

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

NOTICES OF MOTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I shall on Monday next ask the government the following question:

Regarding the Public Service Commission's competition for the purpose of hiring farm stress counsellors: (1) What types of counselling will these officials offer farmers? (2) What types of assistance will these stress counsellors provide to farmers? (3) Will that assistance involve any new services? (4) During what hours will these persons be available to farmers that call the farm-stress line? (5) For how long will these stress counsellors be employed and at what level of pay? (6) At what distance will they be able to operate from government? And (7) what qualifications are required, and who determines what those qualifications are, and how are they deemed to be most appropriate?

Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to inform the Assembly of an event that will be happening in the city of Moose Jaw, which I think is very significant for our city and also for the province of Saskatchewan, and that is the official opening of the Snowbirds gallery at the Western Development Museum this weekend.

The first public viewing will be Friday evening, tomorrow. And it is in conjunction with the air show that everyone in Saskatchewan has become familiar with, and I think, appreciates as a very major tourist component. It's particularly, I think, nice that Moose Jaw was chosen by the Canadian Armed Forces to be the home of the show-case, if you will, for the Snowbirds, their history, the impact that they have had on aviation in Canada, indeed around the world.

The gallery includes a mock-up of the control tower, other paraphernalia, an actual airplane that go along with the Snowbirds. And I guess the highlight of the whole display, Mr. Speaker, is a Cinema 180 which is a poor man's version, if you will, of an IMAX theatre but it was the best that could be done under very limited budgets. And I must congratulate the manager of the Western Development Museum and all her staff for putting this together, because it has the potential to draw a lot of tourists to our province, indeed to our city.

And I would just ask all members of the Assembly, if they have the opportunity in going past Moose Jaw or in for the air show this weekend, that they take the opportunity to go to the Cinema 180 at the Western Development Museum and fly with the Snowbirds. And I think it'll be

very worthwhile.

And they tell me that you should hang on to your seat because if you're weak of stomach and heart that it may be more than you can take. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to make a statement today on a matter which has been very near and dear to my heart and to members of this side of the House and indeed to the people of Saskatchewan. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance announced that \$560 million worth of Saskatchewan savings bonds had been purchased by the people of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that that is a record placement by any province in the history of this country, and is indeed four times larger than the amount projected by this government.

It means, Mr. Speaker, the purchase of those \$560 million of bonds, it means that we won't have to borrow \$560 million from foreign financial institutions in New York or Zürich or Toronto. It means, Mr. Speaker, that the interest on that 560 million won't leave the province but in fact will go into the pockets of Saskatchewan people to help rebuild this province over the coming years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lyons: — And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, more importantly it means this. It means that the people of Saskatchewan, when shown leadership as the type shown by this government, will rally around to provide the solutions to the problems that face us. It means that the people of Saskatchewan are ready to get on with the task of rebuilding this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my congratulations . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to talk of the accomplishments of our community employment program. In just a few months of operation the program has created 563 jobs in Saskatchewan, and by the end of the year we expect that over 1,000 jobs will have been created.

The community employment program was implemented by our government to help persons receiving social assistance find employment and receive training. The community employment program is based on the belief that people in our province want to work. And the results of the program have confirmed this belief.

The program is designed to provide maximum benefit to our communities and to the participants. For the

participant, the job provided is part of a career planning process that provides both work experience and training. We have ensured that nobody becomes worse off by working. Supplementary health coverage, for example, is maintained by the people who are employed in the program.

The community employment program also is providing important services to our communities. For example, in my own riding Services for Seniors has been given assistance to operate an innovative composting project. The project combines assisting seniors to maintain their yards and thus live independently, with the composting of grass clippings and other vegetation.

This innovative program gives work to assistance recipients, helps seniors stay in their own homes, and takes a small step to protecting the environment. This is the type of imaginative project that the New Careers . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Economic Development and Trade announced a new tourism destination program in Saskatchewan. Today I'm glad, pleased and privileged, to stand with the member from Thunder Creek and the member from Moose Jaw Palliser in welcoming Saskatchewan's newest tourist destination, that being the Snowbirds gallery in the Western Development Museum in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know and as all members know, the Snowbirds Canadian Armed Forces precision flying team is based in Moose Jaw. They have performed across this nation and across this continent to literally millions of people and have won a reputation as the best precision flying team in the world.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — The gallery in the Western Development Museum in Moose Jaw celebrates this fact and will give us, as the member from Thunder Creek points out, a hands-on experience of the Snowbirds. This is destined to become a major economic boost to the community of Moose Jaw and for the province of Saskatchewan through increased tourism.

Mr. Speaker, this gallery is the result of a partnership between the private sector, volunteers, the Western Development Museums, the provincial government, federal government, and many people who have worked hard, including and especially Lynn Johnston and the staff at the WDM (Western Development Museum).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, across the province there are billboards appearing now which will say, come fly with us at the Snowbirds gallery. Tonight the Premier of Saskatchewan will be at the gallery. I invite all members in the course of this session to take the opportunity to visit

Moose Jaw and the new gallery.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to report to you on the 13th annual media-MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) ball game. This event began in 1980. In 1982 the trophy was dedicated in memory of the late Michael Sharpe, a reporter who passed away suddenly that year.

Picture it if you would, Mr. Speaker: a beautiful evening, the sun still high in the western sky, the ball diamond groomed to perfection. Baseball fans have been waiting for this event for a long time. For you see, Mr. Speaker, this was a tie-breaker, each team having won six games apiece.

Then I heard the familiar cry: play ball. We took the field first, but the pitcher's mound was empty. Surely something was wrong. Then it began, barely audible at first, and grew into a deafening roar: Serge, Serge. From out of the dugout came Serge Kujawa, with his usual flair. He doffed his traditional golf hat and bowed to the crowd. They loved it.

Our team was so professional, Mr. Speaker, never casting aspersions on the opposition once, but always encouraging them, for there were several within our ranks who actually believed they had a chance to win this one.

It was late in the inning, Mr. Speaker. It was late in the ninth inning, Mr. Speaker, and the game was tied. Things were looking very good for us. A ball was driven by Trew to deep centre, but Mandryk makes a shoe-string catch — or so he reports — guns it to Traynor on third, over to Foster on second, who displayed her usual dexterity, leaping high into the air and pulling the ball down to retire the side.

What would we do? Stop and call it a tie? The crowd screamed: more, more! The decision was made. The game would go on. With the game tied at 11, we went into the 10th inning. Quickly the opposition fell — swish, swish, swish. Serge was hot.

Our bat again, runners on first and second. Suddenly Flavel pulls a muscle. Who was left? What could we do? There was only one person left, and that was the lady who had cared for us so well during the game and brought us this far — our bat lady. Out of the dugout she came, knocked the mud off her cleats and stepped into the batter's box. The crowd was silent. One pitch, Mr. Speaker, it was gone deep into left field. I still get goose bumps thinking about it. And the moral of the story, of course, Mr. Speaker, is: it ain't over till the bat lady swings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Sonntag: — Finishing it on a serious note, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the game there was a total of \$115 donated to the very worthy Chili for Children, and I thank everyone who was involved and participated in this event and made it so successful. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to just say a little today about, and realize to the people, that Big Valley Jamboree today officially opens. It's been open, I guess, since Monday as the trailers have been rolling in there.

This, Mr. Speaker, becomes one of the largest events in Saskatchewan. The town of Craven becomes the third-largest city in Saskatchewan for four days. It started as a dream and it was built into an event, and it has now turned into more of a happening in the valley of Qu'Appelle near Craven. I want to congratulate the people of Craven and to everyone who works so hard in putting this attraction together, and invite everyone out for the weekend.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Farm Debt Refinancing

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the minister responsible for Crop Insurance. After considerable pain and sacrifice, Canadians, particularly farmers, finally have a chance to benefit from low interest rates. Those least able to take advantage of these rates are farmers with large debt, locked into high interest rates.

What have you done to ensure that farm families most in need of low interest refinancing can benefit from these lower rates?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, Crop Insurance has a policy of interest rates, which is passing the interest rates on that we receive and we'll continue to do so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, that really is not good enough. Lending institutions are using the lack of predictability of the new GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) pay-outs as an excuse not to refinance loans at these lower rates for farm people in this province.

What are you going to do? It's your responsibility. What are you going to do for the hard-pressed farmers and rural businesses that are unable to benefit from this chance to save thousands upon thousands of dollars in interest rates that are now ending up — those dollars — on Bay Street in Toronto?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, if the lending institutions are ripping off farmers, I hardly see how that becomes the responsibility of Crop Insurance Corporation. If lending institutions are turning down loans, it's not because of the unpredictability of crop insurance. And that is merely an excuse.

This program is very predictable. The bottom-line coverage is there. Lending institutions have told us that this was bankable and we have agreed that it is bankable. And if lending institutions out there are not treating it as

bankable, that is not the responsibility of Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, I do suggest that you make some of the calls that I have to lending institutions and you talk to agrologists as well, just to find out exactly how predictable those banks are thinking that your new GRIP insurance program is all about. It is not bankable one little bit.

There's no question that the old gross revenue insurance program was flawed. But it's your inept approach to fixing what has gone on in this program that is robbing farmers right now of a chance to take advantage of these low rates.

Now I want you to explain to people — you be the one to explain to financially strapped farmers, you be the one to explain to rural business communities, and you be the one to explain to men and women and young people who are losing jobs in small towns just what you're going to do, what your government is going to do, to get all that extra interest money that is going to the lending institutions into the hands of . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Does the member have a question?

Ms. Haverstock: — I just asked it, sir.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — I believe there was a question there, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but I believe there was a question. I think, Mr. Speaker, that again lending institutions have a responsibility to act responsibly in this province. I think if there's a problem with lending institutions ripping off farmers, then that should be addressed and will be addressed in an appropriate manner if we can find the means to do so it. It is not a responsibility of Crop Insurance.

I repeat again, this is a bankable program, and lending institutions have told us that it is bankable. And that is not the problem with the credit out there. And there certainly are a lot of problems with farmers getting credit. We've gone through some very tough times.

Farmers, many of them are in grave financial difficulty, and those difficulties do not arise because of the changes to the program this year. They arise from the difficulties that have arisen over the past 10 years. And that's the reason the farmers are having a problem getting credit, not the changes to the GRIP program.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Minister, there are many people out there who would adamantly disagree with you on this. This is the break that Saskatchewan needs. And you can't blame Ottawa for this one, and you can't even blame the Devine government for this one. This is really something where we're . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think the member knows she is not to use the names of people in this legislature,

but their constituencies.

Ms. Haverstock: — I apologize, Mr. Speaker. The previous Conservative government. The extra money in the hands of bankers isn't going to do us any good. And what we need to do is to understand this, not as an agriculture problem but as an economic problem. And we're talking about people here, we're talking about jobs here, we're talking about business, and we're talking about people being able to live in viable, vibrant communities. That's what this is all about.

And it was your government, and as Acting Minister of Agriculture, you gave a non-moratorium moratorium to this province, and you said you were meeting with lending institutions. Now I'd like to know when you've met with the lending institutions, how recently, and what the results were of being able . . . for having farmers in this province benefit from low interest rate loans.

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I think the question of when we met with lending institutions, that's being done by the Minister of Agriculture, and it would be more appropriately put to him. As to all the problems of the farmers being attributed to the new changes to the GRIP program, I think that is a ridiculous statement.

I think that farmers were in trouble last year; farmers went broke last year; farmers had trouble getting credit last year. And the interest rates are lower now and presumably farmers are getting credit at lower interest rates than they have in the past, as is everybody else in Saskatchewan. And certainly we are working with the bankers. We are proposing to bring legislation forward to provide a six-year leaseback to farmers. And we are working as hard as we can to provide farmers with the means to continue and earn a livelihood.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Minister, this House has been told that your government is committed to meeting with lending institutions and credit unions to bring people together around the table to come to some conclusions about how farmers in this province can remain viable and to get loans.

What I'd like to find out from you, sir, is when you have met with lending institutions about this particular issue, so that farmers who are being told that their loans will not be refinanced at lower rates, that they cannot get them because of the lack of predictability of the GRIP program . . . when have you met with the lending institutions about this issue, and what were you told?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, we have met with the lending institutions many, many times. The Minister of Agriculture has met with the lending institutions. The Premier has met with the lending institutions. There was a committee formed with lending institutions being part of it. And they have told us that the new GRIP program is bankable, and they would accept it as bankable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, it was this week that the Wheat Board commissioners, the market analysts and the grain industry officials, stated that they expect no improvement or a decline in Wheat Board grain prices for the 1992-93 crop year.

Farm people need a fair shake, and they are feeling extremely hopeless, Mr. Minister. And you know this as the Minister for Rural Development. The actions of your government have made things worse for these individuals. They feel highly, highly stressed. And all the calls that come to me are talking about the desire that they have for a fair shake from your government.

Will you tell me exactly when you met with the lending institutions about the issue of low interest rates and what you were told?

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting the member refers to the fact that she's predicting that grain prices are going to fall. In the case of grain prices fall, the new GRIP program will provide the same or a better level of coverage than last year. The complaints from the opposition have been that if we had a drought and grain prices were to move up, there would be a small decrease in the bottom-line coverage. So I think if grain prices are not going to move up, then the new GRIP program is certainly as good and probably better at bottom-line coverage than the old one. So I fail to see the connection there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Changes to Health Care

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I direct my first question to the Minister of Health. Madam Minister, yesterday in this House you refused to come clean on your secret plan to devastate the rural health care system. When confronted with the actual report, you said that it was a couple of months old, which is a relatively short time.

In the two months since this so-called draft, will you tell us whether the decision to close or convert rural hospitals funded for fewer than 10 acute care patients per day has been reversed? Will you tell us now that that decision has been reversed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the document that the opposition refers to is a document that was prepared by officials in the Department of Health for discussion purposes; it was a working paper. There were a number of things in that particular document that I did not agree with and asked them to go back to the drawing board. There has been at least, I think, two or three versions if not more than that since then.

The fact of the matter is, is that cabinet or caucus has not yet discussed the final version of this particular document in detail and therefore there has been no specific decision on the document that was presented by these individuals, or on the final document that we have.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Madam Minister, I was very interested in the last statement that you just made. You do have a final draft; that's what you're saying. That was the final document that you have.

Madam Minister, to make sure that you do not cause undue pain, undue anxiety for the residents of this province, will you then commit that you will this afternoon table that final report that you have just referred to? And you yourself, Madam Minister, said the final report. Will you table that document so that we can see the differences that have occurred from your so-called first draft, or whatever it is, and the final draft that you have just admitted that exists. Will you table that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I would think that after 10 years in government the member opposite would have a little better understanding of what happens in government, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, as I said, it has not been discussed in detail or approved by cabinet and caucus. Therefore it's not final in that extent. And when it has been through cabinet and caucus, we will make it available for the public.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is becoming evident, Mr. Speaker, that the proof is in the pudding. If it's not public, then it's secret. That's exactly the position that I have taken. So, Madam Minister . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Please let the member ask his questions.

Mr. Neudorf: — And then, Madam Minister . . . Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then, Madam Minister, because it is secret I guess we'll have to go through the painful process of extracting some of the details rather slowly. We asked you questions in question period yesterday. We didn't get any answers. What we know is that those hospitals with 10 acute care patients per day are being considered for closure or conversion.

So I ask you, Madam Minister, for a piece of information that has always been public to the citizens of this province. Will you, Madam Minister, provide for us today, this afternoon, a list of the hospitals in this province that are now funded for 10 or fewer acute care beds per day? Will you give that list to the Assembly and to the people of Saskatchewan this afternoon?

It's a simple thing. It will be a public . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I think the member has asked his question. Let the minister answer.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, as we deal with the working paper and the final health care documentation,

we will make the information public that the public will want to know with respect to our health care policy. And we will be seeking input from the public because the document that will be coming forward, the document that will be coming forward will be asking for input from the public.

It will be a working paper that we'll send out to the public, setting out goals and directions and guidelines, some general principles under which people can operate if they want to get together and organize on a district basis. But essentially it will be a consultative process. As we move through the health care reform, we will be asking input from people, from small communities that have rural hospitals, as to how best we can meet their health care needs. And therefore that input will be taking place and is required.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — I will give the minister, Mr. Speaker, the courtesy of assuming that she did not hear my question. This question was a very simple one. It's a public document for the Department of Health. And all I'm asking for you is to table in this Assembly that document that indicates those hospitals that have 10 or fewer acute care patients per day. That's all I'm asking, Madam Minister. Will you do that?

The Speaker: — Order. Could I ask the government back-benchers please not to interrupt. I'm sure if the members wanted to direct questions to them, they would do so. I think they're directing their questions to the Minister of Health. I'd ask the Minister of Health to answer.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the documentation that the member requests will be provided in due course, as we come forward with our health care policy. The fact of the matter is — and I want to say this, I want to say this, Mr. Speaker — we will be asking communities to look at co-ordinating and integrating services, and this is assuming that cabinet and caucus agree with this approach. We will be asking communities to organize and co-ordinate on a district basis, to look at the health care needs in their district, to determine what facilities they want or what role they want for their facilities, to provide us with their plan and their input. And that will be the general thrust of our health care reform, not as the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, are trying to paint a picture.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — I'm just amazed, Madam Minister, why you won't give me that information. It's a simple, simple request. I have the '89-90 document, but I don't have the '90-91. And that's all I'm asking for you is to update me on that particular piece of information.

You talk a good talk, Madam Minister, about consultation. One of the items on page 2 of your report, of your document, of your plan for devastation of the health care system says, and I quote: the wellness team also heard that now is the time to do something. Now is the time to do something. There have been enough studies

and enough discussions and it is time to get on with it. That's your report.

Madam Minister, will you admit now that you have rejected that element of this report? Is that one of the rejections that you were referring to?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the public of Saskatchewan, the health care people, people throughout this province, realize there has to be health care reform and they want the government to get on with it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The members opposite were in government for 10 to 12 years and they refused to do anything with respect to health care reform except to bury their heads in the sand. They did nothing at a time when every other province across this country was playing some sort of leadership role in making health care services more efficient and providing a higher quality of health care services for the people of their province.

But that government did nothing. They had no long-term strategic plan. They had nothing. And now what they want to do is try and destroy the future of medicare in this province with their political gamesmanship based on a document that was rejected when it first came forward and has been revised in many different manners in the last month or so.

That document is not the document that we are working with now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, there may well be justice in this world after all. I'm very proud and happy for the people of Saskatchewan that, Madam Minister, you were prevented from doing your dastardly deed by presenting this report tomorrow by the simple fact that it was leaked, that it was leaked by your own people to me in order that the people of Saskatchewan could become aware of the perilous condition of their health care system.

Madam Minister, you speak about the wellness team, the wellness team that was announced back in January. I want to ask you (a) and (b) of a question. Number one . . . or (a) is, who were the members on that wellness team? Who were the members on that wellness team? And it also said that the wellness team will contact appropriate people for consultation. Who were these appropriate people that your wellness team consulted with?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, we have been talking in this legislature since before we were government about the need for health care reform and organizing and co-ordinating health care services on a district basis. We've been talking about it a long time. We continue to move in that direction regardless of your political games and any leaked documents. We will continue to move in that general direction because it is the right way to go, Mr.

Speaker.

Now with respect to the wellness team in the Department of Health and the Department of Health itself, it has been meeting with stakeholders throughout this province; it has been meeting with all sorts of people in the health care area, with health care professionals.

There have been extensive consultations in this regard with health care professionals, Mr. Speaker, as they analyse the Murray Commission report which that government had solicited, and other documents in the area of health care reform as they came forward with the proposals. But they have had a very . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before the member asks his question, I did notice the member interrupted the minister three times while she was trying to answer his question. And I also want to remind him, she only took seven seconds more than you did in asking the question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand chastised. Madam Minister, you claim changes would only be made through open consultation — you've said that again — open consultation with this secret report of yours that you refuse to share with the people of Saskatchewan, putting an anxiety in the hearts of all of our people.

Earlier this session I asked you if you would be prepared to truly consult with the people on the health care system. And I'm going to repeat that request right now. Madam Minister, will you agree to hold full-scale public hearings into any plan before you make a major overhaul of our health care system? Will you commit to hold full-scale public hearings?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, our plan is to go out to Saskatchewan and hold meetings with people throughout the province. They will be public meetings. They'll be open meetings. And we'll be going throughout rural Saskatchewan and talking to people.

But I want to say that there's a very large sector of Saskatchewan that aren't the Neanderthals of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, is there are a lot of communities already who are ready to move with district organization. And I've heard from some since this matter became an issue. They want to move with a community and a district organization, and they're ready to move. They're ready to move in this direction.

Those communities that are ready to move, we will be helping them and providing them with ever support and incentives we can to get themselves organized on a district basis. Meanwhile we . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Next question. Very close to yours again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I'm wondering, Madam Minister, that now that this document is public — and I'm sure that you're going

to be forced now to make some kind of an answer to the people — I'm wondering, Madam Minister, if you have plans to immediately launch a mail campaign to do some damage control? I know, Madam Minister, for example, I know, Madam Minister, I know that you are right now in the process of implementing a massive letter campaign. It started this morning. I know that.

I'm wondering, Madam Minister, if these letters that you are going to be writing out, and probably are in the process right now, will be the usual inflamed political rhetoric that for ever spews forth from the NDP (New Democratic Party) government offices. Or, Madam Minister, will it be, will it finally be a request for public input into those changes, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Well because of the scare tactics of the members opposite, because of the gross exaggeration and . . . because of the gross exaggeration . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. The member just got through asking his question. Let the minister answer, all right?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Because of the irresponsible behaviour of the member from Rosthern and other members across the House and the scare tactics, we will be writing to hospital administrators. We will be writing to them. I haven't seen the letter that will be going, but we will be writing to them and we will be advising them of the general direction we're intending to move. That is true. And we are doing that because of your irresponsibility.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Draper: — I beg leave to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker, sir.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Draper: — I'd like to introduce to you and through you again to the members, Mr. John Bumbac, a teacher from Assiniboia who's spent a day here to see our proceedings. Thank you, sir.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Report on Constitutional Negotiations

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to give members of the House a very brief report on the state of the constitutional negotiations. As members of the House will know, much has happened in the last week in this most recent round of negotiations on the constitution. And I'm pleased to provide this brief report on the outcome of those most recent efforts.

Before doing so, however, I'd like to advise members that on Monday of this week I briefed both the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party, the member from Saskatoon Greystone, on the status of the negotiations in general, but specifically on the question of Senate reform, which was the main agenda, before attending Tuesday's intergovernmental conference in Ottawa. And I'd like to thank both members for their valuable insights and ideas.

I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that there appears to be at least a tentative agreement reached on a package of constitutional reforms which could be the basis for all Canadians to agree on the renewal of our federation.

Those who participated in this round, the so-called Canada round of constitutional talks, and they were the representatives of the nine provinces, the Territories, the aboriginal organizations, the federal government, and ordinary citizens — and a very massive consultative mechanism — all those who participated responded positively to the desires expressed not only by Quebec, but to the desires expressed by the people of western Canada, other parts of the nation, and by the aboriginal peoples of this country.

I might say that we were parenthetically very ably represented at these negotiations and discussions by my colleague, the Minister of Justice and his able — small, but able — group of officials.

Saskatchewan's goal was to keep Canada united, not at any costs but through reasonable and fair compromise. And as I said, I believe that this package formed the basis for the realization of that goal.

Time does not permit, in a ministerial statement, to get into all the details. I would however like to very briefly refer to some of Saskatchewan's specific objectives and their status as the result of the last meeting.

First, there has been improvement on the equalization provisions. The federal government now seems prepared to commit itself to payments with respect to these equalization matters, and this is an extension from the mere commitment to the principle of the equalization.

There is an agreement to have enforceable, constitutionalized five-year agreements on the Canada Assistance Plan. And thirdly, there appears to be agreement on a new political accord through which the provisions of EPF — the established program financing mechanisms — will be strengthened. These three together are sometimes called, I think wrongly but for the shorthand, the equalization package.

We did not attain what we would have wanted, but we did make significant progress and the other governments particularly concerned about these matters, I think shared that view.

On the recognition of the right of Canada's aboriginal peoples to self government, there has been an agreement to entrench that in the constitution and to negotiate and to define it over the five years following constitutional amendment.

There's also been greater representation for smaller, less populous provinces like ours with respect to the question of a reformed Senate, and with improved and increased powers on a matter of particular importance to the provinces like Saskatchewan and Alberta, namely natural resources and in specific matters, the taxation of natural resources.

One other matter dealt with section 121, the so-called economic union. We did not achieve our objective with respect to 121, which was, quite frankly, that this should not be entrenched in the constitution.

But none the less through hard bargaining we were able to mitigate many of its worst features. We will want to monitor and carefully assess future developments with respect to this particular section.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as you can see by this brief report, like all participants, Saskatchewan gained in some areas and compromised in others and did not succeed in others. But in doing so, overall we reached a consensus which was consistent with our overall goal, namely keeping a united and unified country — Canada, the best country in the world in which to live.

I'd like to remind the members of the House that this package, as I say, does not achieve all, nor does it probably represent the end or the final end of the constitutional negotiations. Legal texts will have to be developed. Our officials are prepared to participate. Once the texts are completed — texts, I might add, and/or resolutions — these will be forwarded to the various legislatures, including ours, where they'll be studied.

(1415)

And it's our intention to refer these texts as soon as possible, the moment that they're prepared, to be debated by our own Standing Committee on Constitutional Affairs, and through this committee to be presented to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and to decide thereafter on what, if any, other steps need to be taken.

Mr. Speaker, I'll try to keep the House more fully informed on other developments as they occur. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of the official opposition to congratulate the participants in the recent constitutional negotiations, particularly Mr. Clark for dealing with a situation that, I'm sure from anyone that has been a part of that process would say, can be difficult at most; and to the first ministers of our country and the leaders of our territories who obviously spent a great deal of time and thought in keeping our country together.

It's been a long process which has included many individual Canadians, many interest groups. And certainly I think the very nature of the process that we have here in Canada tells us that we as Canadians sometimes have to expand our tolerance level.

I think Canadians as a whole are overjoyed that with this process now seeming to come to a reasonable conclusion, that the participants who have put so much time into the constitution will be able to look at the jobs, the economy, some of the stability that Canadians seem to want in a unified country.

It's our understanding, and we will be looking for clarification from the Premier and the Minister of Justice, that this package now allows Quebec to re-enter the process in a negotiating position that has a conclusion at its end.

I think people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, have spoken very clearly and certainly will be waiting for the constitutional process that is under way in this province to give direction. But I think Saskatchewan people spoke very overwhelmingly to the need for ratification by individual citizens in this province. And whatever that vehicle is, I would hope that our government respects that wish and that our Constitutional Affairs Committee of this legislature is able to fulfil that wish.

It was good to see that ministers, first ministers, were able to put aside some of the problems that dealt with Senate reform that allow western Canadians in particular to have a stronger voice on natural resources, the various divisions of powers, that first ministers on the economic union aspects were able to put aside some philosophical differences. We believe that the concept of interprovincial free trade is one that should be a foundation of our country, and we appreciate the fact that some were able to put aside some of their philosophical leanings.

Once again in closing, Mr. Speaker, I would congratulate most heartily Mr. Clark for his stewardship and first ministers for their diligence. Canadians now have something to work with. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to members of the Assembly. I'd like to take this opportunity to add my congratulations as well, and most specifically to the Premier of Saskatchewan and to our representative, the Minister of Justice. I think that they represented us ably. And we should all be very, very proud of the accomplishments of all the first ministers and the people who worked in concert with one another to the benefit of the citizens of this nation.

I am particularly pleased, the fact that some decision was made regarding a Triple E Senate. I know I've spoken in this House previously about my desire for a Triple E Senate and the reasons for that. But I do think that what was arrived at was a particularly ingenious way of, first of all, entrenching the view of representation by population right where it belongs, and that is in the House of Commons, by ensuring that there is true representation by population there, and giving more to Ontario and larger-populated provinces, thereby in fact giving us greater credibility in stating that we should have representation by region.

As well I was very pleased by the movement that was made, and would like to take and make special note of the work of our Minister of Justice, with regards to native self-government. And it was with some pride that I was able to watch the member from Fairview on national television with the native leader. And I felt as though we were well represented there as well when you consider how many people we have in our province of aboriginal descent.

I too have a dream. I know that people talk about a national referendum, Mr. Speaker. But what I'd very much prefer would be for each of the 10 provinces of Canada to hold their own referendums; the territories of Canada; for us to join hands together one province next to each other; not have a national referendum, but truly have a renewal of Confederation in our country.

So I do wish them good luck in future negotiations. And it's with some relief that I've looked around and spoke with people recently who had just undergone the 125th birthday celebrations for Canada. And with the things that were arrived at over this last week, a lot of people did say with some twinkles in their eye, I think perhaps we may have a 126th birthday on the horizon.

So I thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 69 — An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 1983

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to amend The Planning and Development 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 session.

The Speaker: — Order. Before we proceed, could I have some clarification from the Government House Leader as to when this Bill would have second reading.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — My understanding is next session of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next session.

Bill No. 70 — An Act respecting Local Improvements in Urban and Northern Municipalities and to Effect Certain Consequential Changes

Hon. Ms. Carson: — Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill to introduce The Local Improvements Act be now introduced and read a 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 question put by member No. 41, I provide the answer.

The Speaker: — The answer has been tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

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.

The Speaker: — Order. I'm sorry, I was not able to see the member from Prince Albert Carlton. I've already called the member from Wilkie, but I will go at the direction of the House.

Mr. Neudorf: — In the spirit of co-operation of the moment, Mr. Speaker, this side of the House will say that we will take our place momentarily and let the member opposite from Prince Albert Carlton have his say.

Mr. Kowalsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the leader of the opposition for his co-operation, and I hope that he's . . . the House Leader, pardon me — the aspiring leader of the opposition. And I hope that he is still in the same type of co-operative mood after I have finished my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

I want to make a few brief comments today, primarily in response to in some cases what I would call the misinformation that some of the members opposite have been attempting to present to this House. They've been attempting to present several things as fact to the media and in this House in the last week or so.

The issues that I want to address mainly, Mr. Speaker, are the issue of majority versus unanimous consent with respect to rule changes, and also a bit about the record of the members opposite with respect to rule changes in the past. And I will then summarize at the end, Mr. Speaker, by talking briefly about the purpose and our purpose in putting forward this motion.

I should mention, Mr. Speaker, that first of all the members opposite have on numerous occasions tried to make the case that past precedent requires that changes to rules of the Assembly proceed only with unanimous consent.

Mr. Speaker, this assumption is blatantly incorrect, and the members opposite know that. In fact while members have always tried to reach consensus on changes to the rules and procedures in this Assembly, that consensus sometimes has been rather illusive. In fact previous rule changes have occasioned considerable debate in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, there have been three major reviews of the rules of this Assembly in the past 25 to 30 years, and many

of the resulting changes have been implemented without the unanimous approval of all members. Difference of opinion on rule changes were apparent in 1970 when the House adopted a series of changes after much heated debate, both in committee and in the Assembly. In fact, the Thatcher government of the day ended up amending the committee report by adding several new provisions including one related to voting on division.

Clearly agreement and consensus are laudable objectives, but they are not always achievable. And they certainly do not extend to any requirement for unanimous consent.

Other jurisdictions have also experienced deep divisions on the matter of rule changes. For example in 1969 the federal government used closure on the rule change that provided for time allocation on government legislation. In this case, Mr. Speaker, closure was introduced after 12 days of very heated debate. Clearly there are precedents, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, rule changes in Saskatchewan and in other Canadian jurisdictions have never required complete agreement and in fact on contentious issues have often been implemented with much less than unanimous consent.

The second matter that I feel compelled to raise today in the House involves the record of members opposite on this matter of bell-ringing. Well, Mr. Speaker, actions speak much louder than words, and I want to review the actions of the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite do sound so self-righteous on this particular matter. But I simply have to remember that members opposite, that when they were in government just a little over a year ago, they moved and passed a motion right here in this Assembly that limited bell-ringing to 10 minutes — 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker — on all votes taken with regard to the Bill which implemented the infamous harmonized provincial sales tax.

This was done, Mr. Speaker, unilaterally, not by taking it to a committee, not by allowing for discussion in committee stage or providing time. But it was done unilaterally right here in this Assembly.

(1430)

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite limited the bells in this Assembly to 10 minutes on all recorded divisions related to that piece of legislation. And this wasn't the first time the previous government attempted to limit the time on the bell-ringing. Previous occasion in 1989, Mr. Andrew, who was the minister at that time, who was, I believe, house leader, introduced a motion to limit the bells at that time.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, this House has already seen limits on bell-ringing under the previous administration. And believe me, Mr. Speaker, there was no provision for a compromise or for compensation of the suspension provision which we are offering at this time. There was no such move by the members opposite at that time.

So, Mr. Speaker, this main portion of my remarks, I want

to reiterate that I've shown that unanimity is not always possible in the House. And secondly, that the members' own record belies their present position.

I now want to speak very briefly, Mr. Speaker, on the purpose and reiterate the purpose of the rule change, purposes that we found it necessary to proceed with this.

Mr. Speaker, the public wants us in this Assembly to get on with government business. They tell us, get in there. It's a debating forum, debate, make compromises where possible, but get in there and pass the Bills and do the business of the people. They want us especially not to get bogged down in partisan posturing. They say to us when we do that: a plague on both your houses; in fact, a plague on all three of your houses.

Mr. Speaker, we have what I think is the best system in the world. But it gets into disrepute only because — and I think largely because — of the waste the people that hear about, of patronage and of partisanship. It also gets into disrepute when they find that the government has reached a stalemate, when the opposition is using the bells in a situation such as this where they are trying to give themselves a virtual veto.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we feel very strongly that there is a need to restore public confidence in our system of government. And one way is to listen to the public on this particular issue. And the public are clearly saying, bell-ringing can no longer be considered a legitimate tool.

I do believe, Mr. Speaker, that the *Star-Phoenix* editorial of July 4, '92 summarizes public opinion on this to a T. And the last paragraph of this particular *Star-Phoenix* editorial states that reasonable people, and I quote:

Reasonable people should need about five minutes to agree on a time limit for the bell-ringing tactic. Let the MLAs just do it, then get on with what the public pays them for.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that sentence in itself I think underlies, in large part, the reason for us moving with this particular motion and presenting this motion to the Assembly.

In doing so, Mr. Speaker, we understand that we are removing from the Assembly a tool that has been used rather efficiently and effectively by members of this Assembly. And we felt that it was very important not to just remove something without compensating, without putting something else in place.

So what we have decided to do, Mr. Speaker, and what we are offering the opposition and offering this Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan, is a way of suspending the business on a specific item or specific Bill that is in contention and allowing the House and the proceedings of the House to continue without disrupting the total proceedings of the House.

That is why we've attached to this a suspension rule. I want to put this suspension rule in . . . and take a few minutes to put it into a larger context in the context of parliamentary democracy, a lot about which has been

spoken in this Assembly over the last two days and a lot of which I believe we are in agreement with.

Parliamentary democracy works for two reasons, Mr. Speaker. It works because a government is able to exercise that for which it was elected — the government can get a job done. And secondly, it works because our system of government provides for a minority view to be presented, and it is the job of the opposition to always present that minority view.

When things start . . . If those two things are in place and as long as those two things are in place, our system works. If there was no opportunity for a minority to place its position or a minority to be able to mobilize the public, our system would break down. On the other hand, if there was no way for a government to pass a Bill, to proceed, and to be able to govern, then the system also breaks down.

And that's what we're seeing happening now. We're seeing the opposition members demanding a veto, effectively demanding a veto. And, Mr. Speaker, I put it to you that that simply would make our system unworkable. Every other jurisdiction in the Commonwealth and in Canada found that they've had to change the rules of their Assembly to make provision for limiting the bells for that particular reason.

The government members or any government member or anybody in the public, and particularly members of the opposition, may and have asked the question, well what tools do we have? And I think it's instructive for us to look at our system and review what tools we have, what tools are available to the opposition and what tools are available to any member in this Assembly. I want to take a couple of minutes just to do that.

Every time a Bill comes before this House, Mr. Speaker, it goes through three readings on three separate days. That is done for a reason, and the reason is to provide time for all members to become familiar with the Bill, for the public to become advised of the Bill through the media, and to provide time and opportunity for changes and amendments.

The opposition members, as well as any other member in the House, can move an amendment in this Assembly. That is an important tool.

The members of the opposition, as well as members in the back bench of this Assembly, have direct access to the ministers in the House. And quite often we see members from the opposition, or any of the government members, sitting behind the bar or alongside a minister and discussing a particular issue which may be of concern to him.

Another tool that's been widespread, is of widespread use, often used by members of the Assembly and by the public, and that is the method . . . the tool of petitions. We haven't had that many petitions submitted to the Assembly this term, Mr. Speaker, but in addition to the bell-ringing tool we found the petitions are a very good way of getting a gauge of public opinion.

The members opposite at this current time are now using what I would call as the fifth major tool, and that is the tool of the filibuster, the extensive debate which gives the public time and the government time to assess.

And last of all, there was the bell-ringing — the bell-ringing tool. And I mention again, Mr. Speaker, there's only one problem with the bell-ringing tool, and that is that in addition to stopping the process on a specific Bill, it stops the process of the entire government. It brings everything to a halt. It's like turning the keys off in an automobile after you're stalled in a snowstorm or whatever. It turns everything off. It turns the heat off, it turns the lights off, it turns off your life-support system.

So that's what's happening, Mr. Speaker, when you reach an impasse where the bells are used as the tool to stop the House for a long time. That's why we have to resolve this or use the other tools to better advantage to resolve issues.

I would remind the members opposite of the original purpose of bells. The original purpose in this Assembly and in the British parliamentary system was to use the bells to summon government members and all members to a vote, to a recorded vote. That was the purpose. And they allowed a specific amount of time, or not so specific amount of time, in order that the government members could all be summoned so that the government . . . so the vote when it was held would not be held in the absence of a majority of government members. And that has to be the way. Otherwise we would be into an election every two or three months, Mr. Speaker.

So the purpose, the real purpose of the bells ringing in this case . . . or in tradition, and as has been the case which has been returned to other jurisdictions, has been simply to summon the members to come to the vote. It is only more recently that it has been used as a tool with which to discipline government.

Much has been said, Mr. Speaker, about the issue on which the bells were rung. I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that there will always be an issue. In '89 it was SaskEnergy privatization. This year it's the GRIP. Next year it could be something else. There will always be an issue. That is the purpose of this Assembly, for us to find ways . . . for us to debate issues and then figure out ways of resolving them.

But I submit, Mr. Speaker, that there was a bit of a difference between the way the government, previous, used the bell-ringing . . . pardon me, the opposition, previous, used the bell-ringing tactic and the way the members presently are using it.

At that time the New Democratic Party and caucus went out and attempted to mobilize public opinion — had rallies around the province, sought petitions. Contrast that, Mr. Speaker, with what the present opposition, the Tories, are doing or did. I saw no attempt at public rallies; I saw no attempt to gather petitions. What I did hear about in the House was about a dozen phone calls.

And it was also interesting to see on television what some of the members opposite were doing while the bells were ringing. The Premier himself was photographed on a golf course. The Premier — excuse me the Leader of the

Opposition, and I was at grave error. The Leader of the Opposition himself was photographed on a golf course.

An Hon. Member: — Where?

Mr. Kowalsky: — On a golf course, Mr. Speaker.

And his comments were well, I'm not sure when we're going to come back. It seemed he was enjoying his golf slightly too much to be bothered with what was happening in the House, Mr. Speaker.

Another member was quoted, although I didn't hear this directly, that he really enjoyed the holiday. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that that is abuse and misuse of bell-ringing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close my remarks because I think I have mentioned those things that I thought was important. I thank you for this opportunity to enter this debate. I invite the members opposite to continue to put their points into the debate.

I also invite the members opposite to recognize the compensation and the compromise that has been provided and that we are attempting to provide, and that is a system and a method of putting aside the business of the day, of a Bill, using the suspension rule, using the proposed suspension rule in addition to the existing rules. That is the compromise, Mr. Speaker. That is the compromise.

(1445)

The members can take any Bill and at any one time any member from the opposite, if these rules are passed and changed, can stand up and say and request under the rules that that Bill be suspended for a period of up to three days, over and above all of the other tools that they can use, over and above.

And I want to underline that this is an innovative thing. It is a creative approach. It has not happened any place else and it does not exist anywhere else in the Commonwealth or in Canada.

We came up with something, Mr. Speaker, in our deliberations. We came up with it; we offer it to them; we hope that they accept it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Neudorf: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard during the member's comments, right at the tail-end of his comments, made reference to the former . . . or to the opposition leader golfing instead of being in the House. I thought we had a rule in this House, Mr. Speaker, where . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Order. That is not a point of order and the member well knows it. That is not a point of order.

You are not to refer to members in debate at that

particular time, whether they are in the House or out of the House. Whether somebody was in the House last year or the year before that, has absolutely nothing to do with the debate that is taking place, and that is not a point of order.

Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Neudorf: — Could I just exercise the right to ask a question for clarification of your ruling? I don't understand you.

The Speaker: — I ruled that it's not a point of order. I have made my decision. It's not a point of order.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I listened with some interest to the member from Prince Albert Carlton. And, Mr. Speaker, today is not a day that I would thank you and then say it's a pleasure to speak to the motion on the floor. It is not a pleasure to speak to this motion. Mr. Speaker, this motion that's on the floor in my opinion, sir, is an outrage.

And this motion that's on the floor today, Mr. Speaker, was put on the floor for one reason and one reason only, in my opinion. And that is to accomplish something by, if I might say so, a very devious way to get something done they couldn't do in another way.

And as you have allowed, Mr. Speaker, the connection between the motion on the floor and the GRIP motion, I would like to say to you, sir, that in my humble opinion, that that's the only reason that the government would try to ram through a motion that is not even an honourable motion. It's not just a bad motion, it's a dishonourable motion in my opinion, sir.

The member from Prince Albert Carlton said that they had walked out and they had filibustered a motion that my government had on the floor a year ago or so. Mr. Speaker, the point he made makes the point we're trying to make. After listening to the members from the opposition side, the PC (Progressive Conservative) government withdrew the motion to change the rules. And that's all we're asking today. That's what we're asking today. Yes, we are not as headstrong and obstinate as the members opposite seem to be.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking them to do the same: listen to the people. And I can take you, Mr. Speaker — and I will do so later on in my remarks — to the polls that we did to show that we are listening to the people when it comes to bell-ringing. The member also said that ringing of the bells had been used effectively by the opposition in days gone by. And I would also add to that, Mr. Speaker, that it was done sparingly.

There is no long history of abuse of bell-ringing. And no one could make that argument. No one could make that argument, Mr. Speaker, particularly in the province of Saskatchewan. To my knowledge — and I stand to be corrected — there's been only twice that there was a major bell-ringing episode. That was in 1989 for 17 days and in 1992 for, I believe, 18 days.

Mr. Speaker, over the life of the province it would be hard

for anyone to make an argument that that's abusing the power of the bells. That, I would suggest to you, sir, and to the members opposite, that that negates the remarks that the member from Churchill Downs said in his opening remarks that they have no assurance that we on the opposite side would not use these bells again and again and again. That, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, is a very weak, very weak argument.

The other thing the minister from Churchill Downs said, the very first controversial piece of legislation that came before the House, we walked out. Mr. Speaker, that is not only nonsense, it is untrue. It is very untrue.

Mr. Speaker, no one walks out of the House lightly. I'll give that to the opposition when they walked out in 1989. I don't think they done it lightly. And I can assure you, sir, and all the members opposite and all the people in the province who happen to be watching here today, we don't do these things lightly. But when you're reduced to your final, your final tool, then you have to use that tool. And we did that, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I find it a little difficult to understand, when we look at the motion that's on the floor today, I suggest that there's a hidden agenda in that motion. And I will try to tie that together for you, sir, and for those members of the back benches over there who may not realize what they're doing with this motion.

Mr. Speaker, July 7, 1992 I believe will go down as a very black day in the legislature of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this motion today will be remembered a long time. Mr. Speaker, this government will be remembered for this motion for a long time. And I would suggest to all the back-benchers, if and when you get on your feet to defend what you're doing, which is fair ball, I would say to you, sir, and you, madam: you will be recorded the same as I am being recorded today, and the same, Mr. Speaker, as the members opposite were recorded in 1989.

Now I have in my hand, quotes. Those were recorded, and as I said to the back-benchers, when and if you get up, remember you will be recorded as I am being recorded today. And that's fair.

Let me say to you, sir, and to those who are here in this Assembly, not only will you be recorded but you will be remembered. And the way you will be remembered, and I say this to the Minister of Agriculture and the minister of Crop Insurance, you will not be remembered for the mistake you made. You will be remembered of how you fixed your mistake.

Mr. Speaker, in my life as an employer and my life as a father, the philosophy I tried to put forward was simply this: if you make a mistake, why is it so hard to say, I'm sorry, I made a mistake, but I will fix it? Because how you fix what you've done will be remembered long after what you have done.

And I say to the member, why is it so hard to say, I'm sorry, I made a mistake when I brought the new GRIP program in, and here's what I'm going to do to fix it up . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, that's fine? Now okay,

fine. I get hoots of laughter, Mr. Speaker, if in fact that is not a good philosophy, fine. I lived by it. I didn't find it hard to say, I'm sorry. You may suggest that I made so many mistakes . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Yes, right. That I made so many mistakes I found it easy. Well, Mr. Speaker, that could be true. Because I did not find it hard to say, I'm sorry.

But I can tell you, I can tell all of you people sitting there, it's not the mistake, it's how you try to fix it. This motion today, that was on the floor today, is not an honourable way to fix up an honest error. It could be an honest error. I'm not saying it was . . . I don't say it was deliberate. It was bungled. Could the minister not have said, I'm new to my job, give me a little time, I made a mistake, here's what I'll do to fix it, I'll give you a choice, I accept the responsibility, I'm sorry, let's get on with the job. No.

What you're doing with this Bill, and what the back-benchers I think must understand, what you're doing with the motion that's on the floor today is you're asking your members to commit perjury. All right, think about it, think about it. This Bill is for no other reason than to get the GRIP Bill through. And when the GRIP Bill comes to the floor of this House you're going to stand in your place and say yes to something that is not true. Think about that. Think about that.

And I would suggest to you that's what you're going to be doing. The Minister of Agriculture, the minister for Crop Insurance, is putting the onus on his back-benchers to stand in this House and say yes to something that is not true.

Well, Mr. Speaker, another reason why this day will be remembered, this motion, is because the NDP used their majority to ram through a motion to make something possible that they couldn't do otherwise when they tried to get a Bill through this legislature to manufacture evidence, to win a court case they knew they were going to lose.

And that is what I am talking about. The cause of this was because of the bungling. And as I said, maybe it was an honest mistake. okay? Why is it so hard, why is it so hard to admit you made a mistake?

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, there's nothing wrong with being in error. But what is wrong is how you fix it up. And this is not the way to fix that up. This is an unhonourable way to fix up a mistake.

And as I said before, you will be recorded and you will be judged long after you and I are out of this. *Hansard*, my friends, never forgets.

Well I have quotes here, Mr. Speaker, and it'll take a little while to go through them. But I have quotes here that repeats what the members said when they were on this side of the House, when they were arguing against legislation to change the rules.

And as the member from Maple Creek said yesterday, I can't understand how you can flip-flop so dramatically. Nobody got up and said we were wrong then or right then. And I ask the House, I ask any one of them, does two

wrongs make a right? If you were right in 1989 and you're right now, that makes us wrong. That makes two wrongs trying to make a right.

(1500)

Mr. Speaker, I think this is something that has to be addressed. And I would ask the members over there with some legal background, if they were standing in the court of law trying to defend a client and someone brought in evidence that was manufactured after the case started and that was not true and they lost the case, how would they feel? That's exactly what's going to happen here if we allow this motion to pass.

The member from Prince Albert Carlton also said that there was a compromise made — 3 days; 10 minutes and 3 days. Well, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that that is absolutely, totally nothing. That is nothing. He also mentioned it takes three days to get a Bill to third reading. They also didn't mention to you and the rest of us that you can only do that once.

Now if I was on the government side and I wanted to ram an outrageous Bill like this through, what would I do? If the members on the opposition side moved an amendment, what would they do? Yes, what would you do? You then would wait until the hoist was made and then you would make an amendment. The opposition then are stymied. Their hands are tied. They can do nothing.

Now if you think that we on this side of the House don't understand why you're doing this, then I would suggest you go back and look at your whole card. Because that is exactly what you're trying to do. You then would make an amendment to whatever Bill was on the floor of the House. You've already used your three-day hoist, Mr. Speaker, and your hands are tied.

Well, well, well. Well, well, well. The other thing, Mr. Speaker, the other thing we others don't understand . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . the member from Lloydminster chirps up from her seat, Mr. Speaker. I will listen with bated breath, ma'am, when you're on your feet defending your position in this. I want you to understand that. I want you to tell those farmers that have phoned me from your area, asking me: where do I put my hundred dollars down? Where? Tell me where? Do you want some names? Come into my office and I'll give them to you. Madam, where were you when the rally was up in Prince Albert . . . or in Paradise Hill. You weren't there, but some of your constituents were.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I intended to try today and find out to the members opposite the total inconsistency that there is here between your approach in 1989 and your approach today. No one, no one, I feel, can make a hundred per cent flip-flop like you folks have done. I wonder . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, the member from Humboldt wants to know a few things.

Well, well, well, I'll listen to your remarks, but you don't have the intestinal fortitude to get on your feet and try to defend yourself when you know, you know very well, this is the most outrageous motion that ever come onto the

floor of this House. Now I would like . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Fine, you'll have your turn. Mr. Speaker, as I said, I will be recorded, I'll be recorded, and I'm not afraid to be recorded. Because what I'm saying today is exactly the way I feel.

Mr. Speaker, there's another thing that has to be addressed. There's another thing you have to address is your own conscience, your own conscience . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Ah, yes, that's fine. Mr. Speaker, I have a conscience. Mr. Speaker, I'm beginning to wonder if there is any social conscience on the other side of the House. Sixty thousand farmers stand in peril because of the devious methods you're trying to use to get that Bill through the House. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can see that there's no . . . I'm not making any headway with the few members that are here.

But let's go on, Mr. Speaker. What we're doing here is trying to deny the citizens of Saskatchewan a fair day in court. Now that's basically what it's all about. And I believe the members over there will probably get on their feet some time and argue that's not the case. At this point in time, I'm saying that that is the case. If it's not the case, stand up and tell us why it's not the case. That's all I say. Because this is the way I feel and I'm saying it because I feel that way. That's right.

Well, Mr. Speaker, another reason why this motion will be remembered and another reason why the NDP government will be remembered is because this motion that's on the floor of the House today, this motion sets another precedent.

The NDP government will be remembered by their precedents. The first precedent was on April 21, 1989, when they walked out of this Assembly before first reading, before first reading of a Bill. That had never been done before.

And this was the first time that I know of where a government tried to manufacture evidence; tried to put a Bill before the House that wasn't true just to win a court case, after the court case had gone before the courts.

Mr. Speaker, the first time a government — this is another precedent — the first time a government tried to bring in rule changes to accomplish something they knew they were not able to do in another manner. Another precedent, Mr. Speaker, is the first time a committee ever brought a prepared report before the committee meeting was held. That's the first time that ever happened that I know of. Now what kind of a precedent does that set?

Does that mean that any chairman or any committee because of the preponderance of the members on one side, can prepare a report before the meeting is even called or held? Okay? Is that what it means? That's what this motion will do for you because a precedent has been set. And that's another reason you will be remembered.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you, sir, and to the members opposite, this motion on the floor of the House today, this motion to change the rules of the House, has a very, very devious objective and has a deeper meaning than what we are led to believe.

Mr. Speaker, today . . . not today, sir, but on Tuesday the NDP have introduced this motion to win a court case that's being against farmers of Saskatchewan. And I suggest to you and all the members opposite that there is no other reason. Why would this have to come before the House at this time?

We had a 50-day trial period, the new rules. Why couldn't it have waited at least until after the 50-day trial period was up? We heard today, Mr. Speaker, in question period, of another Bill that may be coming before this House that has far-reaching consequences.

It makes me wonder how many more of those obnoxious Bills are going to be forced through this House simply because of the motion that's on the floor today. It bothers me, Mr. Speaker. It bothers me. And it's obvious to me, Mr. Speaker, they want to win this motion limiting bell-ringing just to win a court case — absolutely unbelievable.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can say to you and the members opposite, we will not allow the GRIP legislation to be voted on unless the retroactivity part of that Bill is removed.

An Hon. Member: — You want to bet?

Mr. Britton: — Yes I do. The member from Humboldt, who's very quick to talk from his chair . . . and I can understand why he don't want to get up in his seat because when he talks he doesn't make any sense anyway. So why would he want to get up?

Well, Mr. Speaker, if bell-ringing is limited, the Bill can be introduced in three days time and the opposition's hands are tied, as I said. The option that the member from Prince Albert Carlton offered is absolutely nothing. And we will be powerless, Mr. Speaker, to stop it . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right.

We, Mr. Speaker, are in opposition as they were a few years ago. There is no reason to believe that the tables won't be turned. If they keep on, Mr. Speaker, on this headlong, chaotic trip into the past, I suggest that they will be back on this side at the next election.

If that legislation that's before the courts, the farmers have before the courts, is allowed to lose, there are great and terrible harm will be done to the farmers of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we're not arguing, we're not arguing the farmers are right. That's not what we're arguing. What we're arguing is, they have a right to be in court and be heard. If the judge rules against the farmers, that's fine. We're not saying that we agree with the changes of GRIP. You know we don't. But we're not saying . . . what we're saying is, the judge is the one that will tell us whether the farmers are right when they said they did get proper notice. And you, sir, could have fixed it — you and your partner, the Minister of Agriculture. You could have said, I am sorry; I made a mistake.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP want the people of Saskatchewan

to believe that bell-ringing and GRIP are two separate issues. Well I disagree. I say it's not so. I say it is not so.

Mr. Speaker, this motion on the floor of the House today has more to it than meets the eye, and I truly believe that. This motion, Mr. Speaker, will give the NDP the opportunity to ram through any legislation that they desire and any legislation that suits their vindictive spirit, Mr. Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's right. Mr. Speaker, this motion that's on the floor I suggest has got far-reaching implications. That is why we are not going to allow it to go as it is.

Mr. Speaker, bell-ringing was to be discussed in a co-operative manner during Rules and Procedures Committee meetings. When we went into the Rules Committee meetings that was supposed to take place. Instead, instead, Mr. Speaker, the committee had a prepared report before the meeting was even started. Just imagine that, imagine, no consultation with the opposition side at all, yet the report was prepared in advance of the meeting. And I'm not going to read from that report just now, sir. The report was prepared before the vote was taken.

Now we know with ten members — seven government members; two opposition, official opposition; and one, the member from Greystone who is the Liberal leader — we knew on a vote the government would win. But to have it pre-ordained makes me very, very nervous as to what could happen if this motion is allowed to go through as it is.

Mr. Speaker, this motion completely ignored the opposition. Mr. Speaker, the opposition committee members never had an opportunity to put forward any suggestions for consideration. And when they did, they were not considered. Now the NDP were guaranteed victory, Mr. Speaker, no matter, no matter. They had the members to do so.

And it's ironic, Mr. Speaker, the day this motion hit the floor of the House was supposed to be private members' day. In fact, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow had a motion on the paper dealing with parliamentary democracy — that very day, parliamentary democracy, that very day, on the order paper. What a sham. What a sham. What a sham.

This motion that they brought in today, Mr. Speaker, destroys the credibility of that private members' motion. How can you, on one hand present a motion talking about democracy, and then take this outrageous motion that we're talking about today and put it on the floor of the House?

(1515)

Mr. Speaker, the members on the opposite side, I think, should be embarrassed. I think they should, I would say particularly those back-benchers who are from the rural community, those particularly who are farmers.

I spoke with one of the back-benchers in a casual manner, Mr. Speaker. And I suggested to him that on the GRIP side that the government was trying to break a contract. And

he said to me, I don't believe that there was a contract. The obvious answer . . . or the question that I must ask that member, then why do they have to pay a penalty to get out?

Under the old GRIP, '91 GRIP, you went in for three years.

An Hon. Member: — Point of order.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Mr. Upshall: — Mr. Speaker, you have ruled before on the substance of the debate, and I think the member is off the topic.

The Speaker: — The member makes a good point. That was my ruling yesterday, and I was just going to get up and remind the member not to get into the details of GRIP '91 or GRIP '92. If it makes the link between this motion and the GRIP, that's fair enough but not to get into the details.

Mr. Britton: — I respect your ruling, sir, and I thought I was quite loose, but I have no intention of trying to over, over . . .

Well, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate to you, sir, they should be embarrassed because this motion will effectively stifle the opposition's ability to act on the people's behalf. Mr. Speaker, the only tool left, if this is taken away, as the member from Prince Albert Carlton mentioned, is filibuster.

Well, Mr. Speaker, a filibuster probably will work if you have a fair amount of members. If you're limited in members, that maybe brings up another reason why this motion is tried to be rammed through the House, because they maybe felt the members on this side of the House would not talk about the motion because we're few in numbers. Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Speaker, this motion has taken away the opposition's right to put forward its constituency's concerns.

Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we walked out of the House and rang the bells, it went far beyond the constituencies. It went far beyond the constituencies, Mr. Speaker. We, the opposition, were acting on behalf of our constituents and all of the other people in Saskatchewan. And I will get to that, Mr. Speaker, a little later when I want to show you why the people are behind us on this.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the members on the opposite side of the House have short memories, very short memories. And I'm going to bring their memory back. I want the members . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Would the members please cut down the noise and let the member from Wilkie have his say.

Mr. Britton: — As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the members do have a short memory. I want you to think back to the comments made in 1989 when a similar

motion was on the floor of the House and was being discussed. And I will go into that a little later, Mr. Speaker, because I do want to bring some memories back to some of the members who were there then and are here now.

There was a massive outcry from the NDP that their democratic rights were being trampled upon. Well, well, Mr. Speaker, imagine that — their democratic rights were being trampled upon. Well what about our democratic rights? Are we not as democratic as they are? Do we not have the rights that they have? Now that we are in the opposition, does that somehow make us not democratic, our beliefs not as equally as honourable as they thought theirs were at the time of the 1989 debate?

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's been times when I've been on my feet and I may have had some harsh words for the opposition at that day, and I believe there's been some harsh words said and pointed in my direction, Mr. Speaker, a few times. Well, Mr. Speaker, I say to you, sir, and I say to the House, we do those things but I don't remember that we impinged on the integrity of the people on the opposition. I don't think I ever suggested that the members opposite, ill-advised maybe, but that they didn't believe in what they were saying.

My job as opposition is not much different than it was when I was in government. It's to try to explain my point of view and hopefully change the point of view to some extent of the members on the other side. Equally I expect them to be on their feet trying to change my opinion in some instances. I have never, Mr. Speaker, considered myself that stubborn that I couldn't change my mind, nor have I ever found that I couldn't say I'm sorry.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it was agreed. It was agreed that that motion would be handled in an all-party committee — all-party committee. Back in 1989 that's what was decided. Well, Mr. Speaker, as all members in the House today know, an agreement was not reached. An all-party agreement was not reached in 1989. It was not reached.

The government of the day, my government, the Progressive Conservative government, did not strong arm a decision. They did not come to the meeting all ready with a report written up. Because we had a majority, we could have done it. We didn't do it. Now you could argue, Mr. Speaker, that it took a long time to convince us. You can argue that, and you can do that fairly and squarely that we were dug in, if you will. But eventually we listened to what you had to say.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, that would have been undemocratic had we done that. That would have been no more fair then than what you're doing to us today is fair. I would have said again, that would have been undemocratic.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what is this government doing? What is this government doing today? You're ramming it through. Well, Mr. Speaker, on the morning of July 7, 1992, they forced this motion in committee, and they will now attempt to force the vote and pass the motion — not with consultation, not with agreement, and as I might point out, not with any rebuttal other than the member from Prince Albert Carlton who got up and . . . I can say to

you, sir, a very weak defence, very weak defence of your actions.

Mr. Speaker, I will suggest to you and to the members, they have a fight on their hands if they think that they're going to get this motion through just by sitting there and waiting for us to run out of ideas.

The Speaker: — Order, order. There are lots of members who really seem to want to get into the debate. If they would just indicate that to the Speaker, I would recognize them and if they just got on their feet, I'd let them speak.

In the mean time the member from Wilkie does have the privilege to speak at this time and I would ask members to please let him have that privilege.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, the government does have a fight on its hands because we will not and we cannot sit still for this. The reason we will not is because fundamentally we don't agree with it. The reason that we cannot sit still is because our people don't agree with this motion. And we were hired by those people to defend what they think is right, and we're prepared to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers of the province who will be directly affected by this motion will not sit still for this. The farmers will not let us sit still for this. And I think, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will not let us sit still for this. The people of Saskatchewan, I think, Mr. Speaker, will become very alarmed at how far this government will go to try to achieve its ends.

I said in my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, that I have stood in my place and I have spoke to different motions. Most of those motions, Mr. Speaker, I believe were honourable.

This motion we're talking to today, Mr. Speaker, in my humble opinion, is a dishonourable motion. This motion was not put on the floor for what it contains in the motion itself. This motion was put on the floor, Mr. Speaker, to gain ends that are not honourable.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I don't think any honourable member will walk out of this legislature and ring the bells on a whim. You do not do that in a fit of anger — at least I don't think you should — and I'm sure we did not. We walked out, we rang the bells because we had a fundamental difference of opinion of what was going on in the House.

Now the member from Churchill Downs said we didn't try to reach an agreement to get back to work. Mr. Speaker, that is simply not the truth. And I will go through a few instances, Mr. Speaker, to prove what I say. The member from Churchill Downs, in his opening remarks, made a few remarks that simply were not the facts.

Mr. Speaker, he said that there was no attempt made to compromise. I would like to suggest that there was quite a number of attempts. I have a communication here, June 19 of this year; another one June 22, 1992; June 23, 1992; June 24, 1992; June 25, 1992; June 26, 1992. Mr. Speaker, I stop there because there may be some other

communications going on and, as you know and we all know, there are things that are done in confidence and they must remain in confidence.

(1530)

But I say to you and I say to all the members opposite that what the member from Churchill Downs said in his opening remarks simply is not true — not true. And I have to say that. I have to bring that . . . I have to have that recorded so that in the future someone might read that and suggest that we were uncooperative; that simply is not the truth and it should not be allowed to go unchallenged.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Churchill Downs also suggested in his opening remarks that the difference between their walk-out in '89 and the walk-out in 1992, they had the support of the people and that we had no support. And he based his argument on the fact that we didn't have a whole lot of people standing around in the front of the legislature, smashing through the doors, led by the Minister of Finance, actually physically, bodily, tramping on the guards. We didn't do that, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you two reasons why.

We didn't go out to lead the charge and our people don't do that. We don't have the radicals on our side that we could give a phone call to and they show up here in the hundreds. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the way I feel.

Now I want to tell you, we done a poll, and to prove to you that the member from Churchill Downs, on top of being very hypocritical in his opening remarks, was also to a certain degree, untruthful.

And I want to read to you some of the reports from the poll. He said, we had no support from the people, the masses if you will. Well let me say, have you heard of the GRIP controversy? Yes, 80 per cent, 80 per cent of the people knew why we walked out.

And I'm not going to go through the whole thing because you probably had a copy. But I wanted to point out a few things to show you why I have to mention a few things that the member from Churchill Downs said, which I don't think is fair.

And another question: is the government acting properly? Is the government acting improperly? And I'm going to go to the valid percentage on all of these quotes so that you can't accuse me of cherry-picking through to get the best results, Mr. Speaker. The valid percentage on that, is the government acting properly? No, 82 per cent. Improperly, 82 per cent; properly, 17.6. That indicates to me that we did have support from the people.

The next thing was: do you agree with the legislation? Strongly agree, 13.5 per cent; strongly disagree, 39.3 per cent; somewhat disagree, 37.5.

Mr. Speaker, the other question: should you wait for the court decision? Go ahead now, 16 per cent; wait for the courts, 83.6 per cent. To me that is support, Mr. Speaker.

The other question was . . . another question was: are you

aware of walking out? The questions were, yes, 81 per cent were aware. They were aware of what they were talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that that is . . .

An Hon. Member: — A lot of awareness.

Mr. Britton: — Pardon?

An Hon. Member: — There was a lot of awareness out there.

Mr. Britton: — That's right. My colleague says there was a lot of awareness. And the point I think that brings out is that they were not talking about something they didn't know anything about.

Mr. Speaker, another question was: are you satisfied with the government? One heading was very satisfied — 6.2 per cent. Another one was, were you very dissatisfied? — 24.4.

Mr. Speaker, I have not gone through the whole thing but I want to give you another one or two here. Who answered these questions? And its breakdown — farmers or non-farmers. People that owned the farms was 31 per cent. Those who did not own farms, there was 68.2 per cent. So, Mr. Speaker, in answer to the member from Churchill . . .

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

An Hon. Member: — On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I do not recognize the member because he is not in his seat.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I answered some of the questions . . .

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

Mr. Lautermilch: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member's comments, although may be interesting, are pretty wide-ranging and varied and have from what I can ascertain very little to do with the topic of bell-ringing. And I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you rule on this.

The Speaker: — I have listened very carefully and I think the member is attempting to relate it to the topic at hand. And . . .

An Hon. Member: — Don't I have the right to speak to a point of order?

The Speaker: — Order. If it's on the same point of order?

An Hon. Member: — I want to speak to the same point of order, please.

The Speaker: — If it's on the same point of order, I don't need any further advice. I'm ruling that I think the member is quite in order in the way he's speaking and the

member can continue.

An Hon. Member: — Now I can't even speak to him.

The Speaker: — Order, order. I just want to remind the member from Rosthern that Speakers in the past, if they disagree with the point of order that is given and are ruling in favour of the member that is speaking, have often said, I don't need further advice and I'm ruling in favour of the member that's speaking. If I had ruled against the member who is speaking, I would have taken your advice, sir.

An Hon. Member: — I just wanted to show . . . That's the second time now.

The Speaker: — That's right, and I'll do it the third time.

Mr. Britton: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that I made the point that I was making in response to the opening remarks that the member from Churchill Downs made in terms of our support, and no attempt to consult with the government on this issue. Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Carlton, if you will allow me, sir, did make some fairly wide-ranging comments and I would like to . . .

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

Mr. Lyons: — Beg leave to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Lyons: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members of the Assembly here today a long-time former civil servant, a person who has worked in the public service of this province, Mr. Nelson Bryksa, who is seated in your gallery. Mr. Bryksa is presently a renowned diving coach with the Saskatchewan divers and is one of those people who has helped raise the stature of diving in this province so that at national meets across the country Saskatchewan is becoming a power in diving. I'd like all members to welcome Mr. Bryksa here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Special Committee on Rules and Procedures (continued)

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in these opening remarks another comment the member from Churchill Downs made was that on the first controversial Bill, we rang the bells. Mr. Speaker, that again I must challenge because it's simply not true. I can refer you, Mr. Speaker, to several Bills that are very controversial and certainly, Mr. Speaker, not agreed to by us on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, there is Bill No. 9, the mineral tax Act. There

was Bill No. 10, The Crown Minerals Act. And, Mr. Speaker, I can go back to an Act . . . Bill 18, very controversial. And I stood in my place, Mr. Speaker, when that Bill was brought, and I did make my disapproval noted. So there again, the minister, the member, the associate minister, was not exactly truthful when he made those remarks. And I'm not suggesting that it was deliberate; I'm just saying, for one reason or another, they were not truthful.

And, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned Bill 18. Well, Mr. Speaker, we know who brought Bill 18 in. And I would like to remind that member, I'd like to remind that member, Mr. Speaker, of some of the comments he made in 1989 when we were talking about the rule changes in 1989. And the reason I want to bring that to the attention of the member from Saskatoon Fairview, Mr. Speaker, is that it's a little hard for me to accept the complete flip-flop of that member. And I'm going to read some excerpts from *Hansard*, May 29, 1989. And I'm quoting the member from Saskatoon Fairview who is now the Attorney General, and he says and I quote:

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

May 29, 1989, and that was in *Hansard*. As I mentioned before in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, *Hansard* never forgets. Mr. Speaker, I go on to quote from the same member:

. . . Mr. Speaker, these are not the rules of the government; these are not the rules of the Minister of Justice; these are not the rules of the cabinet; these are not your rules, Mr. Speaker. These are the rules of the Assembly.

Why then are these rules not the rules of the Assembly today? He goes on to say:

These are my rules; these are the rules of my colleagues on this side of the House every bit as much as they are the rules of the government members.

May 29. Well, Mr. Speaker, again I ask the question: why then is it different for us? Now that we are in the opposition, why wouldn't we be the same? Why wouldn't we get the same rights, the same privileges? This is the member, your member, the Attorney General of the province saying these words.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say and I quote:

These are the rules of the opposition; these are the rules of the entire Assembly, and they ought to be changed by the Assembly, not by the government

using its majority in terms of the number of seats won in order to force through rules that they find convenient to their particular agenda right now. That's wrong . . .

That's what he said. That's what he said. Now again I tell you, and I quote from *Hansard*, May 29, 1989. And I go on again, Mr. Speaker, the same member:

Indeed, it is a form of tyranny, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that to be completely parliamentary as a term to be applied to what's happening in this House.

And I believe, he says, that to be completely parliamentary.

(1545)

He's calling the government of the day tyrants. But he says it's parliamentary. Well I guess we have used some harsh words too. But again I say, why is it different now that they're government? Again I quote:

It is a form of tyranny — the tyranny of the majority in a situation where the majority ought not to be exercised . . .

He's saying there, if I interpret him right, Mr. Speaker, that just because you are the majority, you don't always force your will on other people. And that's what we're doing here today.

. . . where the majority ought not to be exercised, where the fact that the government has the number of seats that it has is being used to change rules which have always been changed by discussion and by consensus.

Mr. Speaker, this motion that's on the floor today which we are speaking to, never had consensus — never had consensus.

And I want to go on to the same member, Saskatoon Fairview:

The effect of this precedent will be that the rules will be regarded as the government's rules to change as they like; that the government is the master of the rules . . .

The effect of this precedent will be that the rules will be regarded as the government's rules to change as they like; that the government is the master of the rules of this Assembly because it is prepared to use its parliamentary majority, no doubt with a firm whip and discipline, in order to ensure that the majority (controls) . . . the motion.

Well it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, to hear what that member has to say today when he gets the opportunity to stand on his feet and defend what he said then as opposed to what they're doing today.

Another quote from the same member, May 29, 1989, *Hansard*:

It is a serious backward step, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think I exaggerate one bit by putting it in those terms.

A serious backward step, he says.

It is a very bad precedent. We should not be doing this.

One of the more credible members of the government today was saying this. Now am I supposed to be told, and supposed to believe, that that member now has changed his mind? To me, Mr. Speaker, this sounds very definite. I'd be interested to listen later on when he speaks to this motion.

He goes on to say, still on May 29, 1989, *Hansard* . . . And, Mr. Speaker, in case . . . I've taken these quotes; I have them here. And if you want me to I can go to page and paragraph and all that if it's needed.

And he goes on to say:

The only reason I can think of, Mr. Speaker, is that they want to engage in the exercise of a demonstration of power.

A demonstration of power. Well, Mr. Speaker, he says:

(We're) going to take this rule change and they're going to stuff it up our nose no matter what we do.

That's what he said. He said, and I want to quote that line because . . .

(We're) going to take this rule change and they're going to stuff it up our nose . . .

Well what are they trying to do to us, Mr. Speaker? Do you have another idea where they're trying to stuff it? Well, Mr. Speaker, I say to you, this member, as I said, highly regarded, is standing there, and I don't know if he knows what's going on, Mr. Speaker. But it's a little hard for me to believe that he's going to stand in his place and defend this motion.

Here's another quote from the same member, and he goes on to say:

You may be the big school-yard bully; you may think that you're the big school-yard bully and you're going to push around the kid that's been giving you a problem.

Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe we're the kid. And he goes on to say:

But this kid, these kids over here are just not going to be pushed around like that. These kids are going to stand up here and they're going to make the kinds of arguments that I've been trying to make tonight, and they're going to make them over and over again, and the people of Saskatchewan are going to hear them over and over again.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say:

Mr. Speaker, I know you would agree that any fair-minded person would agree that it is the obligation of the opposition to keep hammering these points home. And hammer them home we will, because the school-yard bully simply doesn't have a right to force this kind of a change on us. The school-yard bully does not win in the end, Mr. Speaker, and that's literally what we have going here, a school-yard bully . . .

Well, I couldn't agree with him more, particularly in the light of what's going on today. He goes on to say:

. . . a school-yard bully trying to use its strength to enforce its will, and to enforce it in a way that is just not acceptable having regards to the traditions of this place, not appropriate having regard to the traditions of this place.

I want to read that again:

. . . a school-yard bully trying to use its strength to enforce its will, and to enforce it in a way that is just not acceptable having regards to the traditions of this place, not appropriate having regard . . .

It's not appropriate, he says, not having regard to the traditions of this place.

An Hon. Member: — Read it again.

Mr. Britton: — Well the member said, read it again. I'll pass it over to you, sir, and you can read it yourself because it's recorded. As I said before, let it be known to you folks, you will be recorded when you stand in your place and try to defend this motion that's on the floor, and you will be recorded when you make your vote. When you stand and vote, you will be recorded. And *Hansard*, *Hansard* never forgets.

I'll go through some of this and let you know, *Hansard* does never forget.

An Hon. Member: — For some reason, we forgot to dig Bob's up.

Mr. Britton: — I have Bob's. I have all of them. And as your own illustrious member said, it's our duty to bring these points forward and hammer them and hammer them and hammer them.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say:

Your approach is immature; your approach is inappropriate; your approach is antidemocratic . . .

Antidemocratic, what the member from Fairview said. And, Mr. Speaker, let it be known that I'm not saying, I'm not quoting this member in derision nor in contempt; I'm quoting him verbatim. And I agree, I agree he makes some points. Here's another one, May 29, 1989, *Hansard*:

Your approach is immature . . . The pros and cons

ought to be considered with some care. But what we're doing is going to be affecting future generations, not because of the ringing of the bells but because of the precedent that we're setting in terms of process, and this process is wrong.

I agree with it. I quote him again:

I know it; with respect, Mr. Speaker, you know it; and the members opposite know it.

Those words are no more wrong today than they were in 1989.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Fairview who, as I said before, presented Bill 18 — and I didn't like it and he knew I didn't like it and I said I didn't like it — and he got the Bill through; we didn't walk on his Bill.

And I'm quoting to you, as I said, not necessarily because I disagree with the man, but I'm quoting to you, trying to say to you, what has changed? What has changed? We have been co-operative. We did not ram through Bills that we didn't like, without listening. We changed some of our Bills; we amended some of our Bills. And I'm sure you will too before the session's over, hopefully.

Here's another quote from the member from Saskatoon Fairview:

... we're seeing a government that has lost control of its agenda; (well how true that is today) not even lost control of its agenda so much as abandoned control of its agenda. And they've reduced itself to this kind of petty action that we see with respect to this motion that's before the House tonight; (the bell-ringing motion, rules-change motion) this kind of petty action where the motivation is to somehow (somehow) teach the opposition a lesson, shove it up their nose, show them who's the boss around here, show them who's got the most seats in the House, and in so doing break one of the longest ... well one of the invariable traditions of this House, namely the way in which we deal with the rules.

Again May 29, 1989 in *Hansard*, and this quote, Mr. Speaker, is speaking about the member from Weyburn, Mr. Hepworth. And he says:

I think he recognizes full well that it is a bad and a dangerous precedent for the government to be changing the rules in the manner in which it is using (doing) — a very bad and very dangerous precedent.

The member from Fairview, the now Attorney General, who, as I said, is probably one of your more credible members. He goes on to say:

I would certainly like to be convinced and persuaded that what we're not doing here is not only an absolute utter waste of time, but a very, very dangerous and highly inappropriate way for any government to be acting.

Now I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, I'm not doing justice to the presentation that member made because he's very articulate, and I apologize to him for that, but what I'm trying to do is present to the House what your people said under the very same circumstances.

And I'm asking you, particularly those of you who are here, what has changed? Why was it right for you to say these words, for you to be incensed at this kind of ramrodding through of things because of your majority, but it wasn't right for us but it's right for you? I can't understand that. And I am trying to be fair in my own mind. I'm trying to see what's different. I don't see any difference. I don't see any difference.

He goes on to say, he goes on to say again, he's talking about one of the government members of the day, and I can name him I think, Mr. Speaker, because he's no longer with us in the House, and he says, the member from Fairview, and I quote, he says:

... no doubt later in this debate we'll see him (Walter Johnson) get to his feet and explain to us that he's not a school-yard bully; (that) he really is the soul of rationality, logic, and intelligence, as he throws aside some 84 years of tradition, as far as the rules are concerned, and makes these rules of this House the government rules — (he repeats) the government rules.

He goes on to say:

That's a precedent we can't live with and that's a precedent that you can't live with ...

I say the same thing. We can't live with this precedent and you can't live with this precedent. It's a very dangerous step you're trying to take.

(1600)

He goes on to say:

... because some day, my friend, you're going to be in the opposition. (And he repeats that) ... you're going to be in the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say:

... the point remains that the Conservative Party in opposition cannot live with a situation where the government feels free to change the rules according to the government's own wishes.

This is your member, the member from Saskatoon Fairview. In 1989 he's saying these very words. And I want to repeat to you:

The point remains that the Conservative Party in opposition cannot live with a situation where the government feels free to change the rules according to the government's own wishes.

And that's what you're trying to do.

He goes on to say:

You can't live with; we can't live with that; our children can't live with it; (and) future generations can't live with it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members, what's changed? What's changed? Why can we now live with that? He says the government in opposition can't live with that kind of rule. Now why can we now live with it? Because you have the majority? You are government, and you know it all? And you now . . . now it's you that is the school-yard bully, and not Mr. Walter Johnson, as he says in this previous quote.

I want you to get into your place and tell me what has changed. Why are you now the school-yard bully? You didn't like it.

Now I have some more quotes here, Mr. Speaker, and I have never found anywhere where any of the opposition members got up after the presentation by the member from Fairview and contradicted him. They never got up and said, Mr. Speaker, I disagree with the member from Fairview.

So in effect, you must have agreed with him. I can't find any place where you disagreed with him. So does that mean you are now the school-yard bully? That's something you'll have to answer yourself.

As I mentioned, *Hansard* never forgets; the people will eventually. But you yourself who have a conscience will never forget what you're trying to do in this legislature with this outrageous Bill, not because of the Bill itself but because the motive behind the Bill. That's what gets me upset.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can stand in my place and I can argue and debate a Bill that I feel is honourable and I feel that is honest. And I can do that, Mr. Speaker, trying to be logical and trying to be fair. But when I see something like this, which is unfair . . . it's not honourable, and it should never have reached the floor of this House in the state that it was brought forward.

It was brought forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . it was flawed from the first. Now in a judgement or a . . . I guess it's a judgement, a ruling by the Speaker, which most of us agreed with, anyone that was fair in their mind agreed with the Speaker when he said, all right, enough is enough. Let's go back to work. We'll put aside the controversial Bill, and let's get on with the work.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was plaudits, pats on the back from us, from your side, from the media, that said: Mr. Speaker, although you're on very thin ice and it's a precedent that has never been used before, in this instance we agree with you. And we went back to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the judgement came down, the Speaker suggested that the Rules Committee get together and come back with a ruling. The committee did meet. But what bothers me, what bothers me about that meeting, that it was pre-ordained before the meeting ever took place. That bothers me a little bit.

That's why I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't like this Bill, but I don't like the way it was presented. It makes me much, much more anxious when I see how it was brought forward. I have sat on committees — all of us have in our time — and I never before, never before saw the report written before the meeting was there.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of material here. And I ask for your indulgence till I get it kind of lined up.

I want to quote. I want to quote, Mr. Speaker, about why this upsets me a little bit, the way this Bill came to the floor of the House, this motion, this rules. We wonder why the public have a low opinion of politicians, elected members. And I think . . . I'm reading from an article by Murray Mandryk in the *Leader-Post*. And I think it kind of gives us all food for thought.

And I'm not going to read the whole thing because I'm sure you don't agree with that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to read some inserts, and I'm going to pick out ones that I think are fair, criticizes both sides. Mr. Mandryk says, "I suppose if we have to pick sides, the title of king of hypocrites of the day . . . (goes) to the NDP."

And he goes on, later on, and he's talking about this Bill. And he says:

Heaven help us if the Tories had tried to pull such a stunt in 1989!

But he also goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, that:

. . . there is remarkably little to choose from here.

About the only thing more obscene than the hypocrisy itself has been each party's justification for its own hypocrisy. (I think we all have to listen to that.)

The NDP claims their unlimited bell-ringing in 1989 was completely justified because bell-ringing is justifiable when "the majority of public opinion is on your side."

And that's what we have on our side today.

Now I can take you back to the results of the poll, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I can ask you again, does two wrongs make a right? If we wrong in '89 and he thinks you're wrong in '92, do those two wrongs somehow make a right? No, I don't think so.

And he goes on to say:

No way, the PCs argue. Our bell-ringing was more justified because our opposition is based on legal (objectives) . . .

Mr. Speaker, an article like that . . . and I know we don't live necessarily by the press, but I believe we should, as all members should, take a little heat for what we're doing here.

This rules-changing Bill that's before the House today, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, I'm not so much opposed to

the Bill, although I would be speaking against it, but I am very, very upset at what I think is the why and the way it was brought in. Again I say it was unhonourable. It's not an honourable attempt by the government to get on with its business.

It's a devious method to shut the opposition down to where they don't have a voice, they don't have anything to do. We might just as well, Mr. Speaker, go on holidays as far as being an opposition. If this Bill goes through, there's nothing left, there's nothing left for us.

The irony of the whole thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we have offered ways to get out of this. We've asked the Minister of Agriculture and his cohort, the minister of Crop Insurance, to admit there's a mistake and offer some changes. That's all it would take. We were ready to go to work on two hours notice.

Mr. Speaker, I've been quoting a few things from 1989, and I have a few more that I think we should look at. In 1989 there was some prolonged speeches made. And the member from Regina Rosemont felt so strong in the opposition to the motion that was on the floor the day that he spoke — I believe if my memory's working — something like 13 hours. And he felt so strong about it . . . if he felt so strong to last that long, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote what he said: what this government wants to do is ram through its own political agenda so that it can carry on its maniacal course — and he says again — and everybody on this side of the legislature and now everybody in Saskatchewan is saying, shame, shame to that government that is more interested in its own narrow partisan political purposes than it is in the real problems facing the people of Saskatchewan.

That's what he said. Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of things I'd like to say on this. I have just barely got into some of the material that I have. But, Mr. Speaker, I know there are others that want to speak to this, at least I'm sure they do. I want to . . . a couple of quotes from the member from Saskatoon Broadway.

Mr. Speaker, I chose to quote the member from Saskatoon Broadway on this issue because as you, sir, and all of us are aware, that member was never hesitant to get on her feet and speak her mind, and I give her marks. She always had her materials well researched and she was articulate. So I quote from that member from Saskatoon Broadway, and she said:

. . . the government's decision to bring forward this motion to limit the opposition's ability to ring the bells, if they so choose, on controversial issues, is really a change in procedure and rules without the agreement of the opposition.

Now that's what we're saying. That's exactly what we're saying. The government's trying to bring this through without the agreement of the opposition. That was May 29 in *Hansard*.

She goes on to say:

This government, in my view, Mr. Speaker, will set a dangerous precedent if it uses its majority to

force through the new rule changes. Never before have the rules changed without all-party consent. A departure now . . . And I want to remind the members opposite that a departure now will permit, will permit future governments to change the rules at will.

That was her concern in 1989. We listened and we withdrew the Bill. That's our concerns today, sir. Now that member is in the government now and I'll be interested to hear her remarks at a later date.

She goes on to say:

There are times, however, I'd like to remind the government, when issues are so important, so extremely important, that it requires that the opposition's objections be put forward in an exceptionally forceful way.

(1615)

Well I don't know how forceful we are, Mr. Speaker, but that's exactly what we're trying to do. We're trying to put our case before the House as forcefully as we can and as fair, as fairly as we can.

And I suppose, Mr. Speaker, we are directing our comments to those on the opposite side of the House who are not in the inner sanctum where the power is. Because I believe, sir, that some of those members over there don't fully appreciate what they're trying to do to the traditions and rules of this House.

She goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

Sometimes obstruction, Mr. Speaker, exerts pressure on governments to reconsider their position. Sometimes obstruction does that, and it encourages the majority government to move slowly and cautiously.

Why do we have to do this so forcefully and so undemocratic? Why can't it be more slowly and cautiously?

Mr. Speaker, again I say, I may not have always agreed with that member, but I give her full marks for saying what she believed. And I hope she would stand in her place and say the same thing on this motion.

She goes on to say, May 29, 1989, *Hansard*:

Bell-ringing, Mr. Speaker, can also be used to gain legitimacy because of what it accomplishes. It can be successful in forcing a compromise, and it can turn divisive legislation into legislation of consensus.

And I think — That's unquote. I think what she's saying is what we're saying. We don't have to be at loggerheads here. We can sit down together and reach a consensus on this. Again, the member from Broadway said:

. . . what I'm trying to say here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there are occasions in our history

in this country when oppositions need the right to ring the bells. They need the right to ring the bells. Oppositions don't take that right lightly, or they shouldn't, because they do so at their own peril (she repeated that) — they do so at their own peril . . .

I said that, Mr. Speaker, in some of my opening remarks. We do not walk out of this House lightly. We don't take that right lightly. We do not do that to get even. We do not say: you did it; we'll do it. Mr. Speaker, I believe this opposition are more mature than that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on and quote from *Hansard*, May 29, 1989, the same member:

Now any opposition, any opposition in this province would not be doing its job if it failed to use all of the tactics and strategies available to it in preventing this government from going against its word.

That's what she said. And I think that's fairly straightforward. The member said that. I believe that's right. Again, she said:

It should be a tactic that opposition parties can use in the future, that this government wants to put it to us.

I want the members to listen to what she said here: "It should be a tactic that opposition parties can use in the future . . ."

What has changed? Why is not right for us to have that right? Your own member said so, your own members. And I chose some of the older members because I think they have some credibility. I mean that in the sense of service, not in generic age.

Again, the member went on to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

We have the right to be here; we have the right to speak on this motion, and we have the right to oppose. And we have the right, if necessary, to ring bells to draw the attention of the people of Saskatchewan, and to the government, that they've gone too far. The members of government have gone too far.

There's no difference today than it was when the member from Saskatoon Broadway was talking in 1989. Why, I ask you? I ask you, why? What's changed?

She goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

This government doesn't want the opposition to be able to protect the public from unwarranted attacks by the members opposite . . . what this government doesn't want. They don't want an effective opposition.

May 29, 1989, and that's out of *Hansard*. As I said to member before, *Hansard* never forgets.

You want to limit our ability to represent the

citizens of Saskatchewan, and I'll tell you this: you may get away with it, but you will pay dearly, members of the government, you will pay dearly in the next election.

That is a quote from the member from Saskatoon Broadway. Again I quote the member. I quote the member again, Mr. Speaker:

And then we're on to the rule changes without the consent of the opposition. And never in the history of our province have rules changed without all-party agreement.

Never, 84 years. Your own members, both of them . . . I quoted from the member from Fairview who I say to you, sir, not only has the respect of the members over there, but has a certain amount of respect from us on this side.

I chose the member from Saskatoon Fairview . . . Broadway, sorry, because as I said, I never always agreed with that member but I was always prepared to give her the credit that she had her material researched. She knew her topic, and she was prepared to stand and defend her opinion. In other words, I'm saying I'm choosing people that I think have credibility in your own ranks, to quote. I'm not choosing some of the more radical people you had over there. She goes on to say, and I quote:

But you people are going to sock it to the opposition, and you're going to sock it to the people in the process.

She goes on:

They're concerned about bell-ringing. Well what about the people of Saskatchewan, and what their hopes and dreams and the future? It's time you people started paying attention to the real needs of Saskatchewan people.

May 29, 1989, *Hansard*.

Mr. Speaker, these excerpts that I've chosen I believe have credibility. I believe that you should listen. I think the members should listen, or at least go and read what you said in 1989 and try to justify that with what you're trying to do to us today with this motion that's on the floor, that I think is a very dishonourable motion.

She goes on to say, and I quote:

. . . I just want to remind them again that their decision to come forward with this motion without the consensus of the members opposite, the members of the opposition, will set, and does set, a dangerous precedent in our province. It sets a dangerous precedent that the majority in this province, the members of the government, will force its will through the new rule change.

I just want to remind the members opposite that this departure from history and procedure, where we've had all-party consensus in terms of rule changes, will permit

future governments — and I just want to remind them of this — it will permit future governments to change the rules at will.

What's changed? If you couldn't allow it because of what a future government may do, then why is it different now? Why? Are you somehow above the rules? Are you somehow above the democratic process? Are you somehow better, more trustworthy? I don't believe that. I don't believe it. I don't think you do either. I don't think any of you do.

She goes on to say, and I quote:

... I want to remind the members opposite that some day you will be the official opposition, some day soon.

Well that worked. That happened. It happened.

And she goes on to say, and I quote:

... future governments will remember this. They will remember that you forced your will of the majority on the minority, and that your departure now will lend to us the very arguments that will permit a New Democratic Party government to change the rules in (this House) ... at will.

That's what she said that our Bill would do. And we withdrew that Bill. We withdrew that Bill. I'm not suggesting, sir, that it was because of this one particular quote, but when you look at the material that we have ... And these are quotes from the members opposite in 1989 when we were talking about the rule changes. We withdrew that Bill after listening. Again I quote from *Hansard*, May 29, 1989, the same member:

And there may be a time in this province when the New Democratic Party is doing something that it shouldn't be doing, and you will want to have the right, you will want to have the right to use the parliamentary tradition of bell-ringing, (she said) and you won't be able to do that.

She said, you will want that right and you won't be able to do that.

Well why are we different? Why is it right for you folks and not right for us to have that right? Are you all powerful? Are you more trustworthy than anyone else? She goes on to say, same *Hansard*:

But this government's just going to sock it to us; they're going to ram through this rule change to limit bells without dealing with other reforms that are necessary in order to make this institution truly (un)democratic.

Truly undemocratic. I couldn't agree with her more, sir. That's why I say it's not necessarily just the Bill that we have there. That would have been ... Had that been presented at the end of 50 days or at some time after reasonable consultation and some meetings and brought to the floor in an honourable way, I may have been on my feet arguing against some of what the rule changes might have been, but I wouldn't have felt the anger and the total frustration that I feel today, because this is not an

honourable Bill. And it was not put on the floor for any other reason, in my opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but to achieve an end that was not lawful and is not honourable.

And I know that the members opposite chuckle, laugh, derision when I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that I am speaking from a sense of honour, honesty, and a sincere belief that this Bill is not fair, it's not right, it's not honourable, and it should not be presented in this manner or at this time. As I said, Mr. Speaker, you can see all I get is hoots of derision and laughter.

(1630)

Well, Mr. Speaker, I have spent a little bit of time, and I'm not through. I would like to spend another ... quite some time on this. But because of reasons that are personal and not happy, I have to leave. Mr. Speaker, to indicate to you, sir, that I am sincere when I say to you that this is not the right kind of a Bill, that this is a dishonourable Bill, I'm going to take the member from Prince Albert Carlton on his word. And I'm going to propose an amendment.

Mr. Speaker, and I say to you, sir, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe there needs to be a compromise on this Bill, on the rules of this House. And I'm not going to stand here and suggest that there isn't some changes needed. I have in my lifetime very seldom saw any proposal, any deal, if you will, any contract that was perfect on the first cut. There always has to be compromise. There always has to be discussion. There always has to be give and take. And I suggest to you, sir, that this House cannot tolerate unilateral rule changes. And I say to you, sir, it's wrong. The Government House Leader knows it's wrong, and the Premier of Saskatchewan I believe knows it's wrong. With his legal background, Mr. Speaker, how can he not know that something like this is not wrong.

Mr. Speaker, we have been urging the government to come to a compromise. And all we get are asinine replies from the Government House Leader who says, public opinion is against bell-ringing — public opinion is against bell-ringing. We know that. We know that.

They have told us, Mr. Speaker, I don't like the idea of bell-ringing but if it's the only weapon you have, use it — use it for the next three years. I've had comments like that. I have had people, Mr. Speaker, call me from across the street and say, I don't like the idea but I know what you're up against. Do it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, even if that is true, and an hon. member would not use it as an excuse to do the wrong thing, for example, Mr. Speaker, public opinion could be very rapidly marshalled against the constitution package the Premier agreed to this month. That could be done.

We sent our Premier down to speak for us ... (inaudible interjection) ... And there's a remark made from the opposite that he done a good job. I concur in that. I haven't seen the whole thing. People could marshal a protest against that. And it would take very little effort, Mr. Speaker, to whip up emotion and get a great public opinion backlash against the package. You can do that.

The Premier is an experienced parliamentarian and he is

experienced in the use of that kind of public opinion. Mr. Speaker, that would be wrong. That would be wrong because public opinion might focus on one or two aspects of the rules of the country and would not mean the official opposition would be morally correct in using that as an excuse to do the wrong thing.

But that is a tactic of the Government House Leader when it comes to the rules of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, he says there is room for compromise. But since he believes he is able to focus all public attention only on the bell-ringing aspect, he will not bother to even try for a compromise. And I say again, it will go down in history in its own small way. *Hansard* never forgets; your conscience will never let you forget.

But, Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope, very sincerely hope that there is some conscience left on the government side. And I suggest we must try to work by compromise and consensus. And I want to give the government one more opportunity to give back the legislature to its traditions, and to restore true legislative democracy.

And, Mr. Speaker, to do that I propose the following amendment:

That the report not now be concurred in, but that it be referred back to the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures for further consideration of the time period over which a Bill may be suspended, and for particular consideration of a process to trigger public hearings during such a suspension of a Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

The Speaker: — I find the amendment in order and the debate will continue concurrently.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise in the Assembly today to speak to the amendment as proposed by the member from Kindersley. I think one of the things that has been talked about a great deal during the course of this debate, Mr. Speaker, is the lack thereof of proposals and counterproposals that the public can truly analyse and, if you will, sink their teeth into.

One of the things that the media have commented on during the course of the last few weeks is that they felt, I think, that all members of the Assembly were being a little bit selfish, that we weren't taking into consideration some of the things in the public interests.

And I think the member from Wilkie today, as he walked through a progression of events as he read into the record various comments of members from 1989, as he read into the record comments from members of the media over the years, that clearly that was one of the things that struck me; that the public do expect us as elected members, as people who take their elections seriously, to talk things out, to propose amendments, to propose subamendments, to do whatever is necessary to come to an agreement that doesn't appear to destroy the traditions and the values that we so have come to appreciate. And I think by doing what the member from Wilkie has done

here, is give this Assembly another opportunity to reassess, to re-evaluate, take that second breath, if you will, and allow all members of this Assembly to sink their teeth into another component of the problem that faces us.

It's been clearly pointed out over and over again in this debate by members on this side of the House that most members of the previous opposition had a very strong distaste for any rule changes in this Assembly occurring unilaterally, a very strong distaste for anything that would destroy the fabric of this legislature and the way that it governs itself.

It has always been incumbent upon members of this House to ultimately come to reasonable solutions on how we conduct ourselves. That the moment that one party or another, be it NDP or Tory or Liberal or whoever might form the government in this province, takes that power unto themselves and unilaterally, for whatever means, whether they be short-term political gain or short-term administrative gain or short-term monetary gain, that whoever should do that would ultimately put the whole system at risk.

So now we have an amendment before the House that clearly says, during this process that we've entered into, that we're going to give the public an opportunity to be part of a controversy. Both sides in this legislature have claimed the public's support; heard many members of the now government claim that the public was solidly on their side during the SaskEnergy confrontation.

We've had most members of the opposition who've been out there talking to farmers and farm families and rural people. And indeed if one gives any credence to the survey results at all, would show that there are fairly large segments of the population on the opposition side in dealing with the farm legislation that was potentially before this House.

And we have a much broader issue tied to this particular amendment, Mr. Speaker. And we all know what that issue is. I don't need to get into the business of the courts and everything else that has led us here. But clearly when we're faced with a situation like that . . . And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that as we as Canadians progress down the road of our constitutional maturity, this problem probably will become more prevalent than less so.

I can remember that in my time as a member in this House, from first being elected and being a member of the legislative review committee until the time that my two years in cabinet had ended, the preponderance of legal help in committees, the legal opinions that are tied to each and every piece of legislation that goes before this House, that has all increased.

The constitutional requirements of Canadians today dictate that government has to deal with that. There simply is nothing that we as a society will be able to do to sort of turn the clock back, and that every progression that we make down that constitutional road ever since repatriation in 1982, tells us that this problem that we have before this legislature in regards to the GRIP Bill will be something that I suspect will occur again and again

and again. We will have citizens in our society saying that I, according to my rights as a Canadian, expect due process in the courts to happen.

And the temptation for government will always be there, particularly if legal opinion is split or there's a little bit of sloppiness, to sort of get on with the agenda. And by getting on with the agenda we will constantly run up against this problem. So we need another mechanism.

The member from Greystone alluded to it in her remarks very briefly, that at some point in this process, and rather than political parties and partisanship sort of having to win the day on important pieces of legislation, that perhaps a public process attached to deliberation to this legislature, in between elections, will make more sense than prolonged bell-ringing, than prolonged filibustering, than many of the things that we have traditionally done in our partisan way.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be very important that political parties evolve along with our constitution. Unfortunately my sense is, is that many people in our society, our province, our country are sort of out of step with some of the things that are happening in other jurisdictions, that are out of step perhaps with the realities of a fast-paced world where people they say will change their occupation three times in a lifetime.

(1645)

You don't necessarily have all of the comforts in society that you used to, nor do you have the political comforts, the time honoured solutions. The time honoured political solutions that politicians in this province have relied upon perhaps need to be updated the same as our constitution does, that maybe we have to rethink our role.

And I go back to the fact, Mr. Speaker, as I've done on other occasions, in saying that one of the appeals of protest and splinter parties — of parties such as the Reform Party — is that they're saying to the people, these time honoured political traditions that you people are relying upon to solve our problems aren't working any more, that you simply are out of step with the 1990s and the 21st century.

And one has to take some credence, Mr. Speaker, in the results. To see a party in a course of a couple of years grab 15 per cent of the attention in a country like Canada, and indeed grab attention in our province like it probably hasn't done since the 1930s when several reform parties were spawned — the old CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) Party, the Social Credit Party, the Progressives, and others — that for one reason or another because of times, felt that there had to be a change to the status quo in our political make-up.

And I think what the member from Wilkie is proposing to this Assembly today is an opportunity to explore sort of the future a little bit, that are we as members up to the challenge? Do we have it within ourselves to take the comments from 1989 that were made at great length, the arguments made by the member from Fairview, the arguments made by the member from Saskatoon Broadway, arguments made across the piece on how we

as an Assembly should conduct ourselves as far as rules and combine those with members of the present opposition, members who have the same basic feelings about how we govern ourselves, and say now that we all agree, we all agree in this Assembly that we should not have unilateral rule changes by one party or another because those rule changes lead to expediency, they lead to very narrow political solutions rather than something that will stand the test of time, that we should be combining those.

And then saying, how do we take that out and allow the public, perhaps on another court challenge, perhaps on another privatization, perhaps on another nationalization, how do we involve the public beyond an election every four or five years in some way of allowing a feedback that not necessarily has some type of partisan political stripe attached to it.

You know, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people out there, whether it be GRIP or whether it would be SaskEnergy or whether it would be some other contentious issue that quite frankly don't give a darn as far as their political stripe. You know, we're finding increasing numbers of Canadians today not joining political parties. Simple fact is that the hard-core party base of most registered political parties in this country are dropping.

The percentage of people who said, well I'm a Conservative — and you know those same people said, well my dad was a Conservative and my grand-dad was a Conservative — those people are becoming less and less, as they are for the Liberal Party and I would suggest the New Democrats, and probably as other parties come and go, you will find the same thing.

The public is far more volatile. We have seen election after election in this country in the last three or four years with massive swings — massive swings one way or the other. We see one party and one party only in the New Brunswick legislature for four years. We see parties that have virtually held a lock on certain legislatures, decimated in one particular round.

And that means that the people that used to have those traditional political affiliations attached to them no longer feel that strongly. Whether they subscribe to the views of Preston Manning who equates politicians with a very low life of catfish or whether they simply have grown tired of some of the political processes that we have been involved in, they no longer subscribe to one party or another.

And I think that's why when you listen to the open lines and that type of thing on this particular issue, you see a lot of people making the comment, well I really don't care for any of their politics; I simply want them to get on with business.

It seems like the public today, one of their major complaints with us as an institution is that the British parliamentary system as we know it is too slow. A lot of people are fed up to the point they don't understand some of the traditions and the intricacies that we as members gradually come to learn as we take our seats in here, and

that we follow those traditions because we know they're long-standing and they're well grounded.

But you have a public today that is increasingly on a faster and faster treadmill. And as they get onto that treadmill, they expect their political representatives to also move along with it. So I guess that's why I don't find the amendment as proposed by the member from Wilkie to be terribly out of step with what the public is telling me. What I hear on the air waves, what I see on TV, is that we have to get back in step and that our Rules and Procedures Committee of this legislature needs to get back in step.

We have argued the one point now over the last two and a half, three years, to the point of a standstill. You can take every member that's been in this House since 1986 and when you read the verbatim . . . and as the member from Wilkie says, *Hansard* never goes away. You're there on the record for ever and a day.

And you read those verbatims of all members that have been here since 1986, with the exception of some of the new ones elected, and you simply have to come to the conclusion that we all think that our Rules and Procedures Committee has no other option than but to come to some kind of harmonious solution to the problem before us. And that's well documented and on the record.

And it was in that light, Mr. Speaker, I guess there's . . . I'd like to read one more set of comments into the record, because they were . . . the member was involved in the debate today and I think it is important that the public, because of his interaction in the debate — and I was glad to see a government member rise today and enter this debate — that I should enter some comments in debate just so that the public clearly understands where this member has been on this issue during the last three years.

And these are all from May 29, 1989, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

I'm referring specifically to this Bill, this motion before us which would limit bell-ringing only at the sort of whim and spiteful emotion that's been presented by the government.

Same day:

I should indicate that this is a very . . .

If they really want to do something about the rules of the legislature, and I think that there are times when you should have a look at the rules of the legislature and how it functions, and weigh it carefully . . . It's an old and established institution. Things do change slowly from day to day and from year to year and from decade to decade. And it certainly does need at times . . . consideration does need to be put to place.

But the proper way to do it would certainly, Mr. Speaker, be to take the suggestions of the government along with the suggestions from the opposition in the regular way, in the traditional way, to a committee of which Mr. Speaker would be the chairperson, of which the Clerk of the Assembly and perhaps the staff of the Assembly would act

as researchers. The ideas would come, would be debated in committee. The research would be done properly.

It wouldn't be done . . . the legislation wouldn't be brought forward as a matter of spite or a matter of revenge. It wouldn't be done in terms of trying to teach somebody a lesson. And I think overall the operation of this legislature could be a better place if things were done that way and were continuing to be done that way.

Well as I mentioned, however, it is the government's opinion that this could be done. The government instead, however, chooses its agenda in a different way, and they are choosing an agenda which to my mind is very politically motivated. It's kind of sad thing, Mr. Speaker, to see that the traditions and customs of the legislature will be changed unilaterally without the co-operation in this case of all of the people who are elected by the people of Saskatchewan.

And I continue the same day, Mr. Speaker:

You see, in a democracy we have a series of checks and balances. One of them is this bell-ringing mechanism. Let me just put that into a larger context. Every four or five years, by custom, our electorate goes to the polls and in its wisdom elects a majority of government members. And at the same time elects a minority of members which sit on the opposite side, the opposition side.

One of the things that has made democracy work is that you give the government members the majority so that they can carry on the business of the House and the business of the province. And you give the opposition immunity in the legislature so that they can bring forward and say those things which need to be said, and also to make sure that there is always an alternate, always an alternate voice added in this province and in this country.

Without that alternate voice, Mr. Speaker, we would not have a democracy as we know it. We would have a system of government as is known in countries that have dictatorships, or in the communist bloc countries where there is just one party; there is no opposition. So our job, our job here in the opposition is to make sure that that point of view is heard.

And later that same day:

Mr. Speaker, if you . . . Or I would ask any member, if they have a chance to go and speak to any of their news directors in their area, or any editors, and ask them if this method, this method of bell-ringing, did actually achieve the objective of making sure that the public was more informed, or less informed, they will to a person, I'm certain, tell you that because of the bell-ringing there were more people that are advised of what this government is trying to do. And that's the whole procedure — that's the whole reason behind it.

And I continue later that same day:

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

And finally, that same day:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the comments are the comments of the member from Prince Albert Carlton, the government member who led the charge in the Rules and Procedures Committee to bring in these rule changes unilaterally.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those comments that I have just made — directly from May 29, 1989 of *Hansard* — are not a whole lot different than some of my opening comments. They're not a whole lot different than the member from Wilkie or the member from Morse or all the members of the present day opposition who say there must be a better way for members of this Assembly to resolve this question, that it should not be tied to court decision, that the ability of people in our land to seek grievance through the courts, to seek grievance against other people, against governments, against companies, that question, Mr. Speaker, is directly tied to our constitution and what it does for our citizenry.

This legislature then must be prepared to cope with that reality. It must be able to take the words of the member from Prince Albert Carlton, combine them with the words from the member from Wilkie, and bring them together in a format that allows this Assembly to go step by step down the road, along with the public of our province in an acceptable way.

That means surely, Mr. Speaker . . .

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on Procedure of a Bill

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before we adjourn for today, I would like to make a very short statement.

Today during routine proceedings, a Bill to amend The Planning and Development Act, 1983 was given first reading. When I asked the question, when shall the Bill be read a second time, the Bill was ordered to be read a second time at the next session. The problem here arises from the fact that an order of this session cannot apply to a future session.

If it is the intention of the government to withdraw this Bill, then such an order must be made by a motion. In the mean time the Bill will remain on the order paper until

properly disposed of. Alternately, the Bill could remain on the order paper but not be called for second-reading debate.

It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:01 p.m.