference

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That leave of absence be granted to the hon. members for the constituencies of Lake Centre, Cut Knife-Lloydminster, and Arm River from Monday July 20, 1992 to Wednesday, July 22, 1992 inclusive for the purpose of attending the Midwestern Legislative Conference in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Motion agreed to.

Referral of *Estimates* and *Supplementary Estimates* to the Standing Committee on Estimates

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move:

That the *Estimates* and *Supplementary Estimates* for the Legislative Assembly, being subvotes 1 to 3, 5 to 7, 20 to 23, and 26 of the vote 21 for the Provincial Auditor, being vote 28 be withdrawn from the Committee of Finance and referred to the Standing Committee on Estimates.

This is a standard motion that we pass at this point every session. If the members opposite want to take a moment to look at this, we would agree to that. This is a standard motion of referral that happens each session.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, if it's in order, I would suggest to the House Leader, Government House Leader, that he bring it forward tomorrow and then we'll have time. Because I don't think it will be creating any kind of a problem if that happens. On that basis we'd provide leave at that time for him to do it.

The Speaker: — I'm not quite certain what we do under these circumstances. Do we just defer it? All right.

Leave not granted.

(1415)

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Special Committee on Rules and Procedures

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Shillington that the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be now concurred in.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night, Mr. Speaker, we saw the Premier of Canada deal with the establishment of rules under which this country will live. The people there came to a compromise to establish those rules.

And it is relevant, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of this province throughout the entire process of negotiating the rule changes, said no. No one must impose deadlines. No to deadlines is what he was saying to the people of Saskatchewan and to the people of Canada, no artificial deadlines. We must not have our hands tied and our minds boggled with time constraints that immobilize the ability of people to participate in the democratic process.

But what about when it comes to establishing rules for this Assembly, Mr. Speaker? What about then? And that, Mr. Speaker, is why we are here debating and discussing the rule changes that are suggested under the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures.

Because you see, Mr. Speaker, we feel that there is a direct alignment to the philosophy that would govern the decisions that we would make in establishing the rules that we would run our country under through a constitutional agreement and what we are doing here in this Assembly to establish rules under which our democratic process will operate here in the province of Saskatchewan. There has to be a direct link in the philosophy of how rules apply throughout democracy, from one level of government to the other, whether that be from the municipal level to the provincial level or to the federal level.

When we are told that we have immediate deadlines and there will be no compromises, then the process cannot work any easier for us here than it would at the federal level. The rules by which this Assembly live are simply too much more complex for the government, and it would appear then that the rules that make up the constitution of this country . . . our rules are so much more difficult to compromise on than the constitution. That's what we're being told in essence when we look at what is happening.

But that shouldn't have to be, necessarily. Because quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely absurd. The rules to govern how we will administrate democracy in the province are really fundamentally no different than the rules that would be required to run the federal government and the nation as a whole.

The government would have us believe that the length of time for bell-ringing is more difficult to deal with than the issue of aboriginal government or Senate reform. How can that possibly be? Think about what that says to the people of this country. Bell-ringing is more difficult to deal with than the issues that we have watched played over our television news media for the last number of years.

This is no more difficult than that. This is no more difficult than sitting down and negotiating a reasonable approach to a consensus on any issue that might face us at any time. This is not the end-of-the-world, earth-shattering issue that everybody has to have solved by force, by deadlines, by drama, by the big fist of power. This is rather a very simple and ordinary kind of rule, in our context.

True, we have held on to a rule here that is somewhat different than the ones used in other jurisdictions. And true, it may be time that we sit down and discuss rule changes just as we did last winter before this Assembly began its work. But as I pointed out last evening, Mr. Speaker, doing it half way through the session under time limits, duress, and threats of power being thrust upon us, is not fair, is not right, and is not democratic.

It would appear that the government would have us believe that the length of time for bell-ringing is more difficult to deal with than the very big issues of our country; that when the issues of the country can be negotiated before the television cameras of this country over a long period of time, we must use the force of power and the limitations of time to solve this problem here because it's too hard to solve.

The government would have us believe that, Mr. Speaker, but it is simply not true. It has simply become a fact of life that this government has a need, an immediate need to save face on one particular issue that it needs to ram through the courts. They need to tamper with evidence in order to win a court trial, and they are therefore ramming this thing through, not thinking for a moment of the distant ramifications that can come out of what they are about to do.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I wonder how the members opposite will think about this in, say, three years time if they happen to lose the next election and find themselves in opposition with this change having been made. I suspect that they will suddenly start to think the opposite direction at that point and say that they wish they had this tool to work with in opposition. If that weren't true, Mr. Speaker, why would so many of these same people have made such a dramatic case for this issue in days gone by?

And I want to refer you to a quote from *Hansard* of some of the members. I believe the one that I'm quoting is from Rosemont on July 1, 1989:

. . . the intent of this rule change has much the same kind of intent as the intent to deny certain citizens their right to participate in the democratic process.

Now that's what that member, who presently is elected, thought in 1989. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if he won't think

exactly the same thing when he comes back to opposition in three years time.

Could it be possible that this government thinks that we will take this rule away while they are government and then just before an election reintroduce the rule so that they can use it for themselves later. It's a distinct possibility, Mr. Speaker, by the very fact that so many things have been said by so many of the elected members in the government about preserving this very fundamental part of our democratic procedure here in the province.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that if they were so dedicated to this premise and this proposition in days gone by, I cannot see how reasonable men could so dramatically change their opinions and their minds except for personal, selfish, governmental reasons, governmental reasons to ram through their agenda and then move back to providing the options of good opposition for the future when they become opposition.

Well perhaps this process entrenches them so deeply into government as dictators that no one can ever defeat them again. How far will this kind of thing go? Does it go so far that a government in Saskatchewan might unilaterally decide never to have another election? It makes you wonder.

This same member from Rosemont, I quote again from *Hansard*:

... this motion before the House tonight (and he was talking about one exactly like this, Mr. Speaker), this motion to limit the use of bell-ringing, is a motion which denies not just the members of the legislature but, more importantly, denies citizens their rights to participate in the democratic process of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Now isn't that a rather revealing bit of news from *Hansard*, that here we have an elected member in the government, a government now that wants to do exactly the opposite.

And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, no man can change his philosophy to that extent in so short a time. Because the fact of life is you can change a man's philosophy but you can't change his character. And this man has portrayed his character in his very words because he took 13 hours of this Assembly's time to totally, completely, and absolutely ingrain into the minds of the people of this province exactly what his character was and is, and that cannot change.

So the members opposite are doing what they are doing in this Assembly today for the purpose of expediency, the expediency of supporting their front benches, a front bench that feels that they have to do anything, whatever it is, to save face. No matter how terrible it might be to the democratic process, they feel that saving face is more important than democracy itself. And that in itself, Mr. Speaker, is a frightening and scary situation.

The same member went on in 1989, the member from Rosemont, defending democracy and the principles that

we talk about today. And again, he said:

Mr. Speaker, that's what this debate is all about. That's what this debate is all about. There is absolutely no hesitation or doubt in my mind that that is what we are doing here tonight. We are defending the rights of citizens to participate in the democratic process, unlike the members opposite, who would deny the citizens the right to participate in the democratic process.

Very revealing, Mr. Speaker, how these arguments could have suited the purposes of these same people in 1989, and today we stand here with their commitment, their commitment to do exactly the opposite, to tear down the very democratic structures that they fought and battled so hard themselves to preserve. What can be the price that these people are demanding of the province in order to destroy the fundamental basis of the democratic process under which this Assembly has worked since 1905?

That's when we became a province, a democratic part of this nation. Way back in history we have established a firm commitment to the democratic process of a Legislative Assembly where both sides of the House have some rules to work by and some ability to put input into the progress and development of our province.

This, Mr. Speaker, is not like the dog catcher's job where he sees a mongrel on the street and must go out and catch him before he bites somebody. We're talking about a situation here of democracy and development of a provincial plan, a direction of travel that we take in the course of our business as a province. There is nothing so immediate or so dramatic that it has to be done tonight or tomorrow morning in order to save our province. That's not the way provincial politics works.

In provincial politics, in the long run, we run a direction on a slow, gradual path down a road of direction that we choose as a group of people collectively to take. The philosophy of the NDP is to take a direction to the left in philosophy, and that is fair ball. The electorate of this province knew that they were electing socialists when they elected them, and they knew what they were going to get in that general, long-term plan.

They did not expect that this government, this group of people, would turn viciously on the democratic principles that guides us into an evolutionary process by which we develop over the long haul. They did not elect a government, Mr. Speaker, who was about, secretly, to invoke a revolution on our province. And with the kind of changes that we have encountered, that is exactly, Mr. Speaker, what we have.

(1430)

Out in the country, all through the cities, people are feeling the frustration of seeing a government that they thought was going to play by the rules, the old, long-established standard of democratic principles, suddenly turned vicious and invoke a revolutionary change upon them.

Look at those changes that prove that point. The

government was elected on a platform that said they would not increase taxes, they would provide more services, they were going to treat folks better. We've got three pages of service industry increased charges; we've got tax increases. All of these things have been changed that form a revolutionary approach to our government and to our long-term development in our province, rather than evolution. Because the changes came too big and too fast to be called evolution or the kind of democratic process under which our province has grown and developed in years gone by.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that some of our former parliamentarians must indeed be rolling over in their very graves. To think that we would come to the point in a relatively peaceful time in our world stage where in the province of Saskatchewan we would see the government, for blind, selfish reasons of getting one Bill passed, would destroy the very fabric of democracy that they themselves built in this province.

And I'm not saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that the committee was all wrong in its determination to examine the rules. And I'm not even going to say that changing the bell-ringing would be all wrong. But it is all wrong to do it this way, at this time, and without giving the opposition some reasonable democratic tools to work with in its place. And the tools that we are offered are not reasonable in place of the power of the bell-ringing as a rule and a tool for oppositions.

I don't know, in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, how you would measure the weight of one tool against the other and come up with a really fair and conclusive answer. But I do know that you can only make this kind of change through a long and rather laborious deliberation in a process of discussion and deliberation.

And I make the very same arguments, Mr. Speaker, that the Premier of this province has made in the constitutional debate — a debate which, incidentally, is coming to some rather pleasant and favourable conclusions at this very time.

It is rather ironic that the very Premier that advocated taking a slow and reasonable approach in the federal scene is now a part of the group of provinces and the country that have seen some tremendous success in the development towards an agreed-upon constitution in this country.

He preached, advocated, and lectured the people of this country through our news media for the past several weeks and months about these very same principles on a national basis that exactly translate and relate to what we're talking about here today — the changing of the rules under which we live and under which we will develop our democratic process.

There is really no difference, except for the size of a province compared to a country. No difference between the rules of a constitution that govern and run our country and the rules under which we will operate a province. No difference between that and the rules that run a town council or a rural municipality. Each jurisdiction must, in a peaceful society, have rules to guide them.

And everyone who knows anything about history will recognize that over a period of time there has to be changes. Things don't stay the same. Everything has to change from time to time. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's anyone in this opposition that believes that we can go on for ever without changing the rules in this Assembly.

I don't believe that as a councillor or a reeve of a municipality for a number of years that I have ever thought that the rules that we run our municipal meetings under would never change. And that is a fact of life; they do change.

The municipalities presently are having their very Act, through the rural development that they operate under, being put to several changes through this very Assembly. Those changes are quite immense in size of numbers. I believe that the Act is probably about an inch deep in pieces of paper, and the amendments that are suggested for change of those rules under which rural development and rural municipalities will be guided for the next few years comes to several, several pages.

And the process, Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that some people may think that because we have a new government of only eight months or so of age, and some folks might say, well they put together that rather lengthy group of changes and amendments to the Act in a kind of a hurry, the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that those changes were made over about a year and a half period of time or even more. Because the former minister of Rural Development, Neil Hardy, started that process, and it was a process of negotiation and yes, co-operation.

Those rule changes for municipal government were arrived at by negotiating with SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), municipal Reeves and councillors, and administrators played a very heavy role because they are of course the ones that do the work of running the computers and keeping the books in the municipal offices. So they have the technical knowledge — the knowledge that many people rely heavily on in this province.

They all contributed and they all came to a consensus. And as one of the members from the government, Mr. Speaker, pointed out a while back, there is a difference between consensus and agreement because you can never have total agreement on everything; that's just human nature. When you have 299 municipalities involved in rule changes, you would never get everybody to agree on everything.

But the term consensus means that more or less you agree because you take something that you want and get it, and you give something that you didn't want quite so much in return for an exchange of something else to the other folks. That's what consensus is about.

And basically what Mr. Hardy had was a consensus for those rule changes. There's only one small piece in that Bill that wasn't his work, and I'm not going to go into that here today because that has nothing to do with our debate. But other than that, it was a consensus on rule

changes.

And I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that this Assembly must approach rule changes in exactly the same way — a consensus through debate, through discussion, through study, through meetings, through private meetings, through public meetings, and then go back to the drawing board and do it over again, and keep on doing it until you get it right. And if it takes a year, so what? So what if it takes a year, or two years even, in the provincial context?

What great calamity will befall us if we don't solve this problem today or tomorrow? Will the province stop running? Absolutely not. Will the hospitals all shut down? Certainly not. There is absolutely nothing in this province that can't go on just as it did before. Even the business of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, could go on as normal. There is no reason why we couldn't go on to the regular orders of the day and perform the duties of this administration and continue to do all of the other work that is to be done.

It just simply is not a crisis situation to change the rules. That's absolute nonsense. It is not a crisis. We can do it this winter, we can do it over the next year, and we can put together a package of consensus that is time-tested and traditional, where the Rules Committee has always agreed in consensus to the change.

We can go back and stop this process of setting precedents and of breaking the very fundamental cords that hold this Assembly together. And that cord is an understanding that there is a gentleman's approach. Gentlemen must have agreements.

Today we have a lot — and fortunately a lot — of women in our province that are taking an interest in our political system. Just this morning I had a call from a lady in my constituency who is becoming very political in her thinking. And it makes me so very happy to see the people out in the country that used to just take care of the homes and their families and kind of closed the world around them now taking an interest in our province.

She told me to continue to ring the bells. And I explained to her that we don't ring the bells on every issue, every day. She was quite surprised, for example, to find out that as an opposition we felt we had a responsibility not to ring the bells as a tool of opposition to everything that we found to be objectionable.

And when I explained to her how many pressure groups there are in our society that each individually feel that they have the most important problem in the world and how many times we would actually be out ringing the bells, if we in fact used that tool on every issue, she was actually quite amazed at how many times we would find ourselves with nothing happening at all. And by the end of our conversation, she agreed that the kind of restraint we have used was reasonable and she suggested that we should continue to ring the bells. So I only won half of the argument.

But you can at least, Mr. Speaker, appreciate that folks out in the country are listening to what's going on, understand what's going on, and know what is at stake.

In a country that has enjoyed peace and relative prosperity compared to other countries in the world, a lot of folks tell me that there is total apathy out in the world around us, that people don't know what politicians are doing, people don't care what they're doing. That's simply not true.

The folks out there do know what's going on and they do know what is at stake. And many of them remember the stories of their grandfathers and their grandmothers or their great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers who came to this country and told them about the kinds of repression in their countries that they were so glad to escape from. They may have a variance of philosophy in direction to run this province from one extreme to the other, but they always, always cherished the fact that they were in a country where we had democratic rules where people who disagreed could sit down and discuss under a set of rules how to make changes.

The basic fundamentals of the things they escaped are discussed in the attempts to change the rules here today.

As I pointed out, Mr. Speaker, the bell-ringing in itself is not the important issue because at the moment it is tied to another issue — a need for our government to win a court battle. But the people out there are very frightened by our attempts to change this rule when it might in fact turn us back to the type of lack of democratic process that their forefathers left their homelands for in order to come here.

They came here to be free of those things. They didn't want to suffer through 70 years of socialist communism in Russia. They didn't want the tyranny of Hitler and the European scene of the past. They wanted to have a free democratic society where people who disagree would have the right to stand up and speak their piece even if the rest of the folks didn't agree with it.

And that's what democracy is all about, that's what this Assembly is all about, and that's what the rules that this Assembly works under is all about. If we don't have rules that are consistent to play by, we cannot be good players. And if the game is democracy, we cannot have a reasonable outcome at the end of the day in our democratic process if the rules are tainted.

And the rules and the process are definitely tainted here in the process that we're going through today. It is not changing the rule of bell-ringing, but the fact that you're taking arbitrarily this power away from the Assembly, that makes people sceptical as to whether or not we can ever operate in harmony again.

We've asked ourselves this question through the evening last night: how can we put a semblance of order back into this Assembly, that is based on mutual trust?

(1445)

Now some folks out in our television land will say, that's a hee-haw. There was probably never any mutual trust between the NDP and the Conservatives. But I wish to argue that point because it is my firm belief that while we oppose one another philosophically, while we have a role to play and a job to do in opposition just as the other

members have a role and a job to do as members of the government, there are people in this Assembly of total credibility in terms of being people who will make a deal and stick to it.

These people are certainly the highest quality, highest calibre people in this province. If they weren't so, the people of this province would not have elected them. They are people of integrity. Every one of them, Mr. Speaker, is an individual of the highest integrity, moral fabric, or they wouldn't have been elected. And people with integrity and with moral fabric are the kind of people that you can depend on to honour their share of a contract.

The gamblers in the world would call us welshers if we didn't stick to our end of the bargain. And that may be an appropriate word for those members in government who quickly pass by this issue and say to the world that we are no longer going to honour this contract.

Because, Mr. Speaker, that's what we are talking about here. We're talking about a contract, a verbal contract between oppositions and governments to follow a set of rules that are jointly agreed to under a consensus of agreement. The deal making is done in the committee. The trading, the old-fashioned horse trading bargaining process. I'll give you a little bit if you'll give me a little bit, and then we'll come together and agree on a set of rules that we'll work under.

The member from Rosemont some years back said, and I quote from *Hansard*:

The argument I will now make for some period of time, Mr. Speaker, is this: is that this bell-ringing, this motion to limit bell-ringing, inhibits the citizenry of Saskatchewan to participate in the affairs of their government, and that far from having bell-ringing as an anti-democratic exercise, the only anti-democratic exercise that we see here in the last several weeks has been this government's attempt to silence the opposition and inhibit citizens from participating in the democratic process.

A member of this very government defending the very principle that his government now would take away from the other opposition. Are his words, Mr. Speaker, not as true today as they were in 1979? Am I to suspect that this individual was not sincere in his deliberation of that very spirited and very deeply committed opinion?

I believe he was being honest. I believe that he said what he felt then. And I have a hard time, Mr. Speaker, believing that this individual would have changed his mind on the fundamentals of democracy even to this very day, even to the extent of being a member of a government, even to the extent of having to save face.

Mr. Speaker, this individual expressed an opinion that was set deep in his mind and deep in his heart. And he said it for 13 hours. Nobody would stand in this Assembly for that length of time discussing, debating, and trying to win the argument of the day if he wasn't firmly committed to what he believed in. I can assure you that after this very

short few minutes that I've been here, no one would put themselves physically through that.

There is no great pleasure in standing on your feet hour after hour, as your feet ache and your mouth goes dry. It has to be something you believe in, something that you feel is more valuable to yourself and to your society than your own personal comfort.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to quote a bit more of these because I think it's important that the same arguments be weighed and considered in this precedent-setting adventure as were considered in the last time that it happened in this Assembly. It's only fair that the people who make the final decision have all of the arguments available to them, have all of the statements made so that they can consider all of the evidence and weigh it in the balance of the scales of their justice.

And certainly it will come to that in the end, Mr. Speaker. In the end there will come a decision as to whether or not the arguments for taking the bell-ringing out in this manner are more heavily weighted than the arguments against it. And someone will have to make that judgement. And the scales of justice, rather than the scales of mercy, will prevail in this instance.

I want to quote further from this member back in 1979 as he debated the issue of whether or not the bell-ringing should be stopped. He said, and I quote:

I think any fair and honest observer of politics in this province realizes that this motion to limit bell-ringing tramples on the right of freedom of speech.

And I'm not sure, in all honesty, Mr. Speaker, how his mind would have worked on that statement, but it does bring to mind in my thinking the reality that in all probability he is right. Freedom of speech happens to be the acts upon which you get people to listen to you. So speaking words is not necessarily the only way that you get people's attention. You might in fact sit in the other side of this House and pretend to go to sleep to express to the person speaking that he is not interested in what is being said. That in itself is a spoken statement; it's called body language.

So freedom of speech can be tampered with if you are impeded upon and not allowed to express your body language or to express your feelings through some physical act. And here the physical act of course would be the ringing of the bells, which everyone knows is the process upon which people simply leave the House and not return. They may in fact stay out for a few minutes.

And I guess the tool that opposition has here, Mr. Speaker, may have been stumbled upon quite by accident. I expect that it was originally designed that the bells should ring for a few minutes to in fact call people from their offices, when one day someone in the opposition realized that if you simply didn't come back, the bells could ring for ever. I guess that realization was discovered by the past NDP Party, because they of course were the first to put the bells to a prolonged ringing period to express their freedom of speech.

And perhaps if that never had happened, it might have been better for our Assembly in the long run. But it did happen, and it is a reality now. It's a tool that we have used in the past; it's a tool that we will continue to use until it is traded off for something else.

And it can be traded, Mr. Speaker, for something else. But it can't be just sacrificed like a sacrificial lamb and allowed to die because along with it dies the democratic principle of people who oppose what the government is doing, to come to the opposition to use whatever tools are available to make the government see a different side of the story, whatever the issue might be.

This individual in 1989 went on in his debate, and I quote:

That's all I have to say on the question of the right of freedom of assembly, Mr. Speaker, because it was enhanced by ringing the bells.

The right of freedom of assembly — that's what he was talking about, and it was enhanced by the ringing of the bells. And that principle, Mr. Speaker, has not changed today, if that was a principle that weighed in any way in the decision made at that time to end the debate by not taking away the right of opposition to ring the bells.

And you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the government of the day did in fact decide to drop the issue and allow the bell-ringing to remain as an opposition tool. I don't know if they worked very diligently to try to find a way to exchange that ringing of the bells with some other tool for the opposition. I wasn't here, and I don't know. I suspect there may have been some attempts.

But I suggest that no matter what happened there, we must try harder now and we must try again. And we must do it over the next several months. And if it can't be accomplished in the next several months, we must stick to it and continue to work on it until we've resolved the problem. But we must do as the Premier of this province has said. We must do it without the restrictions of time limits. We must treat it as he has suggested the constitutional talks of this country must be treated. We must treat it with seriousness, and we must treat it with all of the respect that is required to preserve the integrity of this Assembly.

Back in 1989, this individual from Rosemont went on in his lengthy deliberation to say, and I quote, even the very operation of this legislature was enhanced by the bell-ringing:

And for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, I cannot see how it is that democracy is strengthened by this motion and that limiting the bell-ringing is somehow anti-democratic just on using what we have come to regard as basic civil liberties — as basic civil liberties. All those things — the right of freedom of speech and the right of freedom of expression and so on and so forth — all those things have been enhanced by what we in the opposition did.

If that were true, Mr. Speaker, in 1989, how could it not

be true this year, this day, in this Assembly? If those arguments carried the weight necessary for a judgement to be made that it would be wrong to withdraw the bell-ringing from oppositions at that time, what then has changed in our society and in our Assembly or in our democratic process that would eliminate the weight of those statements in today's judgement?

Absolutely nothing has changed that I can see in the democratic process that we use. Our country is not at war, other than for some peace-keeping actions in our NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) commitments through the United Nations.

We are not greatly threatened with a lack of food or clothing in our country, although there are individuals who certainly have some problems. But that hasn't changed, although the percentages are a little bit up. It hasn't changed, Mr. Speaker, so dramatically to change the evidence presented then as being no longer valid. Nothing has changed dramatically enough to make the arguments of 1989 invalid in this Assembly today.

Certainly there are a lot of folks with a lot of greater problems and we hope that this government will take care of those. But without the tools of an opposition to work with, there will be very little chance that we as an opposition will bring those grievances to the attention of this Assembly.

And that's really what it's all about, being in opposition, Mr. Speaker. It is about our responsibility, our responsibility to the job that we were given, not by choice but by the voters, the responsibility of opposition given to us through the election and that responsibility to bring forward to the government the needs of the people, especially the needs of the people that are not listened to by the government. Because most folks when they have a problem in our society that deals with the government, go to the minister in charge of whatever department they are having the problem with. When they don't get due satisfaction or some kind of resolution, they then come to opposition.

(1500)

That's how the process is working. I believe that's the way the process should probably work. First you go to the person in charge and ask him to fix your problem. If he doesn't fix it, then you go to the opposition. Then the opposition comes into this Assembly and uses the rules of the Assembly to bring those problems to the attention of the government so that all of the members, not just the minister in charge, are aware of what is happening. Because the minister in charge may choose simply not to tell the rest of the folks.

We also use that tool to inform the news media. We also use that tool to allow the television camera in our Assembly to pick it up and to play the information to the world. And then it becomes public knowledge. And that's the way the system should work. And that's why we have a good democratic approach to government, because we have tools that allow oppositions to work, just as we have rules that allow the government to work.

But we must have rules that force government to listen to people's problems. Eliminating those rules then is a destruction of the free speech and the democratic process of individuals.

And so the gentleman that made these statements in 1989, while he has the misfortune of sitting with the wrong party, certainly made some wise comments and some wise arguments into the deliberations of that day.

I want to use another quote from this individual, Mr. Speaker, because it's so very important that the views that he expressed be weighted into the deliberations of this process:

What he did, Mr. Speaker, (and I'm quoting) was brought this motion forward which would limit, and I think I've outlined in rather broad terms, but also in terms which everybody in this province can understand, brought in a Bill which would limit the functioning of this House, the functioning of us as members, and the functioning of the citizens of this province to engage in the democratic process.

I almost wish I'd written that myself, Mr. Speaker. Because no matter which party this individual represented in a partisan sense, he represented the feelings of all people who hold near and dear to their hearts the principles of democracy.

I've been told that this particular member has made a lot of statements that weren't agreed with in this Assembly over the years, but I cannot disagree with what he said there. And if that intelligent type of statement was weighted heavily in the judgement of a decision back in 1989 on this very same type of issue, then it must weight heavily in this day as well. Because the motion before us is similar for all intents and purposes.

Mr. Speaker, I have before me in my hand, copies of *Hansard* that run from 1571 on the page number of *Hansard* right through to 1593 — many, many pages of arguments made by members of this Assembly to try to sway the government of the day in 1989 into making a decision not to take away the tools of opposition.

I haven't read every page of this yet. I haven't had time to get through it all last night. But certainly it is very interesting to note that we are dealing with exactly the same kind of issue today. And so many of these arguments that were used must have weighed on somebody's conscience enough to make them think that they wouldn't go ahead. Because the final result was that the tools that were going to be taken away from opposition at that time were in fact left in place.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that if those arguments were strong enough then, they surely must be strong enough now. And even though the partisan direction of the government in charge is different, the philosophy of the democratic process must remain the same. I cannot believe that the members of our government do not believe in the democratic process. They must believe in it because they went to the polls to be elected just as each and every one of us has done.

There is no way that I can believe that they would go to all that trouble to get elected to the democratic process, to have the right to use this Legislative Assembly to help to contribute to the directional growth and development of our province, secretly thinking in their minds that they wanted to destroy it all. That simply doesn't make sense.

They can't want to destroy the very fabric of this institution and the very fabric of this Legislative Assembly and the very fabric of our democratic system. Nobody that went to all that trouble could want to tear down the very thing that we are all fighting so hard to get to, which is to have a seat in this Assembly, the right to free speech in the Assembly to discuss and debate the issues that come before us.

Back in those days the member opposite, and I quote again, said:

Mr. Speaker, that's what this debate is all about. That's what this debate is all about. There is absolutely no hesitation or doubt in my mind that (this) that is what we are doing here tonight. We are defending the rights of citizens to participate in the democratic process, unlike the members opposite, who would deny (the) citizens the right to participate in the democratic process.

He went on. I'm told it took 13 hours for him to deliver this speech and I most certainly, Mr. Speaker, do not think that I am going to try to equal the presentation of evidence to that extent. But if there is that much evidence to be weighed, then it is incumbent upon us as an opposition to present that evidence so that those people who are in charge of making the final decision will have all of that to consider.

Let it never be said that when the final decision was made it was made because the people who were required to make that decision did not have all of the facts, all of the arguments presented before them. Because it would be just like having a trial where one side presented its evidence and the other side was denied the right to present theirs, and the judge would have to make his decision based upon hearing only one version of the story.

And that wouldn't be fair. It couldn't work. And in our legal process we have established long-term rules that make it incumbent upon the judge to listen to both sides of the story before he makes his decision.

I'm not sure, in this situation, Mr. Speaker, who the judge is. I'm not really sure who in the government will make this final decision. I expect the Premier will weight heavily in that, but I don't know that. I really don't know who's in charge of this government. I don't believe that anybody in Saskatchewan truly understands where the power in our present government is, but it must lie in the front row somewhere.

And those people in that front row, if they are going to be the judges, should in all fairness have all of the evidence to consider. And they must consider not a hastily put together second report of the Special Committee on Rules

and Procedures. They must have all of the arguments that relate to the reasons why a hastily put together document like this cannot work and have the shortfalls pointed out. That's our job in opposition, and that's what we are doing — pointing out the shortfalls of this hastily put together document, a document that has some relevance and some sense to it, but was done too hastily at the wrong period of time and cannot work for the benefit of this Assembly.

I read to you last night most of the report and commented on some of the things that were in it that would be offensive in the long run. And as a conclusion, we must reiterate how some of these things in reality are going to affect the future of this Assembly. For example, we say here that the "... 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."

The member opposite would like to join the debate. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm really hoping that he will. As we go into this debate, it is my firm belief that members of the government should participate in this debate and let known to the people of Saskatchewan their views on this issue. I certainly invite these members to join me in the debate and to let everybody here know exactly where they stand, how they feel about this type of an approach.

I believe the electorate of this province has every right to know exactly where everyone stands. And so I would challenge, Mr. Speaker, every member of this government to stand in his place in order and make a statement to the public on exactly where they stand on this democratic principle and how they stand on connecting it with a farm Bill that will tamper with evidence in a court. What is their position? How do they feel about that approach to democracy?

Mr. Speaker, I think that these folks really should stand up in this Assembly and tell the people of this province where they're coming from and where they expect to take this province in the future. And what they think about this issue can be very revealing as to what kind of people the government really has in it. And whether or not they should be re-elected next time could be based fundamentally on their approach to what is fair and just in this particular issue.

I think I could personally decide how I should vote on an individual who states his opinions on this particular issue as it connects to the farm Bill and the whole ramification of how we came to be here through the past three or four weeks and why we are here today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about these rule changes. It says, "That the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* be amended by adding the following after 36.1..."

The Speaker: — Order. I want to remind the member that he went through the list last night in detail. And if he repeats the same thing again, I will rule him out of order.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your observation. It wasn't really my intention to repeat, so

prejudging what I was going to say won't necessitate your interference, I hope. But I did want to in conclusion re-emphasize a couple of the points, you see. And in order to make sure that as we conclude that these points are considered more heavily than the rest of our debate, we must somewhat repeat a list of those things that we want to have judged as we go into the process.

It says that we are going to limit the bell-ringing on non-debatable motions, on motions moved without notice, and in Committee of the Whole or Committee of Finance. And I find, Mr. Speaker, as I bring attention to this portion of this report, that it will be extremely difficult — not impossible but extremely difficult — for the Assembly members to operate in a functional manner under the restrictions that are placed in this document.

I'm not saying it isn't a good point to start from. If we're going to negotiate some kind of a settlement in the future, certainly we must consider a starting point. And that's what this document should really be. It should be a starting point for the debate and the negotiation, an ongoing negotiation to bring a resolution to the difficulties that we have with the differences that people feel that there are between us with regards to rules and rule changes.

It's a good starting point. But I feel that 10 minutes, for example, as is referred to in one of the sections as being the period of time that you would have to be back into the Assembly, might be practical and realistic in a small Assembly where you have smaller numbers of people, where you have less physical floors separating you in the building.

For example, in Prince Edward Island the entire Assembly is on one floor. I was there a few years back. I was amazed at the difference. And quite frankly, I guess when you only have 100,000-plus people you really don't need a very big provincial Assembly. And they certainly don't have. They have a small Assembly, no bigger than the opposition size here for the whole group that comes in there. And in their context I expect that if they rang the bells for 10 minutes everyone that has an office on that floor — and I think that they all do, they're all relatively close together — 10 minutes is lots of time to get there. But it could conceivably be almost impossible for the members in this Assembly to gather in 10 minutes under any circumstances.

(1515)

And then you must consider the extremes of circumstances that certainly our government members themselves must go through, and those extremes, Mr. Minister, are situations... for example, today we have a delegation here from China and the ministers responsible for those areas, I think, are required under the terms of protocol to be with those folks.

And if we were to enter into a bell-ringing for an important vote on an important issue, is it really fair for this Assembly to expect those people to rudely stand up and say, I got to run now. We got to get over there. Sorry, boys. Go back to China. See you later. Goodbye. I'm running up there.

Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. That's not the way we conduct ourselves in a civilized country and in a civilized Assembly.

And so I quite frankly think that you have to look at making that a half an hour instead of 10 minutes.

You might say that's nit-picking. But the reality of life is that when you formulate this rule it's going to go into effect and people are going to have live with that.

So let's discuss what's fair and reasonable. Let's come to some consensus where the people that represent our group on the committee have the opportunity to come to our caucus and discuss with us what exactly the changes are going to be and how they will affect us. Then I, as person not on the committee, have an opportunity in the democratic process to advise the vice-chairman of that committee, one of our members, that I feel that 10 minutes is not enough. And I can give him my arguments just as I've done here today.

And I can explain to him how I might think 30 minutes would be better and he then can take that information back to the committee and discuss it with the folks there. And they might actually say, well looks okay to me. We'll do it that way.

Or they might say, not. Maybe they'll decide 20 minutes because that's sort of half way between. Instead of 10 minutes or 30 minutes, we'll do it for 20. And that might serve the needs of everyone quite nicely. And we would have had a consensus on that and we would have worked to try to make it . . . to try to make it develop into a workable plan.

But, Mr. Speaker, we aren't doing that today. Today we are having this report jammed down our throats as the laws and the rules that we will work under for the next umpteen weeks, months, and maybe years. In a flash out of the sky, we are going to have a new set of rules to work under here. And this new set of rules is not workable — in the short term or the long term.

It saves the government's face on a government farm Bill one time this year, and after that it destroys the democracy of this entire province. And that is not right and it cannot be allowed to happen. We've got to do something to wake these folks up, Mr. Speaker, to make them pay attention to the needs of the province, the democracy of our province.

I have to apologize for raising my voice, Mr. Speaker, but occasionally my friends in the government side have a tendency to doze off and I would hate to think that I was making all of these good arguments without their paying strict attention to the needs of those things that we have to have considered in this debate.

You will wonder why we get concerned about losing one rule. And you will say, folks are heavily weighted against you because bell-ringing has become a rather obnoxious thing in people's minds.

The reality is that if it is presented to them in a negative

way, the people of our province being common, reasonable people, will take that position. But if you present to them the arguments and the realities of why these rules are required, they start to change their mind. Public opinion is no longer fixed against bell-ringing.

I'll give you one example of an issue. When the government decided to take away the FeedGAP from ranchers and farmers in this province — there are a lot of people involved in the feeding industry, but not many in terms of the number of people in our province, probably more like a few hundred rather than a few thousand, or a hundred thousand, or a million, certainly a few hundred at best, but to those people losing that assistance from government with the subsidization that goes on throughout the rest of this country in agriculture and the rest of the world — to these people this issue was a big enough issue that their livelihoods, their investments of their entire lives, financially and physically, is put in great jeopardy and probably will be lost. And to them that's a big enough issue for us to ring the bells as an opposition to bring attention to their problems.

An Hon. Member: — Did they phone you about it?

Mr. Goohsen: — Yes. The member asked, did they phone me about it. Absolutely. I have had umpteen numbers of people call me on these issues, on these several issues. In fact . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I want to remind the member from Shaunavon if he wants to get into the debate, there's ample opportunity. He should rise and the Speaker will recognize him. Otherwise I think he should give the member from Maple Creek the opportunity to continue.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I echo those words of inviting the member to participate in the debate. I want all of the members to participate in this debate because it is important that they have a chance in the democratic process to express their views as I am doing. And I appreciate this opportunity to express my views here today. I only regret that we are having to do it today on this issue.

But the process that we have that allows me to enter this debate and to bring forward my arguments is certainly a good process. It is part of that process of rules that we talked about in some length where members have to have tools to work with and rules to follow.

I did mention I think, earlier today, that I had 408 letters on my desk. If it wasn't today, it was yesterday. And the member from Shaunavon will take note of the fact that if we had that many letters on our desk just from this past week, we certainly have communications with the people out in Saskatchewan.

My telephone rings quite regularly now. I must admit that at first when I got elected it didn't ring very often and I had some lonely days. But no more. I haven't got time to get to bed to sleep any more, for phones ringing and needs to write letters and answer folks who are fed up with this government, totally upset, absolutely at their last wit's end as to how to survive in this province economically or physically. And they believe that this has become a

corrupt and immoral government. And I invite the member from Shaunavon to stand up in this Assembly and state his views on this issue. Most certainly you should, sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the members suggested to me, what good is an opposition? Even if you have tools to work with, the government outnumbers you 56 to 10 in this particular situation. So what good are you doing?

Well I'll give you one example, Mr. Speaker, for the folks out in Saskatchewan to ponder. We rang the bells for 18 days on a farm Bill issue. Prior to that, we were invited to ring the bells over the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, but we used our discretion and we said that even though this is extremely important — very, very important to many, many people — we as an opposition would not yet use that last-ditch tool of bell-ringing on that issue.

But the farm Bill was so big and had so many complications on constitutional rights and the rights of contracts that we just simply had to use every tool available.

And during that 18-day period of time something rather strange happened that the folks in this province should take note of. The government decided to make one small change. They decided to do some damage control and they decided to reinstate the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, not as it was albeit, but reinstate it they said they would. Not matched in dollars by the government, but the program and the system remains in place.

Now the folks in Kindersley that had their jobs lost, who were going to be unemployed, have an opportunity to keep their positions. The people who have their money invested will continue to earn interest on that money, and that money will be available to them when they retire. It won't be matched in the future on future contributions — and that, I think, is too bad — but at least we've saved the structure so that in three years time when the government changes, we can reinstate the program.

And that kind of damage control, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would not have come about if we hadn't been challenging the government as an official opposition. The work we do here is important and it works. Because public pressure will work on the most stubborn of governments if it's given enough time and enough people put their effort into it. It can work and it does work. Democracy is important and it is important that we preserve the rules under which democracy works so that these things can sort themselves out.

I've heard a lot of people complain that they're unhappy with the fact that the Pension Plan won't be as it was. But they are mildly thankful that at least some damage control was done and the program is still in place to keep their money so that it earns interest for the future.

That's what the rule of opposition bell-ringing did for those folks. Because I honestly believe if we hadn't been out ringing those bells for those 18 days, this being a new government still fresh with its stubborn opinions, as every new government will be, still not used to having to deal with public pressure, this new government would not

have given that concession if it had not been for this official opposition.

And that's important to the people of Saskatchewan. And the rules of this democratic process have worked, and they work well. They may need change. We might have to sit down and discuss changing the bell-ringing in an orderly, planned fashion as the years go by and the months go by. But doing it here under duress, under time constraints, under the heavy hand of dictatorial government demanding that we settle it now, that will not make this Assembly work. That will not allow democracy to work. It will not bring about the kind of harmony that you need to run an Assembly in a democratic country.

We must put this thing aside. Just as you, sir, said so many years ago . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . The member from Rosemont has suddenly decided to enter the debate after 13 hours of arguing this very, very same question.

An Hon. Member: — No. It was the potash debate.

Mr. Goohsen: — Oh, you were in a different debate. Well your friends were into it for a long time, because I've got here a handful of pages of *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker, the members truly did say what they said in defence of this very issue. They truly did say the things that they said because it is recorded for posterity in the *Hansard* of this very Assembly. And the one thing that you cannot change is the words that you put on the paper in this Assembly. *Hansard* is for ever and your words are recorded. And I admire you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, the member truly does deserve credit for some of the intelligent points that he made at that time. Obviously they were good points because the government of the day did in fact pull their paper. They pulled their Bill; they didn't pass it. They allowed the opposition to continue to have the rules and the tools to work with.

(1530)

So his arguments must have been good ones. That's why we repeat them. That's why we congratulate him for having said the things that he did. Probably the only thing that he did in opposition that was constructive, because certainly the things that happened after that were not.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think I've made my point. I think the folks in Saskatchewan have had a pretty good chance to understand where I've come from on this issue and how I feel about it. And as my water glass is empty, I think I'll thank you for your time and allow one of my fellows to get up and discuss some of the issues that are at stake.

Now we have some members in the government that have expressed a desire to let the folks know how they stand on these issues, even though they had 30-some-odd pages in *Hansard* from before. Even though they have had a long time to say things before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do encourage them to get up and let the people of Saskatchewan know what they think. And I want to thank you for your ear.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to today provide for you and for this Assembly some of the rationale as to why I think that the motion made by the member from Regina Churchill Downs is not a good motion. I want to tell you why I voted against it in committee, and I'm going to also outline to the Assembly why I think it should be dealt with in a different fashion than what we have here today.

I want to begin by stating that the work of the committee, the Rules and Procedures Committee of this Assembly, was constituted on the willingness of individuals to participate on the basis of consensus. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I have witnessed the process evolve through the period of time that we studied the different rule changes and the methods that we used, I want to point out to this Assembly that what we did and what the officers of this Assembly did is they took and went back in a period of time and took all of the suggestions that had been made for rule changes through the process of time. They took those individual rules and the things that they would like to see addressed. They took those individual items and laid them before us and our committee.

As we did that, Mr. Speaker, we became involved in some lengthy discussions. And you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were a part of that committee, and you involved yourself in that committee. And you did a lot of discussing in that committee as well as other members. And through the process of these meetings . . . and I think the report says that there were some 40 hours spent in time given to the process and the procedures of the Legislative Assembly and how we could make a better opportunity for the public to participate, how we could better enhance the opportunities for individuals in this Assembly to participate, and how we could provide to the people of Saskatchewan an example of leadership that would enhance the position of the people of this Assembly. And it was a deliberation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that took a considerable amount of time to bring items into focus.

I want to point out that there were a number of items there that dealt with some very significant reforms, some individual significant reforms. And I want to point out too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the role of government involved in the discussion through the Speaker as the chairman became involved in this as a part of a working to gain consensus, gain consensus over matters of concern to the members in that committee, but also matters that were a concern to members that are no longer here. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people had brought forward . . . the officers of this Assembly had brought forward the information as it related to the conduct of different meetings prior to this year, had brought forward those items that needed to be addressed or dealt with in a very precise and concise way.

What we did, when we sat down and talked about them, there were certain items that we said, well we cannot possibly gain consensus in these areas. There were items that we put aside on that basis. There were items, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we said if we can't gain some reasonable amount of compromise in some of these areas, then we're going to put them aside and deal with

those that we can gain some consensus with compromise.

And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our House Leader said that — and I believe everybody agreed with him — that we said that the individuals who had concerns would be not only acknowledged but they would be allowed to express that opinion freely. And that opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was given the honour of being accepted as a part of the discussion for reasonable gain of compromise in dealing with how this committee should work. And that, Mr. Speaker, was how this whole process began.

And from that, I want to point out to the members of this Assembly, from that we gained some very, very important changes. A trial period for changes in this Assembly, 50 sitting days, we will review the process that we have here; we will review all of the guidelines. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the basis by which we put together the rules and the rule changes of this Assembly.

As we studied it, it became aware to all of those people that were in the committee, that there were certain things that there was not going to be a consensus on. And one of those items — and I clearly remember it — one of those items, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was bell-ringing. It was an item that was there, it was discussed, and there was no consensus, so it was put aside.

Today we are speaking on that motion. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it concerns me a lot when I see the members of this Assembly being asked to consider this motion that we couldn't gain consensus on. And, Mr. Speaker, I am here to say, that as the House Leader said in that committee over and over again, we may not get consensus if we don't have consensus in all of the things that we're proposing to provide to this committee.

Mr. Speaker, that is clearly, in my mind, what was anticipated to be done. It was clearly in everyone's mind that that was the process that was going to evolve, and that was the process to reach a conclusion.

I want to go back from that point, Mr. Speaker, and go back to prior to the election when other members of this Assembly, and some of them were sitting on the opposition side at that time, placed before the Assembly some of the things that should be considered . . . placed before the Rules and Procedures Committee some of the things that they felt should be dealt with. And that list, Mr. Speaker, was there for a very, very important reason.

And the reason was that the government of the day could not gain consensus from the membership of the Rules and Procedures Committee to deal with the items that were before it. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, clearly, clearly beyond any shadow of a doubt the decision by the government at the time was that they should not bring those forward because they didn't have a consensus by the individuals who were on the committee to deal with approving the process to have rule changes.

There was no consensus. There was no compromise. There was not even a willingness to compromise. And members of the now government, who were opposition at that time, were a part of that group. Although I was not

there on that committee at the time, I know that that discussion took place.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we have looked at the kinds of things that we have brought forward to us today, we have a motion here that is not based on consensus. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we have outlined with previous speakers and the points that they have made, we have consistently brought forward items and observations made by individuals on the other side of the House that constantly and consistently point to the fact that the motion, the very same motion brought forward today in this Assembly, was exactly the same motion brought forward in 1989.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what did the Assembly do with the motion at that time? Mr. Deputy Speaker, what they did with the motion at that time is they referred it to the Rules and Procedures Committee. That is the process that they followed. That's the process that provided an opportunity for freedom of debate, no time constraints, an opportunity to discuss, a willingness to participate, a willingness to have consensus build, and a willingness to have some sort of compromise in dealing with the situation as it presented itself.

And what have we got here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We haven't got any willingness to compromise. We have no willingness to participate in a discussion. We have, from the government to this Assembly, received an ultimatum. We've received an ultimatum that says, you either fish or cut bait, one or the other. You either decide you're going to go with three days and that's it, or you're done. And that, Mr. Speaker, is precisely where we're at today.

We're at an impasse because we haven't been able, in committee, to reach consensus. And the reason . . . and it underlies all of the issues that we have dealt with here today and yesterday. It deals with the issue of a very important piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that is going to alter, alter and change the very facts of history. That's why we have this motion here before us today.

It is in my opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a very, very serious discussion that we're having. And what are we having here? We have absolutely no participation on the part of individuals opposite except the member from Regina Churchill Downs. We have had absolutely no participation, no involvement in discussion, no willingness to participate in arriving at consensus. You either take it my way or out you go. That's the decision by this government in relating itself to the kinds of things that we have presented to this Assembly and the things that they have presented to this Assembly in the last two days.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of this, all of this flies in the face of working this Assembly to make process and evolving kind of thing for rule changes, a process where compromise and consensus are reached. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the undercurrent of all of this has suspicion written all over it. It has suspicion written all over it because over and over and over again, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Rural Development, the minister from . . . the Associate Minister of Finance, and others, the Minister of Economic Development, have

repeated over and over again they are going to have no change in the format of the 1992 GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program that they've outlined here for the province of Saskatchewan.

(1545)

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people from across this province have called in my office and in other members of this Assembly, their offices. They have told me they have talked to other rural members of this Assembly. And I can pick them off, I can pick them off one at a time. And I will later on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, tell you which ones they've been calling, because they've told me.

Number two on that point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that they have been calling individuals in this Assembly and saying to them, I'm your supporter and you don't listen. What are we going to do?

I have said to them, tell them over and over and over and over again. Maybe some day they will understand that the changes to the GRIP program of 1992 are not what the farmers of this province want to have. And when is the concern going to express itself in a decision by the members of this Assembly who are on the government side, to participate in this debate?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're cowards, every one of them. They don't go out into their constituency, they don't go out to listen, they don't go to RM (rural municipality) meetings, and, Mr. Minister, they don't speak in this Assembly about what their constituents are telling them. I have to express on their behalf what their constituents are telling them.

And they don't have any functional, reasonable, rational way of coming to this Assembly and standing for what their Minister of Agriculture is standing for. Their Minister of Economic Development, their minister of Crop Insurance, none of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are standing here and defending the role of those three members, nor are the ministers of the Crown in this Assembly — none of them.

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, none of them have the courage. None of them have the right to speak in this Assembly because they've been told by their cabinet to be quiet. They have been told, every one of them, toe the line or out you go.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the people of this Assembly and especially to those urban members who are here who perhaps could learn a thing or two about real politics out in rural Saskatchewan, that they're going to be gone anyway. And that, Mr. Speaker, is an actual fact. And I believe that right down to the core of my boots. That, Mr. Speaker, is there because they don't understand and they're not willing to participate in this debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if individuals on that side of the House had the courage, they would tell their Minister of Agriculture: excuse me, sir, but you are slightly out of line. My constituents have been telling me. As a matter of fact, they did tell him, all of them told him, all of them told him on the lawn of the legislature here when members of

this Assembly thought that they were going to get a fine, nice party.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture was booed when he tried to tell them, oh it's not my fault. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were decisions to be made. And it's obvious to me that the decisions that were made on the part of individuals in the government side and executive branch of this Assembly, that those people clearly, without a doubt, have a serious problem in understanding what the rural part of this province is all about. They don't understand it at all. Or even worse, they understand it and are doing it anyway. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is even worse.

I want to go back to the basis of building a consensus on the Rules Committee. We had a number of very, very serious concerns about various things that were to be presented as a part of a report to the Assembly. I'll just raise one of them. One of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have no flags in this Assembly. We have no flags at all in this Assembly.

And Mr. Speaker said to us, if there isn't consensus or agreement, we will not put flags in this Assembly. We on this side of the House said, put a Canadian flag in there, put a Saskatchewan flag in, and let's have an ensign, the Mother of all Parliaments, and recognition of Her Majesty as she stands and watches over us here, to put a flag up with three flags — the British flag as a representative of Her Majesty the Queen, the Canadian parliament who we are directly under, and the province of Saskatchewan.

We wanted to put them up here, display them for the people of the province of Saskatchewan to see. But no, but no. Members of the government at the time said, we only want the Canadian and the provincial flag. And we said, well you know, it would be kind of nice if Her Majesty could have her flag standing here in Assembly as well.

And I want to point out to the Assembly here, the decision was made that, because we couldn't agree, the rule would stay the same. And it did. And that, Mr. Speaker and members of the Assembly, is the reason why it isn't on the Rules and Procedures Committee for adoption. That is the reason why you see no flags in this Assembly — because there was no consensus. There was no compromise, and therefore nothing was done.

I'm going to refer back to this motion that we have before the Assembly. Unilaterally without any question, unilaterally without any doubt, the member from P.A. (Prince Albert) Carlton put the motion forward in the Rules and Procedures Committee and said that's the way it's going to be.

There wasn't a willingness to compromise. There wasn't a willingness to even suggest a compromise. There wasn't even a willingness to say, where are your points to be considered? And when we went through, no. They said we can't do that.

So we had another meeting another day later, or a few days later. And again no willingness on the part of the government and the committee members on the part of

the government to say, okay, if we can't gain consensus, then we will deal with it in another way.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there is only one reason for it. The government members of this Assembly want to put before this Assembly a Bill that would say things that exist didn't exist, and things that didn't exist will exist. And that's what GRIP '92 Bill in this Assembly will do. It will say to this Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will say to this Assembly that we sent a letter out to the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan to say we sent you a notice of change of the contract before the March 15 date. And we will establish a fact of law in this Assembly that says it was deemed to have been sent, and it was deemed to have been done. But underlying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it never happened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what else could be deemed to have happened that didn't happen? We could say, for example, we could use the Saskatchewan bonds that just have been sold. It was said that it was 7 per cent interest rate, but the government here in its wisdom and its power could come to this Assembly and say, we're going to deem it was only two or maybe even only one.

Why should we honour the contracts of those individuals who provided that investment opportunity in the province of Saskatchewan to bring to this Assembly and say, I don't have to listen to what contract I signed with these individuals. I don't have to listen to that at all because I can make the law in here to change it outside this House.

On the basis of a contract, I don't think you'd have a leg to stand on. I don't think you should have the conscience to do it.

But what we have here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is precisely that. We have precisely laid before you exactly what your problem is. And I think beyond a shadow of a doubt, it's here because of incompetence on the part of the Minister of Agriculture. I think it's incompetence on the basis that the Minister of Rural Development, in co-operation with the Minister of Agriculture, did not provide the opportunity for farmers in the province of Saskatchewan to become involved, but also to become involved in a way that would change the GRIP program to deal with it in the way that they wanted to have it done.

All of that says to me that underlying here we have a political agenda that says that we have a responsibility to change the law to say that contracts will be broken for 50,000 farmers. And we will do that unilaterally in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I have a difficult, a very difficult time accepting that sort of thing. We have in this Assembly a rule change being promoted. And the rule change, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will say, or is saying that we will limit the time that the bells can ring. There is only one reason. There is absolutely only one single, solitary reason why that is in here today, and that it is tied tightly, as tightly as the executive branch of this government can tie it, to the GRIP Bill. It is tied absolutely and totally to that.

We have had reports from everywhere. Most people will

say to you, whether they're in urban centres or rural, they will say, I don't like bell-ringing, but I don't like breaking contracts even more. And that's what they're going to do — 50,000 of them. Gone.

What's next, I ask this Assembly? What's next? We have a very, very large burden of debt in this province on unfunded pension liability. What's next? Is it the nurses? What's next? Is it the teachers? What's next? Is it the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union) unfunded liability? Oh no, they might not get it because those are our supporters and they pay for my union halls and all that sort of thing. What's next?

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our responsibility as members of this Assembly is being curtailed by the very fact that we have not got the freedom to stand up and speak nor to defend what you people are doing and controlling the executive branch of this government. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is exactly why we are debating this motion here today. Because there isn't a willingness on the part of the executive branch of this government to participate in discussion and compromise and consensus.

I was very . . . and I have always been struck by the willingness of various provinces to participate in the debate as it relates to our constitution. I have always been struck by the premiers of this province working together to draw a single conclusion for the benefit of this country to make it grow and become viable. I have always thought it was important to do.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason Canada is, is based on consensus and compromise. There is no doubt in my mind that when Upper and Lower Canada were discussing the basis for Canada as a country, compromise and consensus was the reason that brought it together. Nothing else.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I stand here today in this Assembly and ask the members of this Assembly to say that this motion is ridiculing the very essence of the Rules and Procedures Committee to say compromise and consensus are wrong — we will do it unilaterally — in my mind says that you are wrong.

(1600)

As the leaders of Upper Canada and Lower Canada talked about the value of compromise and consensus, they said to themselves, there is more that we can be together than separate. And as the Maritimes put their stamp of approval on that, they said there is more that we can be together than separate. And as we come across western Canada we have regions in western Canada that said, there is more that we can be together than separate. And all of them said it was based on consensus and compromise. Consensus and compromise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been a part of the process of this country, of the parliamentary system, through the years of its history. And that, Mr. Speaker, we have an example here of it just eroding in this motion that we have before this Assembly today.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, causes me a great deal of concern. It causes me a great deal of concern in a number

of areas, and I want to point some of them out. It was a privilege for me in 1977, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be a part of the Saskatchewan rural association . . . municipal association. And I was a director for the municipalities in the south-west part of the province of Saskatchewan. And while I was there, I was nominated to receive Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee Medal. And I received it. I was even tempted to wear it today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I didn't because I'm not supposed to exhibit anything here today.

But I thought of wearing it today and saying to this Assembly, look, the basis of consensus and compromise in the province of Saskatchewan and in this country, this great country of ours, is established by the fact that we have those two things brought forward in every parliament on every Commonwealth country in this world. We have consensus and compromise established as a part of the role that Her Majesty plays and the role that the Parliament of Canada plays and the role that this Assembly plays.

But what have we got here? We have a unilateral change in the kinds of things that are done by this Assembly. And I think it's wrong. I think it's absolutely wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In 1989 the decision was made by the government at that time — and I was a part of that government — that we will not change the rules unless we can do it with consensus. There was no consensus. Maybe it was the participants that were wrong, maybe it was the people involved in it that were wrong, maybe the clash of the personalities was wrong.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have here today, without any doubt in my mind, is a unilateral change on the part of a government that has decided and fixed itself on tearing the very insides out of rural Saskatchewan. There's no question in my mind about that at all. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a matter of very, very serious concern to me.

I have tried to outline for the Assembly here today what I believe to be a matter for consideration by this House, by the officers of this Assembly, and by the Speaker of this Assembly.

I want to point out to the members of this Assembly a number of other things that concern me. There were some things that we dealt with in the Rules Committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that said to us, we will compromise. And we did this because there was strong support on the government side for putting in Committee of the Whole and Committee of Finance the use of lap top computers in this Assembly.

Government members said, we want to use them. We've got them. It gives us time to think about some other things than just having to listen to dry, boring speeches. And . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Minister, they're going to get better, so you better stay here and listen.

An Hon. Member: — I'll be right back.

Mr. Martens: — Okay, we'll wait for you. However, the

decision was made on compromise from this side of the House that members opposite would be able to use them. And if you remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the time we were talking about it, we said to the committee: that's fine; we'll allow that to go because we'll compromise what we think we should be doing here. And we agreed, and we reached a consensus on what we should do.

Some of the things dealt with process in this Assembly. And again, the very fact of private members' day and changing the whole format of private members' day was based on consensus and a willingness to participate and a willingness, I must say, on the part of government to change its agenda to control private members' day. I'll give them that.

But what we did in that committee is, we said we will not talk any more about changes in the bell-ringing because there are consistently the opposing views in this. The government will always say this and the opposition will always say that. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where we're at. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is why members on this side have a problem with it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the role of the Rules Committee I believe was seriously curtailed a number of times, and I want to point them out. I want to point out the time that we made the decision on television in this Assembly and how to deal with those items of business that did not demonstrate a classic, legislative visionary kinds of things. And people could say maybe make some jokes about members of the Assembly. They could write satire and say, this is what happened to this guy. And we had a strong lobby by the media, saying that's not fair.

And I can recall the day that pressure was brought on me as vice-chairman of this committee by the member from Regina Victoria who said to me: would you be prepared to amend this? I said: what is it? And he had a motion he placed before me — five minutes before he personally placed it before this Assembly. And that, Mr. Speaker, was wrong. It was wrong then. It's wrong today. I don't do those things that way and I hope I never see it done again. But lo and behold here we have it done again.

We have a motion before this Assembly that says, 3 days, 10 minutes. Well I think we got a problem. I think we have a very, very serious problem. Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the time I expressed some irritation about it, and I was. And I think today I am still of the opinion that it was wrong. I haven't changed my mind about it. I wouldn't have minded encouraging the member to do that if the process had been done right.

Now comparing that to the meeting that we had last week — Thursday — of the Rules Committee called by the chairman. The members of the opposition, led by the member from P.A. Carlton, decided to unilaterally put a motion forward indicating that this was all that there was there and that was the limit to the extent that they were going to go. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our House leaders have been in discussion at various times in this Assembly, among the other functions that they're doing, trying to negotiate a resolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier and the Leader of the

Opposition have even discussed it. Is there an option for change? In the context of Canada, the Premier of Saskatchewan says that consensus and compromise have reached an agreement on the constitution. And he comes home and he railroads. He comes home and forces through the Assembly his will that he forces and torques down on the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Today it's farmers, tomorrow it's whoever — whoever you choose. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will point out the fact that the 25 people who sat on the opposition side, when I was in the government side in this Assembly, told me over and over and over and over again that the rights of the opposition are enhanced and provided the benefit to the stability of the government by given an opportunity to ring the bells. I have that from every speech that was given in that long debate that we had. I could reiterate over and over again the points of view made by individuals in trying to convince the government that they should not put that rule forward and vote on it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what changed these people's minds? What gave them an opportunity to bring to this Assembly a motion that will abolish the bell-ringing as a tool for defence when there are Bills before this Assembly that we cannot accept?

An Hon. Member: — The thirst for power.

Mr. Martens: — And as my colleague says, it is a thirst for power. And I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that tomorrow it will be another thirst for power and the next day another thirst for power. It doesn't quit until you recognize that the people of the province of Saskatchewan need to have a logical, reasonable government based on consensus and compromise themselves. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the reason why we're talking about this motion. That's the reason why we want to have you understand that we must have some compromise and consensus on this motion before us today.

We cannot expect, nor can you expect, that we will agree with everything that you do or say. But I want to point out to this Assembly that we have consistently . . . even though we have disagreed adamantly about certain areas that you have brought forward in this Assembly — we have disagreed with you, emphasized it in debate, focused our attention in voting against those items, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have not made a serious application of the ringing of the bells in those areas unless we think they're totally wrong. And there is only one that has stuck in my mind in this Assembly so far that is that way.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I visited the farmers all across this province last year and this year, I realize that it is difficult to reach consensus. But I will point out to the people of this Assembly that we had a rural tour in the last two weeks of June. We had a rural tour in the last two weeks of June with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities that not one single member of the government was at.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Shaunavon was

not at those meetings. The member from Shaunavon was not at those meetings. Neither was any other rural member at those meetings. Neither, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the minister at those rural meetings. And he's the minister responsible for Crop Insurance. And he was not there to listen for what the people had to say about one of the Bills that this bell-ringing came to the focus on. It came to the floor of this House because . . . this motion has come to the floor of this House because of their incompetence in delivering the system to start with.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to point out a number of other things that I think are in this that cause us a problem. I want to point out to the Assembly that in the Rules Committee meeting that we had last Thursday, the motion was brought forward. We got an extension to this week Tuesday, and what happened on Tuesday was this. The government didn't bend and the Speaker brought forward . . . the chairman of the committee brought forward the motion as a part of a motion that would be approved in this as a second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures.

(1615)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we raised the point, that don't we have anything to say to it? There are certain things in this that we don't agree with. To say that we have consensus on the basis of what we have in this report, I believe, is wrong. We said that. We've pointed that out, Mr. Speaker, on many occasions. We said, why put a preamble to it that is going to irritate us? Why? Well the committee said, go ahead and do it. Again no compromise, no consensus; unilateral decision, we'll go with it.

And what happened? This report was prepared before we even got to the meeting. That concerns me a lot. And it's bothered me a lot since I had to vote against it. Mr. Speaker, I think that that's a very . . . it causes me a great deal of concern.

There are some other things that cause me a great deal of concern in relation to what was done. Why the hurry? The court has extended itself indefinitely to hear the case. The court has decided that they're going to take the time to look at what's going on. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think that this legislature should do anything else but wait and see what's going to go on. Because I believe that the function of this Assembly is to provide leadership, not retroactive, regressive legislation that is going to cripple the opportunity of farmers in a court.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think the haste with which we were forced back into the Rules Committee, I think was wrong. I think that it was wrong because of the way the executive branch corralled the members of the committee and said, you got to do this. There's no other way.

And that, Mr. Speaker, I think is wrong. We based the decision on changes in the rules on compromise and consensus. And now we have one that says, unilaterally, we're going to change it. We're going to cut it to the quick. We're going to change it and make unilateral decisions that don't compare or correspond with compromise and consensus. I think that's totally wrong.

I think it's wrong for a number of reasons. One of which, Mr. Speaker, is that in a setting of a provincial legislature the checks and the balances on appropriating and grievance before supply, all of those issues, those items before this Assembly have only one avenue of scrutiny and that is through this Assembly, Mr. Speaker — and that is through this Assembly and the opposition, given the opportunity, to adequately scrutinize and observe what's going on in the executive branch of this government.

And I know it and am convinced of it that it should be your responsibility as a member of this Assembly, even if you are on the government side of the House, to analyse and scrutinize the work of the executive branch of government. You are shirking your responsibility to your province, to Her Majesty and her representatives, and to the members of this Assembly, and to your constituents if you are not scrutinizing the operations of the executive branch of your government.

If you take away that freedom from me to do the same thing, then you are also doing it to the people of Saskatchewan. If you do it to the members of the Assembly, who're you going to go do it to next? That's the basis for this Assembly to operate.

What have we got in other areas? Let's take the Canadian government for example. We have a balance between the branch of government and the executive branch, the parliament, and the Senate. We have a balance.

How many times have you had the Senate hold up debate in the Parliament of Canada? Many, many times, Mr. Speaker, many times. In fact, on one occasion, we were asked as a part of this group in this Assembly to vote for a change in the constitution as it related to the voting procedures of parliament so that they could move a money Bill. Because the Senate would not allow that Bill to go through. Those are balances and counter-balances to have the executive branch of government remain responsible to the citizens of the country.

In the parliamentary system, Mr. Speaker, there are very few checks and balances. The only checks and balances that you have is the capacity of the opposition to speak in a way . . . that is going to function in a way that is going to be described as a competitive role in this Assembly. It's the only way you're going to have the executive branch of government held accountable.

And that, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion is being breached right here. In my opinion, it is wrong to do what the executive branch of government is doing here today. I find it disgusting.

I want to point out to the members of the Assembly that I have been frustrated by an opposition that dealt with us in a harsh way. And to say that I wasn't frustrated, it probably was . . . that is limiting the volume of frustration that I felt. Anger probably would be a better word. And I don't think that the feelings that you have are any different than the ones that I had.

However, I'll tell you what we did. We gave, we gave the opposition, the opportunity to refer that motion to the Rules and Procedures Committee. That's what we did.

An Hon. Member: — You brought in closure.

Mr. Martens: — No, Mr. Speaker. The member from Saskatoon Haultain, whatever, Eastview-Haultain, he says we brought in closure. No, Mr. Speaker, we did not bring in closure on the motion . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know we did, but that was on the basis of a decision that was reached in a Rules Committee, on the basis of the decision that was reached in our Rules Committee on consensus that those rules would stay the same.

This one was put aside because we couldn't gain consensus. And at the time, in 1989, what we did is we gave it to the Rules Committee to study and evaluate and come to a consensus on.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is a fact. If you go back and you will find out that that is absolutely true. They gave it to the Rules and Procedures Committee. They referred it to them to provide the time for compromise and consensus to form. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a fact.

Now what we have, when there is an impasse in a Bill or legislation being brought forward, we have an impasse. Because you feel strongly one way and we feel strongly another way, there is an impasse. Just like there was in 1989, Mr. Speaker, an impasse on your position and an impasse on my position. It was a philosophical debate between two diametrically opposed parties.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is not wrong. I think that's constructive for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. What is a tragedy, Mr. Speaker, is that today we have a unilateral decision based on the decision by the government to say that we will force this down their throat. We will not take no for an answer.

Why didn't they bring it forward in this kind of sense when we had our committee meetings prior to the Assembly sitting? Well I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that they didn't think it was necessary. I will suggest to you that they didn't think it was important enough to discuss, to raise in profile, to say to the other members of the committee that this is as important as the sitting hours, it's as important as the television guidelines, it's as important as orders of business on private members' day.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if we have in this Assembly the continued decision on the part of the government to unilaterally change this rule, we have a very, very serious problem in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to this Assembly that this morning, this morning we wrote a letter, the House Leader here wrote a letter to the House Leader of the government and said, can we have an opportunity to discuss this to allow this to go back to committee and say, well maybe we could have 60 days and start talking about the difference between 3 and 60.

And, Mr. Speaker, nothing was done about it. In fact the response was in a very, very negative way, opposite to that — nothing based on consensus; nothing based on compromise; not a willingness to discuss.

Mr. Speaker, we have stood in this Assembly since yesterday at 1:30. And we have stood in this Assembly and presented argument after argument about the components that we think are wrong in you presenting this motion. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's realistic to consider that none of the members of the government wouldn't have an opinion on this. I think that, Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent on some of the people opposite to talk about it.

And now I want to relate just some of the things that the member from Churchill Downs, Regina Churchill Downs, said in how he made his presentation as he presented the motion to this Assembly. And I just find it very, very difficult to believe that a man would stand in his place and tell this Assembly that this was a good thing to do. In 1989 he spent hour upon hour upon hour telling this Assembly and the members of this Assembly how wrong it was to have a motion brought forward by the government to cease ringing the bells.

He stood in this Assembly and did not tell the truth about what he was saying. He didn't. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I could use the other word, he even did that in presenting his arguments. That is what he did in this Assembly.

As a matter of fact, he decided somewhere along the line that he was going to support the Minister of Agriculture in his bungling of the GRIP Bill. That's what he decided to do. By making that statement he changed his mind. He said, I'm going to support the Minister of Agriculture in all of his bungling and fumbling. I'm going to support him even though he is wrong.

And the member from Regina Churchill Downs, if he had the courage, would go back and read his own script and find out from *Hansard* what he said in 1989.

I don't know how people can switch like that. I don't understand that. I really find that difficult to understand. In respect to this, I'll just use another example, Mr. Speaker, that I find interesting — his stand on harmonization. He flip-flopped on that. He flip-flops on how he's going to present this motion before this House — 1989 he says one thing, 1992 he says another; 1991 he says one thing, 1992 he says another.

(1630)

And that, Mr. Speaker, out in my part of the world, is not telling the truth. One of the times he's not telling the truth. How could he believe both? I find that even more disgusting than anything that I have heard. And that, Mr. Speaker, is why I am against this motion being brought to this Assembly today. I am against it for that reason.

There are other things that I want to point out as I go through the items that we have here today. I want to point out some things that have been said by individuals in this Assembly, and quote from the debate that was held in relation to the motion before us today, in 1989.

The member from Humboldt — a quote, May 29, 1989:

When we talk about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the

motion before us to limit the number of hours the bells can ring in this legislature, to limit the effectiveness of the official opposition, we have no option but to stand up, each one of us, and voice our opinion on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to this government's high-handed, arrogant, undemocratic method of running government.

That, Mr. Speaker, was a quote from the member from Humboldt. That's what he said then. On May 29 again:

... I'm not doing this for my own political purpose; I'm doing it because the people of Saskatchewan, the feeling that we have for the people of Saskatchewan must be heard, their concerns must be heard.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the members of this Assembly again today the reason why this is being rammed, jammed, forced down the throats of the members of the Assembly is because of the incompetence of the member from Rosetown-Elrose who couldn't handle anything. He couldn't handle anything in the livestock industry. He couldn't handle anything in the grain industry. What's he going to botch up next? That's the question.

An Hon. Member: — The highways.

Mr. Martens: — And my colleague says the highways are next. Well, Mr. Speaker, he couldn't run anything and he's demonstrating it every day. More and more as we see him dealing with items, he can't handle anything.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I want to remind the member — he may have forgotten, it's been such a long time — that we are on a motion that's moved by the member from Regina Churchill Downs that says that the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be now concurred in. And I have read the report very carefully and what he is on right now has nothing to do with the report, and I remind him to get back to the motion that is before us.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out to the Assembly that the competence of the minister is the reason why this motion is before the Assembly here today. I believe, I honestly believe the only reason, absolutely the only reason why this ...

The Speaker: — Order, order. I want to remind the member that that may be his opinion, but that has nothing to do with the resolution that is before us. Just because it's your opinion doesn't mean that that can be debated in the legislature on this motion.

The motion before the Assembly is on concurrence on the report by the Rules and Procedures Committee. Nowhere, nowhere in that report or in the resolution that is before us does that pertain to the Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Highways. So I ask him to please get back to the resolution that's before this Assembly.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The discussion here today is on limiting the ringing of the bells. And in

my opinion, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of this Assembly, that GRIP is the reason it's here. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why this Bill or this motion is before this Assembly. In my view, that's clearly what it is.

And in the view of thousands and thousands of people across this province, the ringing of the bells is because of the Minister of Agriculture. And that, Mr. Speaker, and to the members of this Assembly, is an absolute fact. It is impressed on the minds of individuals across this province, and I'm only expressing the view of my constituents and the members ... or the people who have talked to me about it.

The limitation of time to get the Bill before the House is the reason why this motion is being debated here today. Absolutely no question in my mind and in the minds of thousands and thousands of agriculture producers across this province.

The member from Humboldt said on May 29:

Why is the government trying to stymie the whole process by limiting bell-ringing?

Why? And we were talking about a philosophical difference, not an illegal action.

On May 29 again:

... I'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the present rule, the present rule in this legislature gives the opposition the opportunity to engage the people in an exercise known as participatory democracy.

That, Mr. Speaker, as I stand before this Assembly, is what you're taking away from this Assembly.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why I don't think that this government is dealing with this Legislative Assembly in a fair and equitable way. They are not reaching the conclusion of limiting the bell-ringing to consensus and compromise like we have on every other rule change in all of the time that I have been in this Assembly. There hasn't been a unilateral change in rules in this Assembly, I don't believe, in the history of this Assembly.

And here we have, on the basis of someone's competence or incompetence, depends upon which way you view it, that individual is asking his caucus to support this motion. We can only assume that. We can only assume that because we have not heard one word contrary to that.

And I want to point out to the members of this Assembly that I don't agree with the observations made by the member from Churchill Downs. I don't believe it at all. I don't believe that he's right today. He was probably more right in 1989 than he is today.

And what has changed? The only thing that's changed, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that he is now in the treasury benches on the other side in the executive branch of government. And he doesn't want even his colleagues to voice an opinion. And in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that's wrong.

I believe that there isn't one of them that has the courage to get up here and say anything against or for what the Associate Minister of Finance has said. I don't believe they have the courage. Because they've all been told to keep their mouths shut. And I think that that's wrong.

So what we're doing here in a very real and sensitive way is we're telling the people of Saskatchewan what these people said. This is what they said. On May 29 the member from Humboldt said this:

Not only will this motion to limit the length of time that the bells ring, not only will it muzzle the opposition, an opposition who, like I said, gave the people the opportunity to speak, but it will also muzzle the people of this province, because if we have to depend on the media, we have to depend on general elections, what opportunity do the people of this province have to speak in between elections and if the media don't pick up their cause. That is the role of the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the role of the opposition is to keep an effective balance of power in the executive branch of this government. That's what our responsibility is.

Mr. Speaker, it is also the role of this opposition to challenge the executive branch of this government in its actions in relation to democracy. It's the role of this opposition to challenge the executive branch, the cabinet ministers in this government, to be honest and forthright in dealing with the kinds of things that they have to deal with on a regular basis. And that means that we have to stop them. We have to challenge them. We have to correct them. We have to provide, on the basis of Her Majesty, the responsibility to have an effective government.

And that's the reason why we are challenging, not only in the debate, but challenging the very essence of the motion before us today. That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we are here discussing and debating this today.

There's one other thing that concerns me, Mr. Speaker, and it concerns me a lot. And I have stood in this House when the executive branch of this government had to deal with a very, very serious problem in the justice system. It was not the justice system that was to blame. It was the actions of an individual who was a part or could have been a part of that executive branch.

And, Mr. Speaker, the role of the Attorney General at the time was to say that I have to exclude myself from the discussion because I could not only cause a problem of a relationship between the minister of Justice and the executive branch, but my role as a member of this Assembly. And that, Mr. Speaker, was clearly a very, very difficult thing to do.

And it is our role as a part of the opposition to make sure that that is kept on track. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe, I fundamentally believe that the changes that we will make as a part of this motion will only provide an opportunity for the Minister of Agriculture to provide, as a part of evidence before a court, evidence that is contrary to law. And I don't believe that that is right.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, on the part of this opposition, it is our responsibility to say to this executive branch, you have to do things legal. You have to do things that are not only legal, but you have to do things that are perceived to be legal because you can't do it the other way.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have been to countries in Africa and in Europe where precisely the opposite exists, where the control of the opposition is said to have no benefit to society. The opposition has been told, we're going to curtail your involvement in the democratic process. And, Mr. Speaker, I see that as an example here today. Without a doubt, I see that as an example of what we're debating here today and the motion that's before us.

I find that very difficult to believe. And as I stood and received the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977 for responsibility for responding in a way in local government, I said to myself there is a reason why I need to defend the democratic process. There is a need for me to stand in this Assembly and stand in this province and say to the people of the province of Saskatchewan that the role of the government is one thing, the executive branch is another, and the role of the opposition is the third. And, Mr. Speaker, we are having the executive branch of government cut down the role of the opposition in a very, very serious way here today.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is exemplified by the very fact that the executive branch of government will not allow even the back-benchers to get up and speak. And I challenge the members from around this Assembly who are back-benchers in that government to take up the challenge. And I want to point out to members of this Assembly that there are quite a few of you who ought to. I'm going to talk about where I've been receiving encouragement from to keep the bells ringing.

I have quite a few pages here from people across this province — people who have called me who I have never, ever met before; people who have said, keep those bells ringing. And for a number of reasons, Mr. Speaker. It's not only the GRIP Bill that they say to me that you should keep those bells ringing for. Do you know what else they say? They're going to destroy our health care system. Keep them ringing. Don't let them continue to govern because they're going to completely destroy this province.

(1645)

And the examples are demonstrated every day. We have examples of that from across the piece in all of the ministers that we have here today. Mr. Speaker, I have people from Hanley calling me and saying to me, don't stop ringing the bells. I have people from Eastend calling me and saying, don't stop ringing the bells. As a matter of fact . . .

An Hon. Member: — How is Ted doing?

Mr. Martens: — He's doing very well, thank you. The question that should be answered, Mr. Speaker, is, how is the member from Shaunavon doing? And the individuals who were his supporters from Climax who were

organizing the rally down at Shaunavon, I wonder if they're as strong supporters today as they were on October 21.

And that, Mr. Member, and Mr. Speaker, is what we're talking about. They're telling me over and over and over again, don't stop ringing the bells — don't stop ringing the bells.

And I'll tell you what. When the people at Eastend find out their hospital is gone or the ones at Ponteix find out their hospital is gone, they're going to be ringing the bells. They're going to be ringing your bells, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't want to include you — the member from Shaunavon. I want to tell the member from Shaunavon they're going to be ringing his bell, and they're going to be ringing it loud and hard. That, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why we think that this limitation on the bell-ringing is very, very serious.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — I'm going to talk about a phone call that I got from Golden Prairie, said keep ringing those bells.

An Hon. Member: — Where's Golden Prairie?

Mr. Martens: — Yes, the member from Saskatoon asks, where is Golden Prairie? Well I'll be. Try going to the west side of the province some time and find out where some of these little towns are. Do you want to know where Fulda is? Ask the member from Humboldt. Where is he? Oh, there he is. Where is Fulda . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes. No, that's in the member from Kinistino's seat.

Yes, I had a gentleman phone me from there. He said, I've talked to my member. He told me, he said, I can't change it; I can't get the government to change it. I think it's probably best this way. And what do we got? He told me that he told the member from Kinistino, he said, keep ringing those bells.

The second thing he told him, he said, as a matter of fact, you better go find yourself another job because in four years you're not going to be here. That's what he said to me. And he called me; I didn't call him . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I sure did.

And as a matter of fact, I got a call from a gentleman at Wynyard and he said exactly the same thing. I got a call from a gentleman in Assiniboia, and he said, keep ringing the bells. I got a call from a family in Prud'homme. Now which seat is that in?

An Hon. Member: — Kinistino.

Mr. Martens: — Kinistino. Right. Okay. There you go again. Another one who said to keep ringing those bells.

And will those people, those rural members from across this province, will they have the courage to stand up and say, I'm not going to limit the time of those bells? In fact it would be even better if they would ask their Minister of Agriculture and their House Leader to withdraw the Bill so that it could be seriously talked about over the next year.

That's what they're asking for. They want to have the Bill withdrawn, the process changed, and then, Mr. Speaker, that's what they want to have. And, Mr. Speaker, they want to have that from all across this province. I'll leave out the people that call me from my constituency, but there's a few of them that tell me to do this too.

Let me talk about the member from Bengough-Milestone when I got a call from Minton. Any of you know where Minton is . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it's Minton. And they told me, keep the bells ringing.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Bengough-Milestone would do well to go back to her constituency and ask the people, what do we want done with the GRIP Bill.

Whose seat is Leroy in? Is that Humboldt or Quill Lakes? Well, Mr. Speaker, that's another call that I got unsolicited by an individual who wanted to tell me to keep the bells ringing and get the Bill off the Table and be done with it.

What about Southey? Qu'Appelle-Lumsden probably, or Last Mountain-Touchwood — that's what it is. That's where Southey is. I had a call from a gentleman at Southey and said, keep the bells ringing, get rid of the GRIP. Get rid of the GRIP and the minister, as a matter of fact.

What about Kamsack? What about the family from Kamsack who called me and told me to keep the bells ringing? Brownlee, whose constituency is Brownlee in? One of you fellows — Brownlee? Well they tell me, Mr. Speaker, they tell me, Mr. Speaker, that GRIP is supposed to be gone. They probably called him too. Anyway, what about Admiral? Whose seat is Admiral in?

The Speaker: — Order. What about getting back to the motion that we're on?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I've reminded the member several times that the motion before us is a motion moved by the member from Regina Churchill . . . order . . . is the motion moved by Regina Churchill Downs that the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be now concurred in. I have reminded the member there's nothing in that report on GRIP. And to go . . . one more comment from the member from Wilkie and I will remind him of rule 28.

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I have been listening very carefully as the member from Morse went through the litany. I admit it's a litany because we have massive lists of this. But he was talking about the people, Mr. Speaker, that had called him up and encouraged him to continue with the bell-ringing. And he was giving us a sample of the calls across the province. Now am I right, Mr. Speaker, in saying that you called him to order on that?

The Speaker: — I called him to order on discussing the GRIP program and as it relates to the Minister of Agriculture, has absolutely

nothing to do, has absolutely nothing to do with the motion that is before us.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the member from Shaunavon that the individuals from Admiral who have called me and told me to keep the bells ringing. And that's from your constituency. I've had calls from Climax, from Frontier, all the way across the south-west. And they tell me, Mr. Member from Shaunavon, they tell me over and over again, keep the bells ringing.

And I see that the member from Southey wants to participate too, or the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood who Southey is in his constituency. They phone me and tell me, Mr. Member, that they want me to have the bells continue ringing.

What about Cut Knife — Cut Knife? Cut Knife is another one where they phone me and tell me, keep the bells ringing.

An Hon. Member: — You already said that.

Mr. Martens: — I did not. I know what I've said here, Mr. Member from Elphinstone. They call me from Kisbey. Whose constituency is Kisbey in? They call me from Porcupine Plain . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Right. I'm just reinforcing the opportunity from everybody across this province to participate in this debate.

As a matter of fact, the member from Humboldt said in 1989, he said over and over again: allow the people to participate in democracy and allow this opposition to give a demonstration of the opportunity to give the executive branch of government an opportunity to govern in a fair and equitable way across this province.

That's what they're asking us to ring the bells about. Because they believe, Mr. Speaker, they believe over and over again, that the executive branch of this government is out of control. They believe that fundamentally, because it isn't only about GRIP.

And, Mr. Speaker, you're right. It isn't only because of GRIP. It's because of health care. It's because of highways. It's because of all of those things. They think this executive branch is out of control because they want to take away and throttle the opposition in every way, shape, or form. And by putting this motion in, they are doing exactly that.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why this opposition feels the way they do. And it is why the members from that side of the House, when they were over here, said exactly the same thing. They said exactly the same thing over and over again. The member from Elphinstone, the member from P.A. Carlton, the members from Humboldt, all of them, the members from Saskatoon, the members who aren't here from Saskatoon, those people said it over and over and over again: give us an opportunity to speak out for democracy and we will.

Somewhere along the line, Mr. Speaker, the executive branch has to be brought into control in this Assembly. And it is the role of this opposition to do that. And it is my role, as a member of this opposition, to convince not only

this Assembly but everyone in this province that not only is the government wrong, the executive branch wrong, but who speaks for those people whose representatives sit on that side of the House and are told to keep their mouths shut by the executive branch of this government? Who's . . . Oh, I hear a whole lot of groaning from the other side saying, now where are you . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I've asked the members to please let the member have his say. And if you wish to get up, I'll recognize you at another time.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the executive branch have told individuals on the opposite side, you can't speak to this motion. And I want . . . I challenge anyone to get up to do it. Because I don't think you have the courage, number one. Because you don't have the understanding of the situation in your own constituencies. You have no idea what it's going to do to hurt not only the farmers of the province of Saskatchewan, but it could also have a very, very serious impact on the executive branch of this government.

The executive branch of this government, Mr. Speaker, is going to be held accountable by a court of law. And when that is done it's not only going to be the opposition's responsibility to challenge them, but, Mr. Speaker, it will be the opposition's responsibility to keep them in a check and balance on how they handle that decision themselves. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the reason why I agree that there should be some compromise and consensus built on the decision here.

I'm going to raise one point to be an example of how compromise and consensus should work — and I'm going to conclude with that, Mr. Speaker — the decision by the Rules Committee at the time the consensus was reached on all of the rules that are there today. There was a decision made by individuals in that Rules Committee that we would have flags in this Assembly or we would not have flags in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, you don't see any flags in this Assembly — not because we didn't want them, not because the government didn't want them, but we couldn't reach an agreement on what they should be. We couldn't reach an agreement on which flags there should be. And so, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of that and the decision reached by the committee, no flags are in this Assembly. And that, Mr. Speaker, was a decision based on compromise and consensus.

We're not angry about it nor are we upset about it. But, Mr. Speaker, we are disappointed today in the very fact that we don't have consensus and agreement and compromise, which this whole country is based on.

Canada was founded on the basis of compromise and consensus. And here we have a unilateral decision by an overpowering government with an overpowering mandate to deliver for the people of Saskatchewan whatever they choose it to be. And that, Mr. Speaker, is fundamentally wrong. And Her Majesty is not being well served today by this discussion that you are purporting to impose on this Assembly, and that is the motion before this House today. That, Mr. Speaker, is what I believe to

be a fundamentally flawed decision on your part. And I believe you are going to regret, inevitably regret, the day that you ever brought this forward.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why I believe that they should withdraw it and allow it go back to the Rules Committee where it was supposed to be in the first place. That, Mr. Speaker, is where it should be. And I say that today, and I said that in Rules Committee, and I will say it in rules committees again. As vice-chair . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.