

The Assembly met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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

The Government of Saskatchewan entered into legally binding contracts with them to provide a Gross Revenue Insurance Program explicitly guaranteeing that the provisions of the contract would not be changed without notice being given to farmers by March 15, 1992 and that the Government has announced its intentions before the Courts in Melville that it proposes to pass a law saying farmers received such notice when in actual fact they did not and concerned that the crisis on the farm is being made much worse by these actions.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to

- 1.) allow the 1991 GRIP program to stand for this year;
- 2.) start working with the federal government and farmers to design a program that will be a true "revenue insurance" program by the end of this calendar year, and
- 3.) ensure that the new revenue insurance program be set up on an individual cost-of-production to return ratio instead of a risk area formula.

And I have here, Mr. Speaker, people from the districts of Bethune, Findlater, Chamberlain, Tuxford, and Moose Jaw, I present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Upshall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce through you, and to you, to the Assembly today a person sitting in the gallery opposite, His Worship Mayor Doug Still of Humboldt. He's down on business today. I would like all members to help me welcome the mayor of Humboldt.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to introduce to you, and through you, to members of the Assembly this morning a person sitting in your gallery, sir, someone I think that you probably know quite well. He's a farmer from the Moose Jaw district, a constituent of

mine. His name is Mr. Art Crone.

Mr. Crone and his family run one of the largest hog operations in the province, individual operations. He and a number of members of his family have been in hog production for approximately 20 years. Mr. Crone is in the building today soliciting support for the red meat industry in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Rolfes: — I wonder if the members would allow the Speaker to join the member from Thunder Creek to introduce a guest also?

I would like to certainly take his pleasure to introduce Art Crone who's my first cousin. And of course I've known Art for many, many, many years. And although we've had our differences on many issues, we do appreciate seeing Art here today, and wish him well and his family well, and ask all members to join with me in welcoming Art to the gallery here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to announce the release of the co-pilot's manual. Saskatchewan Government Insurance has designed this manual to help parents and other responsible individuals who accompany new drivers while they are practising their driving skills.

The manual contains step-by-step procedures for the practising of basic driving manoeuvres as well as helpful suggestions that will make the learning process a positive experience for the new driver and the co-pilot. The importance for new drivers of acquiring the required skills to be safe and competent behind the wheel cannot be overstressed. By instilling good driving habits early on, we will be able to prevent many unnecessary accidents in the future.

The co-pilot's manual, when used in conjunction with the Saskatchewan driver's handbook which details the rules of the road and basic driving instructions, will go a long way towards improving the safety of Saskatchewan road users and the general community. As a parent of two teenagers, I personally congratulate SGI (Saskatchewan Government Insurance), but I feel I can also speak for the parents and citizens of this province in commending SGI for this positive initiative.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Too often the news we hear, see, and read describes disasters, unemployment, and bankruptcies. This morning, in need of a personal lift, I drove through Lakeridge in the north end of the constituency I'm blessed to represent.

Since I last went door-to-door in Lakeridge last October, there have been more than 30 housing starts and lots of

buildings are being . . . or lots are being prepared for more buildings. These houses are in varying stages of completion, from basement cement to the finishing touches outside and everything in between.

Yesterday we heard news of the sensational Saskatchewan response to the Saskatchewan savings bond program where \$560 million in bonds were bought by Saskatchewan residents in a very oversubscribed offering.

Similarly, the people and the home builders are clearly enthusiastic about the future in Saskatchewan, and more directly, in Regina. They know, as we all do, there will be better times ahead. The houses are being built in the best Saskatchewan tradition of improving our lot in life. The employment benefits are immediate and the results will be long-term assets. There continues to be remarkable faith displayed by Saskatchewan people, a faith that when the going gets tough — as it is in Saskatchewan right now — the tough get going. Call it Saskatchewan tough, call it a leap of Saskatchewan faith, call it what you want, but I call it good news.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

(The hon. member spoke for a time in Ukrainian.)

This weekend in Prince Albert, Ukrainian descendants are inviting their friends and their neighbours to a celebration commemorating one hundred years since the first immigration of Ukrainians to Canada. This celebration is one of several being held across Saskatchewan and other parts of Canada this year.

Organizers have been working for over a year on this, Mr. Speaker, and are expecting more than a thousand people to join in the celebrations, to attend the concerts Sunday afternoon, visit the arts and crafts sales and displays, taste the bread baked in the clay oven, and attend the banquet. It's Ukrainians' way of saying: we love our country, Canada; we're proud to acknowledge our heritage; and we're very pleased to be part of the great Canadian mosaic.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On July 31 to August 1 and 2, in my constituency, the second-biggest annual country and western music festival in Saskatchewan will take place again this year in the Cypress Hills. Much like the Craven valley jamboree which is presently in effect, the Hootinanny in the Hills, as it is known, sponsored by Beefaroo Productions, presents country and western entertainment much the same as that which is on now. And a lot of the same folks that attend the Craven valley jamboree will end up going over to the Hootinanny just as sort of a finish-off for the season.

With the help . . . and many thanks to the Department of Tourism and Economic Diversification for their financial assistance in advertising and other areas as before, and again this year. Many thanks go to them for their

assistance in helping this production to continue.

The production provides a fixed budget of \$200,000-plus investment, and about 100 jobs that creates work for one to two weeks for a lot of folks in the summer out in our area.

The Kinsmen from Maple Creek, Mr. Speaker, and Shaunavon and Eastend, run the beer gardens, making about \$8,000 annually for their charitable work. The town of Consul, Saskatchewan's European club earns about \$3,500 annually for clean-up and sewage disposal.

Some of the acts this year will be Travis Tritt, Carlene Carter, Pirates of the Mississippi, the Johnner Brothers, and four other Saskatchewan groups. Six thousand people, Mr. Speaker, are expected to attend with 50 per cent from out of province. And they invite you all to come.

Mr. Flavel: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk today about a small Anglican church in the Punnichy area, this small church which was built of hand-hewn logs by volunteers in 1892.

Mr. Speaker, the years have gone by and the outside world has seen many changes, but St. George's Kutawa Church remains virtually unchanged. The walls have been stuccoed and roof reshingled but time has not changed the setting of this little place of worship.

The church is surrounded by about 40 acres of prairie and bush, and the road leading into the church is an original segment of the old telegraph trail.

I said, Mr. Speaker, that the church is surrounded by bush, and that is where the name Kutawa came from. It is the Cree word meaning small clearing in the bush.

A cemetery is located behind the church with graves dating back to the turn of the century, and it is the final resting place for many early pioneers, and even today is favoured by many as their final resting place.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday I will have the pleasure of attending the centennial service along with the Bishop of Qu'Appelle and the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. And I want to take this opportunity now to congratulate the people of Kutawa on their centennial.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to take the opportunity today to share with the members of the legislature and pass on the observations to the members of the family of the passing of a great Canadian that was marked yesterday in the funeral services for Jake Brown, who was the dean of agriculture for the College of Agriculture for a number of years, worked as an agricultural economist, worked for the provincial government, received the Order of Canada, Saskatchewan Award of Merit, and generally was considered to be one of the most conscientious agricultural people that we've seen in Saskatchewan's history and contributed not only nationally but internationally.

And I want to say personally to his family and to the Minister of Energy who is here with us here today and to others that the respect, the genuine respect that we held and we all hold for Jake Brown and his family is extremely high and we are very, very proud of the fact that men and women of that calibre have decided to go into public life and serve and provide a significant difference and indeed inspiration to the young people in the province of Saskatchewan and across Canada.

So we share in the loss but we recall with great fondness the memory of Jake Brown.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to Health Care

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is going to be directed to the Minister of Health this morning, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, on Wednesday we learned of your plan to close or to convert rural hospitals, which was in complete contradiction to the promise that you made while you were in opposition as critic for Health and certainly while you were . . . during the campaign.

Yesterday, Madam Minister, we learned of your massive letter-writing campaign to cover your tracks. Now we hear you frantically phoning board members and interest groups all around the province. It seems that the only way that we can get you to consult with the people of this province is to embarrass you into it.

Madam Minister, shouldn't you have directed your so-called wellness team to have engaged in major public consultation before putting your wellness plan into action? Madam Minister, will you not admit to that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact is, is the wellness team has met with many, many, many, many people in the last few months over a course of a very short period of time since we've taken office. They have consulted widely and met with many people. And there's been a lot of input into this entire process.

The members opposite, it's very easy for them to make blanket statements which they know nothing about. And just to make blanket statements that have no truth to them and which they know nothing about, it's very simple to do that. But I say it's also irresponsible, Mr. Speaker. And what it doesn't do, what it doesn't do is help the people of Saskatchewan to move towards a system of health care that is in the final result going to provide a much higher quality of health care service, which will take taxpayers' dollars and use them in an efficient way, in a sensitive way, in a quality of health care way as we move through this reform. Because that is what is happening here, Mr. Speaker. And what they are trying to do is to attempt to prevent the improvement of the quality of health care in this province.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Not so, Madam Minister, not so. We are dealing with your report. It's not our words; it's not our scare tactics. It is you, Madam Minister, as the queen of mediscare that is responsible for this situation.

Now, Madam Minister, I want you to react to this. We know that you are sending thousands of letters to Saskatchewan citizens as we speak. Can you tell this Assembly . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order! You'll have your turn, I'm sure.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I say to Madam Minister, we know that you are now sending out thousands of letters to Saskatchewan citizens in your attempt now to do damage control. Can you tell this Assembly now, Madam Minister — and this should not be a very difficult question for you — can you tell this Assembly whether or not this letter assures these people that there will be public hearings on your closures or on your conversions? Will you table that letter for us this afternoon so that becomes a public document?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that there will be public meetings as we go through this reform. I said that yesterday, and I'll say it again. And there will be widespread public consultation. That is at the root of our health care reform.

Now with respect to the specific issue of the correspondence, we will be writing to some people in the province to correct the king of exaggeration's comments. The fact of the matter is there's been gross misrepresentation by the members opposite — gross exaggeration.

And yes, we will be communicating with the public of Saskatchewan to tell them what we are thinking about in terms of health care reform and to correct the comments from the member opposite that are designed to prevent, to prevent what this government wants to do. And that is improve the quality of health care for the people of Saskatchewan and to take us into a new generation of medicare that has more emphasis on health promotion and wellness, that is better co-ordinated and integrated, Mr. Speaker, and that provides our people with good health care.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Madam Minister, I find your answer . . . And I'd like to laugh at the humour of it, but you see the question that we're dealing with is so serious that I cannot.

Madam Minister, if you say I am the king of gross exaggeration, then you can put the people of the Saskatchewan mind at ease by simply saying that first of all, I will table the so-called new version that you have of your report — you say there's a newer version — table that version so that people of Saskatchewan can have that

reassurance.

Madam Minister, I asked you a very simple question here: will you commit this morning to the people of Saskatchewan that yes, you will have public hearings, you will allow the people of this province to have input. And if they tell you in rural Saskatchewan, don't close our hospitals, Madam Minister, will you admit now and confirm that you will listen to those people of rural Saskatchewan and not close their hospitals? Or what's the point of having public consultations if you're not going to listen to them, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, we always listen to the people of this province, that's why we're here. That's why there are 55 members on this side and 10 members over there. We listen to the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — And the fact of the matter is, is there's been widespread consultation, and we will continue to consult with the people. And that is our commitment and has always been our commitment. There will be widespread consultation as we move through this reform, unlike the members opposite who for 10 years did absolutely nothing with respect to health care reform. Instead, they just engaged in all sorts of activities that attempted to maintain the *status quo*, but would not move the system through the necessary reform.

How much did they spend in the 10 years on capital construction, Mr. Speaker?

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, it is a serious concern when there is the potential and the threat to close up to 66 . . . and convert and close up to 66 rural hospitals.

And, Mr. Premier, you can recall where as leaders we campaigned in by-elections like Assiniboia-Gravelbourg where you were really concerned and, I would assume, genuinely concerned about the closure of rural hospitals, and you've certainly campaigned against the closure of rural hospitals. We see in the paper today that rural people are worried, Mr. Premier, about the closure of rural hospitals. We know that the wellness minister, Mr. Premier, is in many quarters being called the wolf in sheep's clothing, the rural terminator, as has been bantered around.

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. Order! We are well past a minute already and I still have not heard a question. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to direct his question.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Premier, I ask you on behalf of rural people, rural health boards, rural people — some in the paper today and those that will be calling in — will you

commit yourself and your minister to a process of extensive public hearings, public consultation, so that in fact the genuine fears that people have about rural health care closures can be addressed in full public attention?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question. I want to tell the Leader of the Opposition and the people of the province of Saskatchewan that we're embarked upon a new, exciting program for the next generation of medicare and health care in the province of Saskatchewan which will put the people of Saskatchewan once again at the forefront of health care. Health care in this country is under a lot of stress, a lot of strain. Health care has served us very well. We support the basic principles of medicare and hospitalization, but now's the time in the 1990s to build a scheme and a system which serves the people of rural Saskatchewan, the people of this province, indeed the people of Canada, the best way possible in a new, exciting generation. This is going to be a difficult job. It's not going to be an easy one. Nothing worthwhile is going to be easy.

Now the member asked specifically, are we committed to widespread consultation. I can only repeat what the Minister of Health has been saying over and over again, there shall be widespread consultation beginning with the tabling of a blueprint document, an official document by the Department of Health in the next few weeks which we'd invite the positive contribution of the opposition parties and the public at large, including widespread public consultation with the public outside of the Legislative Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Premier, I ask you again, will you have public hearings in the communities where we have the list of 66 hospitals that could be closed or converted? Would you be prepared to do that as a sincere commitment to each community? And I can think of two in my constituency like Bienfait or Lampman, for example, that would be very interested. Assiniboia, Gravelbourg have hospitals.

We all have hospitals and rural people would be extremely interested in coming to a town hall meeting, public meeting, and saying, this is why I believe that we should have this kind of facility or an integrated facility or whatever it might be. Would you commit yourself in a sincere way to public hearings and public town hall meetings in these communities where you're planning this dramatic change in rural life-style?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I am again pleased to repeat and respond to the Leader of the Opposition our commitment for widespread public consultation. That is the commitment that we make. And I think the form and the nature of the consultation obviously has to take into account the question of the local community's needs or the local community's directions.

The Minister of Health forwards to me, for example, the question pertaining to Bienfait, which is a Department of

Health . . . at least the minister's notation here. There was a community decision at Bienfait to close the Bienfait-Coalfields Union Hospital already. And the decision was taken under the previous government's decision — your government. And I don't know whether there were any public hearings in Bienfait that were involved in that. I think the answer to the question is that there was not.

And I don't condemn the former premier for that, other than to say that we have to be consistent in our responses here. I don't condemn him for it because it depends on the various communities.

The communities in this province are farther ahead sometimes, of this legislature and of governments, than we've given them credit for. They know the stress and the strain financially we've been placed under the last 10 years, as a result, if I may add, the economic policies and fiscal policies of your government. They know full well what's required, and I think that they know how to respond.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Premier, all I'm asking is that you will commit to an open, public process so that in fact when you are going to involve deep changes in rural health structure because . . . I mean it's clear that the people are worried. I don't have to quote you the people that are worried across the province today. And instead of wellness, they're thinking of termination — the termination of hospitals.

So that all I'm asking is, would you commit to a public, open process if you are going to address rural health care like we've seen in the report prepared for your cabinet? People are frightened. They want to know that you would be prepared to send your minister or your ministers into public meetings in communities across the province. Would you commit to that today so people can feel confident that the public will be involved in changes in health care?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to keep repeating to the Leader of the Opposition and to all the members of the House what I have been saying, what the Minister of Health has been saying for days now inside this legislature and outside this legislature. We are committed to full public consultation because we want the stakeholders in health care in Saskatchewan to be a part of the decisions which are to be taken. We believe in full community consultation and community participation.

I remind again the former premier, the Leader of the Opposition, that when the Bienfait hospital was closed, it was closed without public hearings. It was closed under his administration without public hearings or public consultations. Just like that. Now the Leader of the Opposition argues that we should be committed to doing what he did not do.

Well I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that unlike his

administration — and I don't want to overly politicize this because this is a serious matter — we are on the path for new health care reform. It is going to be exciting; it is going to improve the opportunities for rural people in Saskatchewan. We hope to be a beacon again in all of Canada, and we're committed to full public consultation, sir.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Premier, the reason that we're asking for public town hall meetings is that your tune has changed a little bit. You said you don't want to politicize this. They want to know that they can trust you with their health care system because they're a little concerned about what's happening in agriculture with GRIP (gross revenue insurance program); they're a little concerned with respect to funding for rural municipalities; they're a little bit concerned about the tax increases, and all of the things that weren't supposed to happen. So what we're concerned about, on their behalf, is: will you agree to go to town hall public meetings and talk to them about their rural community and their rural health care? That's very important.

You raised the point about making it political. Nobody wants to make it political. But your record in rural Saskatchewan is being questioned. So I just want you to commit to them, to saying your ministers will go into public halls and talk to the public in open meetings before you make changes like we've seen in GRIP, and taxation, rural affairs, SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities), municipal changes that are completely different than you campaigned on, Mr. Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Leader of the Opposition and the members of the Legislative Assembly exactly what I campaigned on. It's entitled "Let's do it . . . **The Saskatchewan Way**". And I'm pleased to report that at least a half, perhaps the two-thirds, of this platform card is now well on the way to being finalized according to the mandate that we've given.

The members opposite are preachers of doom and gloom. They are so in the face of facts to the contrary: \$565 million of sales bonds, Saskatchewan savings bonds purchased by people, rural and in urban Saskatchewan, showing confidence in the province of Saskatchewan.

I tell the Leader of the Opposition again. This government wants the stakeholders, everybody — we want the Liberal Party; we want the Conservative Party, anybody, the health care professionals, the providers, the users — to have their input into how we can devise the best health care scheme for the 1990s and beyond.

That means full public consultation. Join us. We are going to build the best health care program in all of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, the Liberal leader, the member

from Saskatoon Greystone, stood in this legislature and argued for a grant for a one-day fair in Beechy, yet while on the election campaign she wanted to close the hospital in Beechy. Imagine, a hospital for a one-day fair. Do you, Mr. Premier, support the Liberal leader's stand in closing rural hospitals like the one in Beechy, like the one in Eatonia, and like the one in Dodsland?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to say that there is a new king of exaggeration and hyperbole, but instead I think he's really still the prince. He's still the prince. The real king is sitting in the king's chair there, and he intends to sit for quite some time, contrary to all the princes.

Look, Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe the member from Kindersley is serious in the question. The answer that we give is the answer which I have said to the Leader of the Opposition and that the Minister of Health has given to the Health critic. We are involved in a development of a health care program which I think any thoughtful person for the 1990s is going to also join us in developing.

And we expect the Liberal Party and we expect the Conservative Party to put on a baseball glove and get into the game. Join us in building this new, exciting health care plan. And we'll take good ideas wherever they come from, although I haven't heard too many, even from the Liberals or the PCs (Progressive Conservative). If you can come up with a good idea, give it to us; we'll consider it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Mr. Premier, in Arm River we have four hospitals: Outlook, Davidson, Imperial, and Craik. These hospitals, Mr. Premier, have been in existence for over 50 years. Now, Mr. Premier, the board members want to meet with me. Some of the board members have asked to meet with me this weekend to ask me if there is any danger in closing this hospital. And also, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I just want to bring to the attention of the people on this side, the member from Arm River does have the floor. It's very difficult for him to ask his questions. Give him his opportunity.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And also, Mr. Premier, I agree with the member from Kindersley that the Leader of the Liberal Party has made statements at election time against the building and improvements of hospitals in Arm River. And my question is twofold: do you agree with her, and what do I tell my board members this weekend, Mr. Premier? Is there any danger in hospital closures in Arm River?

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, again I always thought that question period was designed for the government to defend government policy and not to defend the Liberal or PC policy which is indefensible. So please don't ask me to defend Liberal or PC policy — it's simply not possible.

And since the member from Kindersley and the Leader of the Opposition seem to be so attracted to the Liberal party's position, you ask her about her position and tell me how you believe about it and whether you support it or not.

I'm here to defend the government policy. And the government policy is a sensible one based on the future of health care.

And I say to the member opposite, if he would sit down rationally and talk to the leaders, the hospital leaders and the community leaders in his constituency, he would find that many know exactly the truth of the direction that the Minister of Health is proceeding.

The idea that you advance, that somehow people are not open or receptive to new change and new directions in health care, is as old as the hills. You got to get into the 1990s, you know. The election's gone; you lost it. The people rejected your old, old out-of-touch ideas. I know you have no plan whatsoever. Please join us in the new plan of building a new health care direction for the 1990s.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — A new question to the Premier. Yes, we did have a plan. Our plan, Mr. Premier, was to build hospitals and we built hospitals in the '80s. And your plan is to close hospitals.

And, Mr. Speaker, I say to the Premier and I ask him . . . My question was twofold and you only answered the first question because you didn't want to answer my second one. And I ask you again, Mr. Premier, very sincerely, very sincerely, Mr. Premier, I ask you: what do I tell my board members this weekend when I meet with them? Is there any danger whatsoever of having any of the hospitals in Arm River being closed? Is there any danger whatsoever?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, what I suggest the hon. member tell his hospital board directors is the truth. And the truth is, as we have said before in the legislature, that the government will present in due course a blueprint with respect to health care for the 1990s. We will invite the members of the hospital board in your area to meet with the Minister of Health or her officials at the appropriate time in appropriate and full consultations.

Tell them the truth that after 10 years you virtually bankrupted the province of Saskatchewan. Tell them the truth that we have \$14 billion of debt which has bankrupted the system of health care and social services in the province of Saskatchewan. Tell them the truth that the amount of capital expenditure over 10 years was less than \$500 million. Tell them the truth. Tell them that we're on the way to building a new health care system and we want them to join with us, as I'm sure they will.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Speaker, it looks to me like the Premier's just playing straight, pure politics. That's all

he's doing. That's all he wants to talk about is politics.

I asked you a question, Mr. Premier, and I expect a direct answer from you. Is there or is there not a danger of my hospitals in Arm River being closed? Is there a danger or is there not?

And if there is, Mr. Premier, my second twofold question is this: will you promise me that the Minister of Health will go and meet with those boards to get . . . and to consult with them and receive any information what they'd want, and listen to them, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I sometimes think that the members of the official opposition are like the Bourbons of old. They remember nothing and they learn nothing. They remember nothing about the election loss. They learned nothing from the election loss.

I would suggest to the hon. members opposite that what they should do is learn that the people of the province of Saskatchewan rejected them precisely because they had no plan in health care, that they allowed the health care system to deteriorate to the point where now we have to repair it as we do the financial system.

Now the member opposite wants to know about his hospital boards, and I say to the member opposite what I've said to the Leader of the Opposition and to everybody in this House: in due course there will be a white paper on health care tabled by the Minister of Health. We invite hospital boards to sit down to meet with her and her officials. We invite you to sit down and to give us your ideas, if you have any ideas, about how we build the best health care system for the 1990s.

I say to the hon. members opposite, look it, leave the '80s behind. We're not in the 1980s. This is the 1990s. We're building a brand-new health care system for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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, and the amendment thereto moved by Mr. Britton.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a pleasure once again to enter into debate on the amendment as proposed by the member from Wilkie yesterday in this House as we were debating the motion

on the rules and procedures of the House, of the Assembly of Saskatchewan.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, as I went through my opening comments yesterday, I laid out a number of proposals of how we should rethink this issue that is before us.

The member from Wilkie, I think, had an amendment that was very germane to what we are attempting to tell the House and tell the people of Saskatchewan. What he is saying is that rather than go out against the time-honoured traditions of this House, to go against what so many members of this House have put on the record in the last three years, that we put in place a process whereby it can be referred back to the Rules and Procedures Committee of this House and that we truly involve the public in a way that this Assembly has never been able to do previously.

In all the history, Mr. Speaker, of our House and the rules and procedures, we've always been able to solve these problems internally. There has been accommodation. There's been co-operation. There's been an ability of members, even when pushed to the limit, to back off and come up with a reasonable solution.

And yesterday the member from Wilkie, as other members have done, read into the record comments made by most of the senior members with the government side, very revealing comments: the Attorney General's comments during that particular debate, the comments from the member from Saskatoon Broadway yesterday. I read into the record the comments of the member from Prince Albert Carlton, the leader of the government team in the Rules and Procedures Committee.

All of those comments, Mr. Speaker, spoke about our traditions, spoke about our ability in the past to come to a form of compromise that did not sully this Chamber. Unilateral decisions by majority government, particularly by very large majority governments, simply has never been acceptable. The Attorney General in his comments said he did not think that a Conservative party in opposition would want this type of rule change foisted upon the Assembly. And of course he was speaking from his days in opposition. And I just heartily agree with the Attorney General's comments.

So what the member from Wilkie proposed, given the fact as I explained yesterday that . . . and I'll review it for some members that weren't here because I think it's a very fundamental point. We in Canada have been going through a fundamental change in our society in the way our relationship is to executive councils of government and the courts of our land.

(1045)

And this in an ongoing process, Mr. Speaker. It was thought by some, back in the 1981-82 period, that we would probably go through at least 50 years of transition before we as a society came up with what was probably a **modus operandi** that would then take us through a longer period of time. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we will have increasing amounts of interaction between the

citizens, the voters in our country and our province, and the courts. And as I said yesterday, I don't believe for a minute that this question of the ability of people to take government on, using those constitutional rights, will diminish. In fact I believe that they will become ever more prevalent.

The whole question of retroactivity is one that the Canadian population is becoming increasingly frustrated with. The ability of government to break contracts, to rewrite history, to in effect enter into some of the fundamentals of this new constitutional process that we're involved in, means that individual citizens and groups of citizens will increasingly look to the courts to rectify that problem.

So if they're going to increasingly look to the courts, Mr. Speaker, then we, as elected officials in our province and in Canada who subscribe to the British parliamentary process, are going to have to get on with life, get on with change, get on with adapting to that reality. That reality seems, in my mind, to have some element of public involvement beyond elections or by-elections.

And I guess if one wanted to get really definitive, Mr. Speaker, in the amendment raised by the member from Kindersley, perhaps it could even come down to the question, the narrowness perhaps that this Assembly could define of questions, say, of retroactivity.

Now we all know in this Assembly that taxation measures have been done since inception of our province with retroactive components to it. Oftentimes you will have a change in sales tax, or you will have a change in gasoline tax, you will have something announced before a budget two or three months, and then the budget process comes along and makes the increase legal. And I think all of us recognize that that is a fundamental right of government. The question of taxation and how we manage that has always been one that will probably have that component.

But then there is the other side of the equation, Mr. Speaker, that we in this Assembly and all assemblies across Canada will have to deal with, and that is the question of contractual arrangements, of the ability of citizens to seek redress through the courts.

Is it a fundamental principle of our country or is it not, that those people . . . and we have the example now in this province that has caused all of the problem, the bell-ringing, the impasse that we've had in this legislature . . . Is a contract signed over a fairly lengthy period of time one that should ultimately be arbitrated by the courts of our land as per the constitutional changes, or should it be arbitrated by Executive Council of government when in effect Executive Council of government, as per the rules we have now, hold all the cards?

The Executive Council, even though they may be at fault . . . because Executive Council of government has the ability to then marshal a majority of elected members of this Assembly . . . in other words the 12 or 13 people of Executive Council who make decisions, who make decisions oftentimes in the sanctity of the cabinet room. Possibly right, possibly wrong — in this case many people in the province believe wrongly. But simply saying

because Executive Council messes up in some way, we will then have the rest of the members of the Assembly simply come in and fix the problem for them, and we won't let the courts in our land involve themselves in that process . . . And the public is saying no, that's wrong.

Whether it's redressing the question of salaries, of contractual arrangements of salaries of individuals, whether it's this question of GRIP or whether it's a question involving some future contractual arrangement that the Executive Council of government enters into on behalf of Her Majesty, it simply is something that the public, I don't believe, is going to stand for much longer because you will have this ever-increasing impasse in our land.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly what that mechanism is. I'm not sure if that mechanism is an automatic hoist that then is broken down into several components. And I'm going to get into the question, Mr. Speaker, that the government has put forward about a three-day hoist, because I think it's something that hasn't really been thought out. And I think we need to put that three-day hoist in comparison to, for instance, the things that are on the blues in this legislature today, to make a true evaluation of where this might take us and what kind of legislative process we might have at the end of that day. Because it's simply not good enough to come in with a rule change such as that without applying it to what is happening here outside of the GRIP question or what may happen in the years to come. And it's very important, I think, that members of this Assembly understand that process very clearly before they subscribe to the motion as brought forward by the government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is quite lengthy in how we would view this, but I think the only way that members can truly assess the proposal of the government is to actually put it into the perspective of some of the business that we've done here in this Assembly in this particular session. It's something that all of us know about and I think it's only right and proper how we would compare the rules, as proposed, to legislation that we have seen recently.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the government said the reason it needs to end bell-ringing is that the opposition cannot be trusted not to veto everything they disagree with. Now, Mr. Speaker, you as a long-serving member of this legislature know that that simply is not true. That anyone who has spent any amount of time in here knows that that's simply not true. The amendment proposes that the Rules Committee reconsider the length of the suspension and the possibility . . . or the amendment that we proposed says, reconsider the length of the suspension and the possibility of public hearings.

And there's a point here, Mr. Speaker. If the government is worried about bell-ringing becoming a routine tool in this House, they should understand the fact that a three-day suspension is far more likely to become routine. In fact I would say, Mr. Speaker, that if this rule change goes ahead, three-day suspensions will become the normal process, just as there's a two-day notice of requirement now in our rules book.

Effectively all of the government proposals will be . . . in

other words this three-day notice will simply become part of the normal period of notice, this three-day suspension. And just as the opposition agreed to extend the time allowed for replies to written questions from two days to five, adding three days now.

I mean, the government is saying it's equally willing to extend the notice of motion period from two days to five, or three extra days. And that is a big fear, Mr. Speaker, because I don't think we need that in the process. I don't think we need it to become the norm, and simply have instead of a two-day period of notice, a five day.

And I think the only way that we can truly analyse that, Mr. Speaker, is to take a look at the order paper of this Assembly and see how it would fit in with the three-day hoist in place. And I think you must compare that to the amendment as proposed by the member from Wilkie, where we're talking about a much longer suspension accompanied by public hearings.

The whites of last Friday can be looked at as a record, which incidentally reflects the record of, in my opinion, co-operation, co-operation that this official opposition in most cases has, I think, conducted itself in this Assembly.

And as the member from Churchill Downs stated on July 7 of '92 when he introduced this motion, he says we — meaning the NDP (New Democratic Party) government — have no assurance that this bell-ringing won't be used again and again. And the government has used this argument all the way through saying why it must limit suspensions to three days.

Well I say to the Associate Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, that there have been many pieces of legislation put forward in this House that we have not agreed with, the official opposition has not agreed with. Now that does contrast somewhat to the member from Saskatoon Greystone who has on many occasions voted with the government.

But to make my point, Mr. Speaker, I would refer to the whites of July 3, and I see recorded there that on May 12 '92, Bill No. 1, an Act to amend The Clean Air Act passed first reading. Not to create confusion, Mr. Speaker, I'm referring to the *Votes and Proceedings* dated July 3, '92 which contain within them the notation on an Act to amend The Clean Air Act as having received first reading on May 12, '92.

And on that day the Bill passed first reading. It passed without incident. There was no bell-ringing. The government did not object it . . . or the opposition didn't object. There was no rancour, no shouting. This Chamber was very normal.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if there had been the proposed three-day suspension in place, what might have happened? Well probably on a Bill such as The Clean Air Act you would not have had anything happen on first reading. It would have simply moved ahead.

But we didn't have any forewarning, Mr. Speaker, at the time of what was in that Bill. So I suspect that, given some of the ramifications that a Bill like that has on industry and

it has on individuals in this province, that a three-day suspension would have been declared on second reading.

Now by the same token, Mr. Speaker, if the opposition had felt that the contents of that Bill upon first reading had been sufficiently Draconian to, for instance, put at risk a large sector of our industrial society, we would assuredly, I think, Mr. Speaker, looked instead to — for instance a 60-day or a 30-day suspension — some type of suspension that was fairly lengthy. And that that suspension, in our mind, should have triggered some type of public consultation process or some public process that allowed the people involved to take the edge off, if you will, of the Draconian measures in the Bill.

I don't think, Mr. Speaker, at any time on Bill 1, would you have seen a bell-ringing episode that would stop this Assembly from operating on everything else that it had before us. The preference would have been the public process that would allow the government then to back off on a Draconian measure.

Now as we know, Mr. Speaker, that Draconian measure wasn't in Bill 1. But none the less, Mr. Speaker, I assure you that any opposition, in my view in the time I've been in this House, would have considered it a very serious thing to exercise the right of suspension if we knew that that suspension was going to, for instance in the case of 60 days, almost take up an entire legislative session, that it would have effectively blocked the passage of Bill 1 in that session.

(1100)

Mr. Speaker, on June 4, 1992, Bill 1, an Act to amend The Clean Air Act passed second reading. The opposition had a chance to review the Bill and could have made a determination of what to do with it. And the official opposition did not stand in the way of this piece of legislation. We may not like everything that is in the Bill, but, Mr. Speaker, certainly the bells did not ring. The official opposition did not walk out of the House. We were responsible therefore in dealing with an Act that we thought in turn was responsible to Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that contrasts with what would have I believe been the process under a three-day suspension. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that on second reading of an important Bill to the people of Saskatchewan, it is very likely indeed that we would have asked the Bill be delayed from second reading for three days to give the public a chance to gather their thoughts on the Bill. We almost certainly would have used such a small and insignificant measure in the public interest.

So on the second reading of Bill 1, the three-day suspension would have been invoked, and it would have been used to give the public their first chance to get more than a passing glance at a Bill before it was debated in principle, the debate in principle being the second reading stage debate, to give the public a chance to know what is going on before the process becomes sort of irrevocably committed to passage. So Bill 1 would have been the subject of a three-day suspension in second

reading.

Now what would have happened, Mr. Speaker, if a 60-day suspension with public hearings was the alternative? Would the opposition have done that? Mr. Speaker, I don't think we would have triggered that process on Bill 1. I don't think it would have been reasonable in the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, we see the experience that Bill 1, it tells us that bell-ringing did not happen, that a long suspension would have not happened, and that a three-day suspension more than likely would have applied. But what in the end would such a suspension have accomplished that the normal workings of this Assembly could not accomplish?

The Rules Committee, at least the government members, say it's intended that the suspension serves as a replacement for prolonged bell-ringing. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that even though that's the spoken intention, the reality when applied to the things that we have seen on the whites of this Assembly simply isn't fact. I don't believe that the committee ultimately wants to come up with a solution that would have that sort of ramification for something like Bill 1.

Let's look at another example, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's important that we . . . even though this may seem boring and routine to members of this Assembly, this is the work that this Assembly does. Many of the Bills that we see in this House are in fact of a housekeeping nature; some might even say they are boring and routine.

But because of that, Mr. Speaker, it verifies the point that I've made and that members in the then opposition made for hours on end in this Assembly in 1989, that it simply wouldn't be proper for a large majority government or any government to arbitrarily change the rules of this Assembly, because the tactic that we are discussing has been used so rarely and it would be far better for members of this Assembly to come to some sort of conclusion that allowed members to move on into the future, all feeling that the rules of this House are fair and apply in an even-handed way.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we return to a look at the *Votes and Proceedings* of this House, you will look on May 12, '92, Bill No. 2, An Act to amend The Ozone-depleting Substances Control Act passed first reading. It passed first reading without any hesitation on the part of the opposition. And under the current rules and procedures this Bill was considered on the next sitting day of the House. And this is another one of the member from Melfort's series of Bills dealing with the environment.

And I say to the member from Melfort, did we ring the bells on this particular Bill? And as all members of this Assembly know, we did not. We did not ring the bells, and Bill 2 received first reading without any disruption of any kind. It was brought into the Assembly and it received first reading as is recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*. And it passed second reading on June 4, '92.

Mr. Speaker, another of the Environment minister's Bills was considered on May 12. An Act to amend The

Environmental Management and Protection Act passed first reading as you will recall.

On July 3, An Act to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act passed second reading. Bill 4, that same day, An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act passed first reading.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, and I have some 30 pages of Bills, 30 pages of Bills that are either in consideration or have been passed by this Assembly in this session . . . I mean, it goes on and on and on, right through the process of Royal Assent.

Mr. Speaker, we as members of this Assembly have to think very seriously about each and every one of those Bills and how the fact of a three-day suspension, which became the norm rather than the exception, would be applied. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, in many of these cases, many of these cases, it would have been convenient, it would have been convenient for opposition members to ask for a three-day hoist. But in effect, Mr. Speaker, it simply would extend the period of notice.

It might be convenient because one interest group or another interest group would then have a little more time to sort of study the meat of the thing, particularly if the minister responsible has not done some type of public consultation process previously, if the Bill is just dropped into the Assembly and no one has the slightest inkling about what is going on. Then it would be convenient. But it simply would, I maintain, Mr. Speaker, become very mundane and very ho-hum, and it simply would not replace those few issues that come along that are of extreme importance to the public — whether they be SaskEnergy, which so many members of the then opposition spoke so vociferously about, or whether it is a question of legality involving the contracts of over 50,000 farm families.

Questions such as this then, Mr. Speaker, given that this Assembly doesn't need three more days notice on its agenda to study Bills, given that that simply isn't a workable solution in my view to the impasse that's before us, then we have to look at another mechanism. If the member from Wilkie's amendment as proposed isn't suitable to government members in either whole or part, if government members cannot accept the idea of some type of public input that perhaps takes partisanship out of an equation, then I would like to hear them propose some type of subamendment or some type of further amendment that would cover that off.

One of the big complaints that I have heard, both in the SaskEnergy debate and the GRIP problem, is that everyone says politicians are trying to use these questions in a way that the public doesn't really appreciate. And I think, Mr. Speaker, my comments yesterday when I talked about the growth of the Reform Party, about the joke that Preston Manning uses in describing politicians in our society today, and how more and more members of the public are starting to subscribe to that very theory, means that we had better start cleaning up our act. That if the sole *raison d'être* of bell-ringing is simply to politicize every contentious issue that comes along, then I suggest

to the members of this Assembly that we increasingly are going to be viewed in some type of sceptical manner.

In order to reverse that tide, to reverse and bring about more confidence by a voting public today, we are going to have to come up with a mechanism that allows them to pass judgement on some of these issues in a non-partisan way. And I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that that is a job that all members of this Assembly had better apply their minds to.

It simply isn't enough to go into the Rules Committee, the rules and procedures of this Assembly, and use seven members of the government as a majority to hammer and ram through this Assembly in three or four days, rule changes because they're politically expedient for the time.

The public will view that process with no end of derision, of scepticism, and simply say it is politicians playing their silly little political games. And in the end we, the voting public, the taxpayer, will get the shaft. Because if this can be done, what happens when the next government comes along, when the NDP are thrown out of office and another party takes over? And it will happen. As assuredly as I stand here, it will happen at some point.

And will the next majority government say, well we're going to make up for some lost time. We're going to go in, we're going to use the Rules Committee, and we're going to change some things because these guys have set the precedent. Even though they stood, man and woman, in this Assembly and went on for days and days and days, saying how they didn't want to do it, they ended up doing it anyway because it was politically expedient at the time. That cynicism in the public will mount and mount, and everybody that seeks public office in this province will be tarred with that brush.

So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, the amendment, in my view, is a reasonable one. It's one that was done with a lot of thought and research. And I look forward to government members getting on their feet and proposing alternatives, proposing alternatives.

Because this is the last opportunity; this is the last opportunity for those members of this Assembly who spoke in defence of democracy and the rights of members, of public involvement, of allowing, as many members said and are quoted in *Hansard*, of letting the public have their say on a contentious issue. This then is the opportunity for those government members to stand on their feet and talk to and work with that amendment.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have a few more quotes that I wish to enter into the record because I don't believe some of these have been talked to before, and I think it's important that we remind the public as we go through this very serious matter, what members of this Assembly felt about this question in the last few years.

And I would quote, Mr. Speaker, from May 11, 1989, the member for Saskatoon Riversdale. And he says:

What new-found democrats are these, Mr. Deputy Speaker?
What new-found democracy is this?

What kind of a charade is this? What kind of an unprecedented action is this for these people to bring forward a motion for rules change without consultation . . . without any consultation from us; out of pique, out of pique.

They know that the people of Saskatchewan oppose what they have done and oppose it vigorously, and they wanted the opposition to do what was being done, and they've gotten beaten up. I don't mean beaten up politically; I don't care about the politics. They got beaten up on this fundamental policy of theirs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They got beaten up and now they're coming in and they're going to show us who the bosses are. Again, what kind of democrats are these?

. . . for the first time in the record of the province of Saskatchewan . . . they come forward to change the rules of this House in the name of democracy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What kind of a double standard is this?

These are the people who say they're the defenders. If they're the defenders, why don't they approach us in this kind of a fashion — traditionally — of trying to define the rules in a way that we could all accept and agree, these self-proclaimed, new-found democrats?

(1115)

I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the member from Riversdale wasn't referring to New Democrats when he made this very eloquent defence of democracy in our province. And again I quote the member from Riversdale, Mr. Speaker:

That's the context in which this motion is to be done, and let's not fool ourselves as to what's happening here. This government, if it was really genuinely committed to democracy, would have, as much as it hurt the Minister of Justice, as much as he is opposed to what he did, they would have done it in the traditional and normal democratic way. Let's not be fooled about what's being planned here.

And I quote the member from Riversdale:

Now they want to introduce the bell-ringing motion to come back and to say to us that on top of all of this artillery that they're going to use to submerge the opposition — forget about the opposition — and submerge the people of the province of Saskatchewan. On top of all of that they say, we are going to muzzle you for ever on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think those words from the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan in 1992, as delivered in 1989, are as relevant today as they were then. The issue was different, but the premise that members of this Assembly should be able to work out these fundamental rule decisions should be removed from the politics, that the weight of the majority should not prevail, that indeed, as

the member from Riversdale says, who are these new-found democrats that would do this to the legislative process in this province?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the answer is very clear to us in this Assembly in 1992 who these new-found democrats are. It is the NDP Party of Saskatchewan. It is the words of the Premier of this province. It is the NDP Party of Saskatchewan who would now change the rules of this Assembly unilaterally, unilaterally for small-term political gain, knowing full well that for ever more, for ever more this Assembly will be changed.

As the Minister of Justice, the member from Fairview, was quoted as saying, he said: I don't think that Progressive Conservative Party in opposition in this province would want these rules as we don't want them.

I mean the very two people, Mr. Speaker, who have been engaged in the negotiations of the constitution of our country over this last period of time, the two individuals that we have trusted, that this province has entrusted to go to the table for us on the fundamental issues of rights and privileges and how we will fit in the Canadian matrix, these two individuals are on the record. They're the two individuals that people in this province have to trust.

And knowing full well that that constitution guarantees people their day in court, knowing full well that they both have strong heartfelt feelings for this Assembly and its rules and basic democratic fundamentals — have them both on the record — how, Mr. Speaker, can this government, how can these members sit in this Assembly in the face of the evidence and ramrod through this Assembly these very rule changes that they have spoken so eloquently in defence of, that they have spoken, we assume at the constitutional tables of our land, in defence of each and every one of us, just in the last few days.

The absolute core, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, of this NDP Party government are the member from Riversdale and the member from Saskatoon Fairview. And they are on the record, irrevocably on the record of this Assembly in their defence of members' rights, and in condemnation of a government that would propose to change the rules of this Assembly unilaterally.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that is why, that is why I say to the government members in this House, take this amendment as proposed by the member from Wilkie. Put your own stamp on it. Amend it. Change it. But the spirit of it, the spirit of it which gives members of this Assembly the second chance, the spirit of it that says, give the public of this province an opportunity to be involved, to be involved in the contentious issues, in the legal issues, in the issues that attest to our fundamental rights as citizens, and then we will have an Assembly that is moving in the direction that the voters and the taxpayers of this province want. Then we will have an Assembly that says, I am marching in time with the people that I'm supposed to represent.

I'm not going backwards. I'm not going to let my narrow political agenda, I'm not going to let the screw-ups of my Executive Council get in the way of what's right, what's decent, and what should be the process that we follow in

this Assembly.

Amend it to say, well we don't like a period of public involvement that is 60 days long. Maybe 20 or maybe 30. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, what the right answer is.

That is something that members in the Rules and Procedures Committee should have thought of before they came in with this narrow, narrow motion. There should have been the type of discussion that gave the public some assurance that we were doing our due diligence, that we had explored other jurisdictions, that we were prepared to in this Assembly for . . . and all members are saying the bell-ringing mechanism needs change; that if we do away with it here, what other safeguards should be given to the opposition.

Maybe there are committees of this House that need to be changed in their chairmanship. Maybe there are ways that the government can determine or the opposition can determine the order of estimates, as is done in some jurisdictions. There are lots of ways, Mr. Speaker, that we as members can structure this Assembly to, on one hand, give up a tool seldom used and enhance it with other tools that have never been here before.

And I say to government members, if you are truly, truly interested in this process, if your involvement in the Rules and Procedures Committee is something that you take very seriously, then I would think that you would take this opportunity, you would seize this opportunity to take the amendment as proposed by the member from Wilkie and build upon it. You would take it and you would build in some of those fundamental mechanisms that have been the tradition of the House but also allow us to move on into the future, and you will not sully this Assembly with a majority vote of the government.

Mr. Speaker, I am not on that committee, but I can tell you that it has been one of my very strong interests since entering this Assembly of how we would take this body of parliament and we would change it so that the art and the honourable profession of politics can be uplifted in the eyes of Saskatchewan people.

It bothers me, Mr. Speaker, when I walk down the street in my home community and people will make remarks about, oh you guys, you're simply in there looking after yourselves. You're only looking at the very narrow interests of certain groups, that you're not speaking for me any more, that you're too interested in playing your games.

And I've always felt, Mr. Speaker, that one of the ways that we can change that is to change this place by mutual consent in a way that will allow them to say yes, I believe my member of the legislature, I believe my member of the legislature truly speaks for me on a certain issue, but he doesn't necessarily subscribe to the views of his party. He doesn't necessarily subscribe to the views of his leader. He has the freedom, the freedom to express openly, publicly, not defeat his government, not destroy the basic tenets of a four-year term of government, but still have that freedom to express without tearing all of the structures around him down.

And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, with the assent of executive power in our government all across Canada — and I say this most sincerely — that the power of premiers and prime ministers, in my view, has become too great for our system to truly be representative of the people who elect us. That we need to fundamentally rethink some of the ways that we do things so that people gain confidence back in elected members of this Assembly and other assemblies across our land; to know that when they elect a person, that person has some fundamental responsibilities to carry forward, and that those responsibilities are to the constituents and not to a political party necessarily, or some short-term political agenda that is being proposed.

And I fear, Mr. Speaker, that if we as an Assembly pass this motion, the cynicism that will build in the public, the fact that assuredly, most assuredly, a government, a majority government in the future will do the same, means that we are going down the rocky road, Mr. Speaker, of no return. That that fundamental reform that so many voters and taxpayers in this country are asking for will not occur.

Because once we do this deed in here, once we allow the majority to simply override with a rule change, a rule change that I say is only because the GRIP issue is so big, that once they are off the horns of the dilemma of GRIP, then the need for the short-sighted political manoeuvring is gone. That this Assembly may sit for another three or four years and you will not see bell-ringing. But you will not also have solved some of the fundamental problems that are before us, that you will not have solved the need of taxpayers in this province to feel more directly involved in their political process.

(1130)

And that's why I'm saying to members of the Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if government members would grab a hold of this amendment, grab a hold of this amendment and propose some concrete changes that we will resolve ourselves of this bell-ringing problem in a way that opens the door, opens the door for further changes in the rules and procedures of this legislature, it will start building confidence in the people who vote for us.

And the alternative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this motion is rammed through by the government majority, means that the Rules and Procedures Committee of this legislature will cease to function. I can tell you right now that that committee is done for the term of this government. It will not be trusted. It will not be seen as a tool of any member of this Assembly that will have anything meaningful come out of it. It is done. Just as surely as I stand here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that committee is finished.

And I say to you, when that one stops to work, it will branch out into every other committee of this legislature. We have been charged recently by the Premier of this province of putting an all-party committee together to view the constitutional amendments that are being proposed, the very amendments that our Premier stood in this House yesterday and talked about, how we as Canadians and Saskatchewanians will fit into a new structure.

Now I suggest to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that committee with a majority of government members is going to have a very difficult time going to the public of this province and saying, folks, we have a constitutional package that furthers the rights of individuals in our society, that protects our natural resources, that talks about an economic union, that does all of those wonderful things. We have a Triple E Senate to protect our rights further. We are going to have government members on that committee going around the province who have just — just finished ramming through unilateral rule changes to this Assembly.

Now you tell me how you're going to sit down in town hall after town hall in this province and look the public square in the eye.

There's probably people in there that take great issue in that hall with the broken contract that they have with Saskatchewan Crop Insurance. But their day in court, their rights as an individual have been put asunder by this Assembly because this government was going to ram through a rule change in order to get on with introduction of the GRIP Bill, to put aside the day in court.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't know for the life of me, how any member on that committee, how any government member in good conscience is going to be able to say, I'm going to seek your advice, your wishes and wants on the constitution of our country, when I have just finished using the legislature of Saskatchewan to rewrite history and tamper with the evidence in court.

But they're going to go out and they're going to say, we are charged with bringing forward a recommendation to the Assembly of Saskatchewan on how the constitutional package should be dealt with. Should it be a resolution of this Assembly? Should it be a referendum? Should it be a plebiscite? It should be something that the people can speak on.

Now how do you go and sit in those town halls, at those kitchen tables, and hold your head up, given the fact that the member from Riversdale and the member from Fairview so eloquently presented the defence in this Assembly, and I'm sure at the constitutional talks, of individuals in our society? How are government members going to do that?

And in retrospect, how will opposition members who will sit on that committee, who have simply been trodden upon in the Rules and Procedures Committee of this House, how will they sit and interact with the government members on the constitutional committee, discussing a package that every citizen in this province should understand in a very clear and concise fashion?

How are they going to sit together in the same town hall meeting when you have two diametric, I suggest to you, two diametrically different views of democracy and the rights of individuals? And how are they supposed to take this constitutional package out to the people in some type of unanimity and harmony so that we as Saskatchewan people will have . . . And I only use that as an example, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It will go committee by committee by committee through this legislature. And sure these people will have their way for the next three years or three and a half years. Just as sure as I stand here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they'll have their way. But is that right? Because that isn't our history; that isn't our tradition. It isn't the traditions that members of the then opposition in 1989 spoke about. And they know it.

And if there's any new member of this legislature, any new members of the New Democratic Party caucus who haven't had the opportunity to go back and read *Hansard* in 1989, they should do it. They should know what their colleagues said. They should know what the public of Saskatchewan heard and saw in the television cameras of this Assembly for days on end on this issue. Because they then have to make a judgement about whether we're doing the proper thing in here and whether this province can stand another dose of hypocrisy from politicians of that magnitude.

Every new member of this Assembly has to be able, I think, to assess and say, can the voters of this province, can we as politicians, can we as people committed to public life in this Assembly, stand another dose of hypocrisy of that magnitude? And I say to those members, I don't think that the public can stand that.

And I think it would be incumbent upon the new members of this Assembly, people who have not been, if you will, tarnished by some of the past proceedings . . . they are the people that can take this amendment and modify it, change it. That they are the people that can bring forward the intent of it, which is to take back to the Rules and Procedures Committee of this Assembly a mechanism to one: limit bell-ringing, but number two, on issues of major contention in this province, allow the public some type of input that isn't necessarily hard-core partisan rhetoric, but it actually has some honest-to-good meat and potatoes attached to it.

And I think if new members of this Assembly took that mission, both government and opposition, you might be very surprised, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with what we might come up with. That some of the wisdom of the old combined with the freshness of the new just might give us an opportunity, an opportunity to stop doing the unthinkable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to enter another set of comments into the record, because I think it's important that people of . . . and I even subscribe to the view that within the New Democratic Party there are people of varying philosophical views, that not everyone's the same. When I quote members of this Assembly, that it be a wide spectrum on this issue because I think it's important.

And I would quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from May 17, 1989. This would be the member for Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain:

Mr. Speaker, until now, as I indicated, this Assembly has not made these kinds of changes without all-party input and consent on any rule

change. As I say, this has been a strength of our system. It has protected the majority from ramming through procedures without minority input and approval. And this is an important . . . the importance of this tradition cannot be underestimated, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This has got to be preserved as an important tradition.

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

So sayeth the member from Saskatoon Eastview-Haultain on the issue of rule changes in the Assembly of Saskatchewan.

And I say to that member as he sits and contemplates this debate, that member is well-positioned, I think, in the government caucus to take the amendment as proposed by the member from Wilkie and build on it, work with it. Obviously these are strong, heartfelt views.

They're the views that that member had no problem standing in this Assembly in front of the television cameras, knowing full well that each and every one of his constituents had the opportunity to tune in and watch . . . That those strong, heartfelt views mean that taking that amendment and reworking it, changing it, giving the opportunity for everyone in this Assembly to take a second look, that member must have those views. He's a thinking member of this Assembly — I know from talking with him — as are many other members of this Assembly.

That these views of a short time ago . . . and I have many more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'm not going to enter into the record today although my colleagues may. But the fact is that the context is the same. The issue is different. The politics are much the same. There are two very strong, divergent views, philosophical views in this province of how we attain certain things. So the parameters are the same.

And as we get closer and closer to the slippery edge on this question, then these members who feel so strongly have got to take this opportunity in my view, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and build upon it. The slippery slope will get sharper and sharper and sharper. And just as surely as I stand here, eventually members on this side of the House will run out of the ability to speak. All of the members of this House know that this process will come to a conclusion. And at the end of that conclusion, the alternatives get fewer and fewer. And the record beside each and every member in this Assembly will be there for a long time. Whether you're a one-term member of this House, which our history tells us many are, or whether you are a long-serving member of this House, which few are, that record most assuredly will be beside your name for ever and a day.

(1145)

That ever since 1905 you will become the first. You will not be the last, because after this government's gone somebody else will, just as sure as I'm standing here, end up doing the same thing. Precedent is a wonderful thing, Mr. Speaker, when it is constructive. But when it is destructive, the urge to use it becomes ever more prevalent because I think we as politicians sometimes allow our political thinking to get in the road of our rational thinking.

And as I said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the big objection that the voters and taxpayers of this province have with those of us these days who are elected and serve, is that we don't listen as much as we should, that we don't have perhaps the rules of this Assembly amended in the way that they should be, to ensure that we all are private members in this Assembly at all times. And as private members we should respect more the wishes of our constituents.

And there's only one way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we're going to get to that point. There's only one way, and that is go back to the time-honoured tradition of this House and work this thing out — not with a three-day hoist.

As I pointed out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these pages are filled with the Bills of this House that have gone through the various stages, and they don't need another three-day consideration attached to them, and that's all a three-day hoist will become. That does not satisfy the public's need in any way on major issues that confront our society, whether they be legal or otherwise. It simply will become another part, the same as notice, the same as written responses.

That's not what the public is saying to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're saying, once in a while we need to become directly involved, at least until the members of this Assembly have a different spectrum in which to work, that allows them to stand on their feet and go against, go against perhaps their own government, their own Premier, their own party. I think until the members of the public know that we have the tools available to us to do that without destroying our basic structures, then we're going to have to work with what we've got.

And maybe members of this Assembly in my own party disagree with me. Maybe members of the government disagree with me on that tenet, but I hear it over and over and over again out there with the public today. They are telling me that there has to be change. There have to be mechanisms available that don't tear down the house but change the house — and I speak of that in a generic way, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that allow democracy to come back into our political process in a way that it hasn't been there in my view for some time.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that humbly. I was a member of the Executive Council for two years in this province, a member of cabinet. I know how the game is played. I know how caucus works, and I know how things sometimes ultimately come to this Assembly that could be better served with a better process. And I think, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's incumbent upon every one of us, as we go through this question here now, that

we really, honestly think that through, we really, honestly think about that before we ultimately come to this conclusion.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that other members of my caucus wish to speak on this amendment because it is reasonable, it is sound, and I think the basic tenets are there to build on. And I would hope, I would hope that some government member, as we head down this slippery slope, that some government member would take that amendment and give it some serious consideration, that some government member that truly understands and feels for this institution, that understands what the voters are saying about the cynicism, about the narrow political agendas, about our inability to take our scarce resources today and cut the costs that are so tied to our political rhetoric out of them . . . It's fine to be the way we were when you couldn't spend the money fast enough. But when you have an ever-diminishing supply of taxpayers and taxpayers' money, then I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the politics is starting to cost us a little bit too much, that we probably can't afford to keep doing some of the things that we've been doing in this Assembly.

And we're going to have to change that from within, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well the member from Regina likes to chirp from her seat. If she doesn't believe some of the things that I've been saying to this House today about the average Canadian taxpayer and voter and Saskatchewanian, then let her stand on her feet and tell us otherwise. And tell us why the amendment from Wilkie simply won't work. Tell it on television where every last constituent of hers has got the ability to tune in and watch, and then tell me that I'm wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that change will be done from within, and it will have to be done in some type of co-operative spirit. And I say to you today that that amendment is reasonable; it is something that this Assembly had darn well better give due consideration to before we go the other way. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was slow in rising because I thought for sure that some of the people from the government side would want to get up and express their views. But I certainly wasn't going to be so slow in rising, Mr. Speaker, that I lost my place in the speaking . . . on this here very, very important motion we're speaking on. This amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a good amendment, and I'll be speaking. My remarks will be to the amendment of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I spoke before on the main motion.

And it's very, very important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very, very important that this motion must go back to this special committee on rules and regulations. It's just imperative that it must. It was done in haste. You can't have, Mr. Speaker, something that's happened this quickly that just go and have a few meetings in rules and regulations and this motion comes before the Assembly. It wasn't well thought out.

And I'm hoping at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm hoping at this time that while we're speaking here . . . we've been speaking the greater part of the day on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday on this motion. I think it started on Monday, if I'm correct . . . maybe it was Tuesday. But anyway, yes, I'm sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we started on Tuesday so we've been talking, this is the fourth day. And I'm hoping at this time while we're talking that our House leaders and whips can be getting together and perhaps coming up with a solution to get us out of this impasse.

It's very important that it goes back to the special committee because I'm sure that people have thought it out. I'm sure that the many members on the opposite side, on the government side, must have surely been thinking this out very carefully. I think they must be thinking it out very sincerely, thinking about what the results of this motion that the government brought in could do.

And most importantly, what the motion could do, as brought in by the government members, is force it upon the people of Saskatchewan, force it upon this House with not having full co-operation from all parties. There's three parties representing here in this House today, Mr. Deputy Speaker — the Liberal Party, the official opposition, and of course the government.

And I'm a strong believer of this Legislative Assembly. This is my 15th session, my 14th year, and I've never seen anything happen in this House that's been forced upon anybody that it goes ahead without having co-operation of the members. If you haven't got co-operation from the members, it just doesn't, it just doesn't work, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think that's very important, that the committee conduct further consideration. They must look at it and they must spend a lot of time. Maybe they should go out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and maybe they should be having public hearings. Maybe they should be talking about it.

We have contacted some of the other provinces that have had this same problem. There's six provinces in Canada where they don't have any rules or regulations to bell-ringing or whatever at all. They just don't seem to have a problem.

But we're living in a different type of a province because I will dare say, Mr. Speaker, that we're probably living in the only province in Canada or maybe North America or the British Commonwealth where a Bill such as the GRIP Bill came towards this House. Not the Bill itself, but from what we understand without seeing the Bill and what we're told, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it has this retroactivity about legislating this here letter that the farmers supposed to have got in March 15, 1992. And there's never been another Bill. So that's why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it's very important that we look at it in a proper manner, that we don't allow this thing to happen.

That's why maybe Saskatchewan is much different than the other provinces, because maybe even the NDP government in Ontario, maybe the NDP government in British Columbia — and they've had an NDP government quite a few years in Manitoba — maybe they never

brought a Bill such as this to the legislature to be discussed and ramrod through the legislature. So maybe there hasn't been a necessity to ring bells for a long length of time.

We've told by some speeches and by some of the members opposite that it's the opposition's fault, that we're the ones obstructing the legislature to proceed. That's not true, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is not true. We're not the ones that's causing it. We didn't bring the Bill forth. We're the opposition. It's our duty as the opposition. It's our duty to stand up for what we believe the people in Saskatchewan want.

And we know that we're in a situation where we're outvoted by the government, that in time that we can fight these things as long as we can. We're not agreeable with the rules and regulation motion. We're not agreeable with the GRIP Bill. So it's up to us to fight it as long as we can, knowingly that unless they start listening to the people that we'll be outvoted in time.

But I have in my constituency, 14 people that I phone when I want to do actually a poll in Arm River. Then they have four, five more calls that they make, and we can do a quick polling of what my constituency believes.

And we had a meeting in Davidson on Tuesday night. I spoke in the afternoon here, and I left at 5 o'clock, went out to a meeting in Davidson. And we talked about what we're talking here now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We went through it in detail, exactly what's happening and what our options are. And then these people are going right back out — and this is my own executive, Mr. Deputy Speaker; naturally they're going to believe along the lines we are, that I am — but I asked them to go out and ask the public, go to the coffee rows and go to meetings and get back to me. And I'm yet to have one call back where somebody says that they believe in ringing bells. The public don't like the ringing of the bells. And I've never liked the ringing of the bell.

We've had ringing of the bells for my 14 years here. The bells have rang, and it's just to call the members in. And then sometimes there'll be a 15, 20 minutes, a half an hour . . . I've often seen that just to get ministers here from . . . they're out in the various parts of the city. And that's normal.

But then sometimes we've had disagreements and we deal with the opposition. And when the government was in opposition they'd go into their caucus lounge. And maybe we've had stand-offs for a hour or two or three, but that's the most. Because I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, in my times of being in this legislature that we've had many controversial Bills.

We've only had these two Bills, 1989 and now — the energy Bill which the opposition at that time felt that they were doing the right thing. And they were doing the right thing because they did table approximately 100,000 signatures on a petition. And they had their right. And I always believed they had their right. And so the Bill was withdrawn, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And now somebody said to me yesterday, one of the

members of the opposition chirped across to me and he said — and he's right in saying this — where's your 100,000 signatures? Well I guess as a caucus we didn't do that. We didn't go out. And we've had the odd one, like the member from Thunder Creek had just a small little group of people sent a petition on their own. But we didn't, our 10 members didn't go out and ask them to sign petitions. But we certainly have gone out to the people talking about the rules motion and to the rules amendment.

(1200)

I was on the phone last night phoning people and talking about the GRIP Bill. So we've really been contacting people. And any time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you get 55,000 farmers involved . . . and when I'm saying 55,000 farmers, it involves thousands more than that because the well-being of a farmer involves thousands more people. It involves all the business men in this province of Saskatchewan. So it's probably involving 100 to 150,000 homes.

So we are getting lots of calls. And I won't stand here and say that absolutely everybody is going to be agreeable with what we're saying. Of course not. I've talked to the House Leader and he thinks at one time is about a 60/40 as far as the GRIP program is concerned. And we haven't done a poll on this here rules motion or the rules amendment. We haven't had time. The amendment just came in yesterday.

But we feel it's a real compromise and at least it's the reasonable thing to do to take it back to the committee and be serious about it to get the GRIP out of our minds. And I ask all government members, if this goes back to the committee — and I urge them that it can get back there — that they would vote for the amendment; that we get back to the committee and all the members. I'm not on the committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm not on it, but there's two of our members are. The Leader of the Liberal Party is on that committee and six or seven of the government members. That we take it seriously before it comes back, know what it will do to the future, get all the little details put together of what it can do for us.

And we're talking about like this motion that came in, and it was a three-day suspension period. And we just said it wasn't acceptable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's not; it's not acceptable — three days. It doesn't do anything for people that want to express their views on Bills of a controversial nature.

Now there's many Bills . . . I've watched Bills come through this legislature for . . . oh, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've seen . . . almost every year there would be two or three or four or five Bills just disappear — pulled.

Now I want to talk for a moment how important this three-day suspension would be. Because in 1980-81 there was a Bill came forth to this House from the now government and was pertaining to adoption. And it was almost through this House when we started to understand the seriousness of this Bill — how it was going to open up contracts, and how the system worked at that time.

And the bells didn't ring. We didn't ring the bells in opposition. All we did is we asked the now Premier, who at that time was the minister of Justice, and we went to him and told him that we have people with many concerns and could we have the Bill put on hold for a while — it was already through first reading, through second reading, and gone to committee — and that we were wanting talk to people throughout the province to see who it was going to affect.

And as a result of about two to three weeks of this adoption Bill, the now Premier, the minister of Justice at the time, they received approximately 10,000 letters. And the minister of Justice stood to his feet here one day — and naturally he didn't give us the credit for it, and I do give him the credit — he says, I've heard from over 10,000 people that they want that Bill pulled. And he pulled the Bill.

So what I'm saying is a three-day suspension would not give the people the chance to have input into something that maybe they didn't know was happening in the legislature, and it would slip by. And that's what'll happen with a three-day suspension.

It's only going to be a few days . . . We get a few days now through first reading and second reading, and then second reading you get into details. And you get into further details in committee and sometimes . . . Like the Minister of Social Services and myself, we got into kind of an impasse over the new adoption Bill that just went through here. And I held that Bill up longer than it should have been held up. I didn't understand it because I didn't have the answers from her. And she gave me the proper answers. And we just talked about it today because the minister had come over and thanked me for apologizing, and she apologized for our little impasse we were having because we didn't understand one another. Once she made it straight and put it on the record, the intent of the Bill, then we let it go very quickly.

And then the next Bill was a child care Act Bill, Mr. Speaker. And so I got her . . . I had talked to her about it. I asked her some questions so we didn't even ask the question on that one. We just let it go from the spirit of co-operation. And that's what you need in this legislature, is the spirit of co-operation.

Now that can happen on the average, normal Bills that go through this legislature, but it is not going to work when you come to Bills like GRIP where it has retroactivity to this Bill. No Bills with retroactivity should be pushed onto people without a lot of input.

And that's why I liked the member from Wilkie's motion, when they're saying this here controversial Bill should go out for public hearings. It's very important that we go out for public hearings.

But you know, it won't have to happen very often. And I'd say there would have to be some control put on it through the rules and regulations committee, that you would have to have the House leaders or someone else that's . . . whips and the chairman of the public Rules Committee, whatever, have a handle on what Bills that you could put out to the public. Otherwise some opposition could take

advantage and want, just to hold up and obstruct, could want every second Bill. It would have to be a Bill like the GRIP Bill and like the energy Bill so we know that it is of a serious consequence, which we've all agreed.

There's been agreement from every government member that I've talked to that certainly the GRIP Bill and its retroactivity has caused a problem. We know the government is in a serious problem here, that they've missed putting out the letter and they have to have this taken care some other . . . and it has to go to the courts.

But I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how much they thought this out. Because I've contacted some legal people. And that's why this is the most important issue that I think that we've ever stood and talked about for any opposition probably in the history of this province. Because I've had legal lawyers, and well-qualified, tell me that the GRIP Bill is unconstitutional. Even if it passes through the courts and even if the farmers lose and the government wins, that when the law changes, when the law changes and they go to court as if . . . and this Bill is through the House and the farmers lose, it's the appeals court that it must go to to find out whether it's an unconstitutional Bill or not.

So I think it's so serious that we're talking about a Bill that is unconstitutional. And that's why I think it is just more than I can comprehend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that actually that our people in the rules and regulations committee never thought all this out, didn't get serious about the consequences of what they were doing. Because this could put a black shadow on the Saskatchewan legislature and it will be the government members and us both. It'll be every member here will be . . . if this turns out to be a non-constitutional . . . a Bill that's unconstitutional. Now that could put a black shadow, as I say, on this legislature, and that puts me a part of it and it puts every member of this House a part of it.

And I think that when it's through in this House, whatever happens here, whether we talk for several more days or whether it's just today or the first of the week, whenever we vote on this here amendment and it goes to committee, that's fine; that'll be one step forward. And then if it doesn't go to committee and we're forced into voting on it, and we don't go along with it, and we decide to let the bells ring, well we know the bells can't ring very long. We can't let that . . . I'm sure that that won't happen too long. It isn't going to be any advantage if the government's got their mind made up.

We thought when the bells went for 11 sitting days before — they rang for 18 days but 11 sitting days of this House — we thought that that would bring the government to their senses and perhaps pull the retroactivity of that Bill. But they didn't do that and we were brought back in by Mr. Speaker and put back to work. And I'm glad we were, because in that first week that we were brought back in and last week there was a lot of Bills got through this here House.

And I think that it was co-operation, and I just said it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I co-operated to the best of my ability dealing with the Minister of Social Services. I seen some of my colleagues here, one of our members that's

responsible for Rural Development. He talked about a Bill that he didn't like and all the things that bothered us, but we didn't obstruct. It's of a nature that I think the people out in rural Saskatchewan will put up an awful commotion. That's one where it could lead to the county system in this province. And I think we voiced our opinion.

But this Bill, the GRIP Bill which has brought the Rules Committee together, that is why we're talking about amendment here today. It is because of a Bill that may be unconstitutional in the courts of Canada. Now that's why I think that we have to be serious on this side. Because if anybody thinks, Mr. Speaker, that we're just sitting here filibustering and to put in time, partly they're right, partly they're right. But we're not doing it on purpose just to waste time, because nobody more than myself would like to get the works of this legislature done and get back out to help my family with the harvest coming up. I want to get the work done. I have been here and some of the members opposite are shaking their heads. Well when they're here as long as I've been here and sit as many days as I've been here, and sit here in opposition when the government starts throwing Bills at us, maybe in seeding time or harvest time, when most of us were farmers . . . And we had to sit right through harvest, 129 days one time.

I know what it's like to sit here and be a small opposition and work hard. And I know, as a government member, what the opposition went through with the same thing when there was only eight or nine members from '82-86. And I felt sorry for them because they worked hard. They worked so hard that it was unreal.

But that's the same position that we're in, Mr. Speaker. We on this side of the House have to make up our mind. Is this something we have to fight? There's so many Bills that you're bringing forth that we haven't got a problem with, but there's Bills that we do have a problem with. And we need longer than three days.

We don't even know the details of the farm Bill, of the six-year leaseback. We've been talking about it since election time. Is three days going to be long enough to talk about it? Now we'll get . . . I apologize, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it'll be more than three days, because we'll have the first reading. And we've had that. And then we've been sitting back here two and a half weeks, or whatever it's been, two weeks, and we haven't had anybody put that Bill on.

Instead of getting serious about the farmers out there and serious about them losing their farms to the lending institutions, they decided that the GRIP Bill was more important. So they go to the Rules Committee and bring it to the House. And let's get that done first so when we bring our controversial Bills in, then we can control it with the three-day hoist. And that's not acceptable by this side of the House. It is not acceptable.

And I am certain, and I have been considered in our party throughout the years that I've been involved . . . I'm been involved since 1970 — 22 years. It's 22 years since I worked for Doug Neil, who was an MP (Member of Parliament) in Moose Jaw. I was his campaign manager.

And I've worked with people long enough to know that I can go to any town, and give me a short time and I'll know how people are feeling about things. And I know that we are right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

(1215)

Mr. Muirhead: — I know that we are correct, that we have the feeling of the average people from Saskatchewan on our side. It is right. They believe. I haven't got one individual that will say to me, let those bells ring. But they say in this particular instance, you haven't got any other choice because the government is ramrodding right over top of you.

They neglected to send a letter to the farmers. We have farmers in south-west Saskatchewan . . . And this is a crime. And the member from Swift Current should know this. We have people that had planted crops in the end of March, the first week in April, under the '91 GRIP, and borrowed their money. And then in April it's taken away from them. That's never been heard of in North America. In fact what's happening in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand that's it's never happened, such a Bill, in the British Commonwealth countries of the world. And England was several hundred years that they've had a government. And Canada is the last one to come into the Commonwealth, and it's never been known that a Bill such as this.

So that's why we are sitting here in this impasse that we're in. Because in other provinces I understand that they just, the rules and regulations committees, they met and they were able to come up very quickly with a mechanism to stop the bell-ringing. They could do it very quickly.

But they weren't dealing in Saskatchewan with a government that ramrods right over top of people. It's a different situation. They know, they know what they did in the 1970s. They know exactly what they're capable of. They know that the same front row is back here doing it again, and they're power hungry, and they're out to do anything they have to do.

I know what they want to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want to bring Bills forth to this House. They want to do things. We talked about it in question period today about what's happening in Department of Health. And I won't get into that because I'll be called for being off the subject. But it is what's happening all over, and this government, why you're doing this and why we're here discussing this Bill is because we have a different type of government, like I said, than anybody I know in the Commonwealth. I don't know of another government in the Commonwealth that would bring in a Bill to destroy farmers, thus destroy maybe the economy of this country.

When I have government members, Mr. Deputy Speaker, say to me, we cannot afford, we can't afford the 1991 GRIP. Well my goodness why didn't they say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we wouldn't be here talking about the Rules and Regulations Committee and we wouldn't be talking about putting a three-day suspension on if they had of thought about that and told the people at election

time that we are going to take the '91 GRIP away and we're going to give you nothing.

And if they had have said that at those days, at election time said that and said all the things that they've done in the last six months, they wouldn't be sitting over there; they'd be sitting over here. And we wouldn't be in this position at a Rules Committee trying to ramrod a new rule through so we can have a Bill go to the court and have the law behind it of this here legislature so they can beat some farmers in court.

Why? Why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does this government want to take farmers on in court? Why do they want to do that? I thought that they were for farmers. I have by the daily, and I don't mean once a day; it's usually one, two, three a day are phoning my constituency office and phoning me here and saying: where do we send our money to fight the Bill? Where do we help the poor farmers? This happening all over, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is exactly why we're here discussing this here motion, this amendment. It's a good amendment. And I urge the members across the way to deal with this motion because it's exactly what we need.

We need to be a proud group of legislatures. We need you, the government, to be proud of what you're doing. And we in the opposition will back you if you will take this here amendment and look at it seriously, vote for it, and then take it to the people.

Take out every controversial Bill that hits this legislature of a real serious nature. And that doesn't going to mean four or five, six Bills a year. Because I said it before, there's only been two in my 14 years, the energy Bill and this one. It's the only two Bills that we've had an impasse on. So maybe it's only going to happen once every 5, 10 years. So when you get a Bill like that for goodness sakes, take it out. Because I'm sure . . .

Here's the constituencies I want to go through, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where I've had farmers either write me, business men either write me or call me and voice their opinion. And the main one that I'm going to talk about is the two closest ones to me is the Arm River constituency. And I would say when this thing first started, when the GRIP became an issue, that I wasn't getting many calls on it. They knew where I stood on it.

But after a while it soon got out that about this retroactivity and that's when calls started to come, and then they seen it was . . . they started to get serious about what the '91 GRIP really meant and their '92 GRIP. And I've had calls of no end. And they're serious. I'm getting people talking to me in the street that I know have never voted for me and probably never will, but they're disturbed at what this government has done.

So why doesn't that take the smiles off the face of the people opposite? Why doesn't it get them serious? Because I see from the seat several times that the several members will look at me and I can see them talking under their breath. And why don't they just go do that, talking to their constituents and talk to them about the Rules Committee and what's happening and what you're really doing?

Because I'm sure if the member from Churchill Downs would go to his . . . and go and knock on doors in his riding and I guarantee, I guarantee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the first door that I'll . . . just put me in my car, put yourself in my car, take me to your constituency and we'll stop at the first house by random. And you go in — and I'll give you the script what to say — and they'll say, no we don't agree with you.

And all you got to do is say that we are bringing in the Bill to this legislature, a GRIP Bill that is going to have . . . it's going to deem that farmers got a letter, that the farmers got a letter that they changed their GRIP Bill by March 15 that they never got. That's what it's going to say. Then you must say to them that to get this Bill through that we're ramrodding it through the Rules and Procedures Committee. And tell them the exact facts. And you'll say, you are wrong Mr. Member from Churchill Downs, they'll say you are wrong.

Because I've gone to people on the streets, talking to someone in Davidson the other night, and I know he wasn't my supporter. And I just stopped him. I said, do you know what's going on down at the legislature? He said, yes, you guys are all acting like fools down there, all of you. He said, quit ringing those bells and get back to work.

And I wanted him to say that because I knew he was a reasonable person. So I stopped him and explained to him, Mr. Deputy Speaker, exactly what's happening in this legislature, what the government is doing. And he just said, oh well, that's your problem. But I understand that he's never quit talking in Davidson ever since, and he's got NDP people and Liberal people and people that didn't vote for me, people that did vote for me, all upset — from one man, one conversation.

If you people would do that, go out to your ridings . . . Because I'll guarantee you, when I come back in here Monday morning I'm going to know the feeling of what they think about this amendment. I know what they're going to be saying about what happened in question period today about the hospital closures in this province. I know what they're going to be saying. So it's all these people have to do this.

And right now is not a good time for the government to be doing anything that's wrong. It's not the time that this government can get away and have anybody like them for no matter what they're doing. You can talk to a taxi driver on the streets of Regina, who knows nothing about farming, who cares less whether it's a '91 GRIP or a '92 GRIP; he could care less. But boy, he's heard about everything else they're doing wrong. So he says, well I'm against them whatever they're doing. And that's exactly what he believes. He believes, whatever you guys are doing wrong, that they can't trust you.

And they can't trust you on this Bill. And that's why at this time, the last few days, like I said when I first started to speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that at this time I hope that the House leaders are out trying to work something out as we speak — this is our fourth day of speaking — to work out a solution for this impasse.

Well I see my House Leader is sitting beside me, so I guess it's not going on at this moment. But I'm hoping that they can work out something, that somebody will give in. Somebody must give in when we're impasse. We're 10 people that are very set in our ways. We believe what we're doing and we can talk here for a long time. And we intend to talk and talk until the House leaders come up with suggestions to stop this impasse, take it back to committee, or do something with the GRIP Bill. I don't . . . anything at all better than what we've got. Do something between the '91 and '92. They can do it right here in this House.

I understand that the Premier has been talking to our leader and he's agreed with some of their suggestions. Now it's not right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Premier has sat and talked with our leader and says, yes, that's a pretty good solution, and our leader says, that's not a bad idea, and then within hours you get this regulation motion thrown at you — within hours. That's not giving it a chance.

Who is responsible that we're sitting here for four days and it'll go on into next week? Who is responsible that's not listening? Is it the Government House Leader that didn't take the message . . . or the chairman of the Rules Committee — is it him, is it him that didn't take the suggestions back . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member should know better than to reflect on the chair of the Rules Committee, who is the Speaker of the House, and to not reflect on the actions of the Speaker.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm sure that the member from Churchill Downs would like to get rid of me; he's been saying that since 1978. But somehow or other he's got himself hid in a little spot in Regina here where he doesn't have to even work to get elected. He knows where he's at; but he should be out in Arm River and have to work with people like I do. And I have to deal with my people. I have to show them that I'm speaking on their behalf.

I told them in 1978, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'll carry the message, whatever message they want, to this here legislature, and I have. And that's why they returned me for my fourth session in this legislature, my fourth term of office, because I listen to people. And my people would turn on me just like that if they thought that I was not bringing their message in here.

We have our now leader that has done everything he could for farmers, and the farmers are backing us now. That's why we're hearing from farmers: please ring those bells. But they don't understand that we can't, Mr. Deputy Speaker, ring them for ever because it has to come to an end, we have to come to agreement. And so rather than the heavy-handed government, rather than this heavy-handed government coming down to us and say, we're just not even going to deal with you; we're going to outvote you on this Rules Committee; and then the next day, or a day or two, we'll have the first reading of the GRIP Bill and then the second reading, and it'll be passed . . . And they didn't listen.

All right, we fought the fight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have fought as long as we could. And that's all we can do. Because my people, and I know that the people my colleagues represent, they want us to fight this as long as we possibly can in hopes, in hopes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in hopes that the members opposite will come to their senses and say, yes we're not listening.

I can remember in 1982, when the now Premier, when the now Premier told me after the election: we lost the election because we didn't listen to people. And I can't believe that they've come back in here in 1992 and here they are not listening again. They're not listening.

They have people . . . if you go out this weekend, all you people that are here, and contact your other colleagues — the colleagues that are not here yesterday and the day before, there's a bunch of colleagues that weren't here yesterday and a few days before — contact them to go talk to your people and find out what they're really thinking. I ask each and every one of you to do that, sincerely. Go out and say, are we doing the right thing? But don't pose the question this way: do you want the bells to stop ringing? Because that's mostly what they do. They say yes, we want them. But don't tell them . . . Be sure you do tell them why you're doing it, that you're trying to do it to get a rules regulation change so you can have an illegal Bill go through so crop insurance . . .

And the Minister of Crop Insurance is in the House and he knows . . . He's a pretty decent sort of a man. I've talked to him about a couple of things. And I'm sure that he does not want this to happen. I know that he's been told by this front row that there's been a mistake made. We have blundered; we have walked over farmers; and we have to have you stand . . . they want to have him, that poor man, stand and take heat. And he's going to take heat for all the farmers in Saskatchewan for the blunder in crop insurance.

An Hon. Member: — Not as much as the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Muirhead: — Yes, as my colleague says beside me here, the Minister of Agriculture, when he comes into this House, and he comes in here with his farm Bill, the one about the six-year leaseback, which we may and may not be backing because we don't know the details of it . . . I know definitely we'll be having some amendments to that Bill. But when he brings it to this House and we talk about it and talk about the GRIP Bill, he's going to have a hard struggle with it. It's going to take a long time.

Here we are, have all these days go by, just about the rules and regulations. And we should be talking about the farm Bills, the ones that are here. There's some important ones.

Well then all right, Mr. Deputy Premier, would it be in order for me to make a motion that we revert back to government business? Is that in order if I made a motion like that? Can I ask that question to you? Is it in order if I put a motion in that we revert back to government business and put this aside?

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked whether it be appropriate for him to move what is termed a

superseding motion. And it would be appropriate for the member to move a superseding motion to move directly to another piece of government business. So if the member wants to do that, he's within his rights to do that.

(1230)

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. All right, well I'm continuing on with my remarks. I'll let my House Leader here . . . Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's be fair. I haven't got the motion written up. So if they want to discuss it and hand me that motion written up, then at the end of my remarks we can do that. And I thank you for your ruling, because I asked.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason why I said that, somebody said, let's get back and talk about the farm Bill. So that was reasonable for me to say that. I wanted to know. I didn't say what we were going to do. I said is it in order for us to do it? So while I'm speaking, we'll let the members talk about it — if we want to go back to government business.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think they've gone in shock over there because they're so used to all these other things that's going on, I don't think they know how . . . they wouldn't be ready to get back to government work. Then wouldn't have their . . . they haven't even got their ministers here.

Mr. Speaker, while they're talking about this, let's just talk about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the importance of the process of the hearings that we're talking about in the amendment; how important the hearings would be on Bills.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the member and I ask the members to observe order.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to, when they're discussing whether we want to do this or not or whatever and whether it's in order, I'll continue on with my remarks. It put the government members into shock when we talked about going back to work because they're all sitting there half asleep and most of them have gone home. It would put them into shock if we had to get back into . . . we haven't even got enough ministers here to probably go on with government business.

But anyway that's up to my House Leader. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's up to my House Leader and his colleagues if we want to do something like that today. We at least now know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it's in order to do that so if we don't do it today we can order for it and talk about it to our caucus and maybe do it on Monday. It's in order. So we know that.

But anyway, going back, and it's quite interesting, it's quite interesting that all of a sudden they say they want to get back to government business. Now this is a very interesting turn of events here, very interesting, because the most important thing with rule and procedure was to talk about the rules and regulation motion that come towards this House to put the three-day ice on the Bill,

that was the most important issue.

But all of sudden they seem to maybe not think it's such a bad idea to get back off on it, so maybe we will be back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, later today. We've only got a little time left, so later today or Monday we might just be back on government business because we'll probably be doing that; we'll be thinking about it.

Anyway back to the importance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the very, very importance of having the public hearings that our member from Wilkie talked about in the special committee under rules and regulations. Now wouldn't it be important to go out and talk to the people because I have private members' Bill . . . we have a private members' Bill that's before this House. And if it was only allowed for three days, these people that are involved in this would be a very unhappy group of people.

And this Bill is pertaining to the Caronport Bible school where I've been involved with for a good many years of my life. And Caronport, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Caronport Bible school want to change the name of their school, and it's always been called the Briercrest Bible school.

An Hon. Member: — What's this got to do with bell-ringing?

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, somebody just chirps from across there, what's it got to do with bell-ringing? Well I'll tell you what it's got to do. It's got a lot to do with freedom and what three days means. It's got a lot to do with it, if they would just listen.

It's got a lot to do with many Bills that may come forth towards this House. Because these people want to change the name of their school from the Briercrest Bible institute to Briercrest schools. But the town of Briercrest have opposed it because they got their school called Briercrest School. So now this has been going on for close to a month and talking going back and forth between the two schools, and they've asked the Bill to come through in my name. And then I see by next Wednesday, Wednesday coming, that this Private Members' Bill Committee is going to be meeting, and these people have a chance to come in and voice their opinions. And then it has to go back to Caronport, and it goes back to Briercrest to talk about . . . What would happen if we just had a three-day hoist on these things and they couldn't even talk about it?

Well it was several weeks even getting into my hand when it come to the House. It came in the member of Thunder Creek's name first. Then it was switched over to my name. And now there's consultation going on. And I think that members from the government here will be involved. They must be involved in that committee. And what are they going to say? That if this goes through here in the next few days, that you haven't got any time to talk about it. They just say, it's gone. Once you're out of there, too late, you missed it.

Well now is that going to make the people from Caronport, where there's 2,000 people there, and the town of Briercrest happy? Because there's something's

happened here that they weren't aware of, that the two schools being the same name is causing a conflict.

And I think it's very important to this here legislature to think about this, to think about the seriousness of this, that you have to have something in your rules and regulations to take care of these type of things because that isn't a controversial Bill that has to go out to the whole province.

But it has to have a mechanism. It has to have a mechanism where you can put it on hold. There has to be a mechanism between the House Leader or the whips or whatever, where you have a mechanism to say, here we have to have meetings with these different types of people. This will happen all over.

I before, Mr. Speaker, was talking about the towns that I've been contacted from about the GRIP Bill and about the rules motion that's come in here, and I'm going to mention quite a few of them here. Thunder Creek and Arm River is where we're getting a lot. I have some coming to me from the northerly side of Thunder Creek where they're closer to me, so they've been contacting me.

But I'd like to talk mostly about the calls I'm getting from these members over here — calls from Bengough-Milestone. Now I've asked them to phone their MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) and ask them to voice their opinion to them. And I'm sure they are. So I'm sure that the member from Milestone, Bengough-Milestone, is getting calls talking about the GRIP Bill, talking about this rules and regulation, and talking about why the rules has . . . why you've done it. And I'm sure that he must be getting calls. Because I've told these people, call your MLA. Write them letters.

And I'm getting many calls, because I know a lot of people in the Weyburn constituency. My family came from there, and I have a lot of family roots there. And I'm getting a lot of calls from them. And I've said the same thing, contact about the Rules Committee and about the GRIP Bill and about the retroactive legislation of the letter, March 15. I said, talk to them about it. Be sure you talk to your member.

So I know that the member from Bengough-Milestone's getting calls. I know the member from Weyburn is. Then Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, if he's not getting letters, he should be . . . getting phone calls. Because I'm getting them from his riding. I'm getting calls from his riding.

An Hon. Member: — They're not answering their phones.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well that's the only way that they wouldn't be getting the message. They're not returning their calls. But I've returned the calls from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg, and they're not happy. And I said, well if you're not happy, I'm only an opposition member. And I'm not happy about it. But tell your member. And he says, I will. So I hope that they are.

And then I've had calls from Indian Head-Wolseley. The member from Indian Head-Wolseley must be getting the same type of calls that I'm getting. And I'm sure that he

must be taking it to your caucus. I'm absolutely sure that they must be talking about it in caucus, hey? I'm sure that the member from Indian Head-Wolseley says, I've just had so many calls and so many letters. And he says to the now House Leader, hey what are you going to do about this, because I'm going to be in a lot of hot water here. If the people out there are starting to get out, and boomerang out there that, hey, this is terrible legislation. It's the worst legislation in the history of the Commonwealth. I'm going to be in trouble if you don't do something about it.

I think that's why there's been a little discussion. There's been a little more discussion. In the last day it started. And there's a little discussion going on now, and there's a little talk here and there that maybe there's a way of working this out. So let's hope that cooler heads will prevail over the weekend.

The member from Churchill Downs, he's the one that brought the main motion to the House in the first place. And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if the member from Churchill Downs and I sit down for a cup of coffee together and we discussed it, and I know exactly what he'll say: that it's the worst thing I've ever had to do. I just didn't like to have to stand on my feet but because of the blunder of the Minister of Agriculture, it gave me no choice.

You know that, and I feel sorry for the member. I've known him since 1978 since I came in here, and he doesn't like to do things like that. But he had to stand up and make the motion as a senior member because of the blundering of the Minister of Agriculture. But why? But why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do we have to have the blundering of one member who didn't send a letter out, why do we have to have it end up in Rules Committee? Why does it end up in the Rules Committee?

I can't believe that these people are doing such a thing as this. I never in all my years heard of the blundering of a minister end up in the Rules Committee to solve his problem. It's never been known. If you didn't do it right . . . in the history of this country, if a minister blunders, the premier gets rid of him and gets another one. Why didn't he get rid of him and get a man in that would apologize to the farmers and say, I didn't send that letter out, and I apologize? Instead, the member from Churchill Downs had to get up and bring that motion to the House and use the Rules . . . imagine using the Rules Committee to solve a problem of a blundering minister. I can't believe that.

I've also been getting letters from Last Mountain-Touchwood. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's been my sister's seat since 1978. I remember working in there against the great Gordon MacMurchy . . .

An Hon. Member: — Is this a filibuster?

Mr. Muirhead: — The member from Churchill Downs asks me if it's a filibuster. Well I'm talking and doing the best I can to give you a chance to go out of the House and talk to your House Leader and see if you can't bring this impasse to a stop — to stop this carryings on.

It's about time this come to an end. Because, Mr. Speaker,

it is imperative, it is very imperative that these so-called ministers from the front row over here, that they quit their snickering and smiling and get serious of what's happening — get really serious that they are making history in the province of Saskatchewan.

Because the now House Leader has said very clearly, very clearly, that yes, he said it on television, he said it . . . I will never talk about what one member says in private conversation; I'll never bring it to the floor of this House. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the now House Leader said it very clearly and was quoted in the *Leader-Post*: yes, we are going to change history and we're going to have a Bill that's going to deem that the farmers got a letter on March 15.

Now if any of you people can look me straight in the eye and go home and look all your constituents in the eye straight and tell me that we did the right thing, every one of you got trouble — every last one.

The member from Touchwood, I know he's got problems because I'm getting phone calls from people that said they voted for him. I'm getting phone calls from the city of Yorkton, farmers from around the Yorkton area. I'm not sure what . . . it would be likely farmers from Kamsack; it's around the Yorkton area. But I would say my most phone calls and most contacts is a seat that I'm well acquainted with is Rosetown-Elrose where the Minister of Agriculture comes from himself.

If he can go . . . I will challenge him to go to any neighbour within 10 miles, anyone, and give him the same challenge that I give the member from Churchill Downs, to go and tell him what they've done and see if he can get back. Can he go and talk to anybody? Can the member from Canora? Can he go home this weekend and go to one farmer — one farmer — and tell him the facts and say, do you agree with what we've done? Do you agree that we are to get this here GRIP Bill through? We took it to Rules and Procedures, made a motion to stop the bell-ringing so we can bring the GRIP Bill in and have it first reading, second reading, Committee of the Whole, passed, goes to court, beat the farmers, and we save ourselves three-quarters to a billion dollars.

Go say that to one farmer. And if you can get backing from him, boy, you surprise me. And make sure that it's . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . I know I can't find one in my riding. I can't find one farmer that if you say it in that manner . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, you don't go to them and say, here we know . . . Like over in the east side of the province, that the '92 GRIP is a little bit more acceptable because they grow low assessed land . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I know the member has been trying hard to observe relevance and to make sure that his remarks are germane to the motion and amendment before us, but I think the member has strayed. And I encourage him to observe relevance and to speak to the amendment, the amendment to the motion before us.

(1245)

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. Then I would ask the member from Canora or any other members if the member from Canora — because he's the Minister of Crop Insurance — if he would go out and ask his neighbours this. That there's been a Rules Committee motion come to this House and there's been an amendment by the member from Wilkie and ask if he agrees with this: that the report 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 hearing during such a suspension of a Bill.

Now I can't, Mr. Deputy Speaker, get any closer to the amendment than that. That if he would go and say to his neighbours, do you believe in public hearings? Do you believe in them? And they would say, of course we believe in them. Do you believe we . . . Then say to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, then say to them, do you believe we did wrong last spring to go and have the public hearings after they changed the GRIP? Do you believe that was right?

Because if you're going to have public hearings — and this government talks about public hearings, they talk about going out and consulting but don't do it after the fact. It may happen, and I'm not going to get into it, and I can't because you won't let me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, get into the Department of Health and what they're doing — they're going out, maybe after the fact. But we hope they don't.

But I challenge the Minister of Crop Insurance and the Minister of Agriculture to go out and talk to his people and say to them, one by one, neighbour by neighbour, town by town, and say that: are you in favour of public hearings when it's pertaining to a Bill and as has been discussed on amendment under Rules and Procedures in the legislature. Go and ask them and I will guarantee that everyone will say yes.

I have been contacted by . . . I'm not going to get into them any more because I've talked about a few of the main ones. But I've got almost every constituency that I have been contacted in the last few weeks or contacts of some nature through letter or phone call or whatever. Cut Knife-Lloyd, Touchwood, I've mentioned Touchwood, Nipawin, Redberry, Kelvington-Wadena — seats that we don't hold. I've got the names down here of all the . . . Well naturally we're hearing more from our own seat — Tisdale, Saltcoats, Kamsack, Shellbrook, we're hearing from all those areas.

So if we're hearing from those areas and getting phone calls, letters, then the MLAs must be. Because what I'm doing, as I said before, is saying to them please go back, please go back, tell your MLA, and take it to his caucus and get this thing stopped.

Now the most serious thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's happening here is the members in the front row. And the first member I put down there is yourself. But now that you're sitting, and I won't make remarks because you're sitting in the Chair as Deputy Speaker, so I'll bypass you, but I'll move to the member from Athabasca. And I'm

only touching the members that have been here for a good many years, that know better. They know better of what they're doing. They absolutely know better.

The member from Athabasca has been here since back in the '70s. And I'm sure that nobody up in Athabasca knows much about what's happening here in this legislature. But I know that he is a very honourable man. He's a man I've become very good friends with. And I know . . . I had a trip one time with him to Newfoundland, and we've become very close friends. And I know that if he goes and asks his people about . . . tell them what they're doing, that they'll not understand the farming and the GRIP Bill, but they'll understand, they will understand about retroactivity in a Bill. But I ask and I challenge you to do that.

The member from Regina Dewdney, now what is he telling his people? They're going to hear a lot more about it in Regina. They're going to read the *Leader-Post*. They're going to hear what the press is now saying about you people. And it's starting to come our way. I can remember when the media wasn't interested in hardly quoting anything that we've done.

But now it's starting to turn. Because they're turning on you people because you're bringing things forth to this House that is — like I said a long time ago in my remarks here an hour or more ago — that it's an unconstitutional Bill.

And that's the only hope that Saskatchewan people have, that if you do ramrod it through this legislature, that if we have to ring the bells and we have to be brought in to vote, and if you have to introduce the GRIP Bill and you get first reading, second reading, and Committee of the Whole, and it's passed and the poor farmers lose their court case, the only hope we've got is the farmers hang in there, and I think they will, and take it to the Supreme Court. And that is where they have the right to rule that a Bill is constitutional or not.

And I'm told by many, many, very high-profile lawyers in the city of Regina that . . .

An Hon. Member: — Name one.

Mr. Muirhead: — Well I'll name one. He asked me to name one. I know a high-profile lawyer in the city of Regina that knows, that know quite well that if this Bill ever got to the Supreme Court of Canada, that it would be ruled unconstitutional. And that's the member from Churchill Downs. He's one lawyer that I'm sure knows better.

And there's many others. There's many lawyers over here. And every last one of them knows what you're doing — it is wrong. And if they think for one minute that I'm going to start naming lawyers' names without their permission . . . But I'll ask for their permission on the weekend . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Churchill Downs, he did get up and speak, because he brought the motion to this House. He did get up and speak.

But instead of all this chirping I hear over there and

people contradicting what I'm saying and laughing about it or trying to rile me up or whatever, why don't they just stand to their feet on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday? And we've talked about this, our caucus, for four days. Surely you can talk for four weeks, you guys. Because you must be so right. You must know that you're right, what you're doing. Stand up and say so. Stand up and say so. Quit saying it from your seat. Stand up. Because I'm standing up and I'm being counted.

I'm the member from Arm River — for somebody in television land that doesn't know who I am — and I am saying that this is wrong, what this government is doing. It is absolutely wrong to bring retroactive legislation of this nature to this House. And then they can't get it ramrodded through, so . . . because the bells already ring 18 days on it, 11 sitting days. So they took it to a rules committee. And they know it's wrong to bring it to a rules committee to get a Bill passed in this legislature to go to the courts in Melville or wherever it goes, to fix farmers — to fix them.

I had a farmer tell me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with your permission — and it's pertaining to this here bell-ringing and to this GRIP — that he said he was insured. He's a big farmer — him and his two sons — but not so big maybe when you take three farmers in one; \$475,000 guaranteed under GRIP '91. And he is going to be guaranteed 125,000 less by their figures. But they can change because you won't know on GRIP '92 until the wheat payment comes out, announced in '94, what you're going to get. So don't try to fool the people in this province that you're going to ramrod a Bill through, through the rules procedures to try to tell them they're going to get some money out of the GRIP Bill . . . the GRIP '92 even compares to '91 because you have to wait until the . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Again I'd just like to encourage the member to address his remarks to the motion that's on the floor, to the question. That has to do with an amendment to a motion that the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures be concurred in. And I'd like to just ask the member to address his remarks to the amendment that's before us now.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now the most important one that I haven't talked about, it hasn't been said anything publicly, that just won't say a word. You can't get him out of Ottawa long enough to come back and talk about the seriousness of what's happening in his own province, and that's the Premier of this province, the member from Riversdale. Where is he?

I challenge him. Before this comes to a vote, I challenge, and I challenge everyone in Saskatchewan that will possibly be interested to challenge the Premier to stand to his feet and tell us in his words why he's doing this. Tell us in his words why he's forcing GRIP '92 upon us through the rules procedure, through the Rules Committee. How can the Premier of this province do such a thing as that? I don't think that he can come in this House and face us.

Because I remember in 1981 we had a Bill come forth to this House, and it was brought in by a member called . . . oh, I forget his name. And he was the chairman of the

committee, and he brought a private members' Bill in about . . . Billy Allen brought a Bill in here about private . . . to bring racing on Sunday to the city of Regina. Well there was only a handful of us over here. And all I did was stand up here and started quoting some scripture one night that there was laws made long before this government made laws, and challenged Mr. Blakeney to come in here and stand up to his feet. And he had to walk in here and said, I have to agree with the member from Arm River. He turned around to Gord MacMurchy and says, will you stand up and say? And he had to stand up and say I agree with the member from Arm River. And we outvoted them because they voted with us.

Now there has to be some decent people on that side of the House that will do the same thing. So when it comes to vote, voting from the member from Britton's amendment, I am asking the cool, calm-head, good thinkers there has to be over there . . . hey must have some enough people to stand up and vote for one simple little request. And it's a very simple request: take it back to the Rules Committee and discuss it. Take it back. Discuss it in a rational manner.

Don't send your people to that Rules Committee, that are representing the Rules Committee, and don't have the House Leader send them there and say, no matter what you do make sure that GRIP '92 gets passed. That's all it's saying — use the Rules Committee; get it passed.

Go back to the people that's telling you that. The member from Indian Head-Wolseley, the member sitting beside him from Saskatoon, the member from Nipawin, there's some good-thinking members. I'm looking at them. The member . . . the House Leader or . . . he's in Rules Committee. They're good-thinking people. Sit down. Sit the House Leader down, the member from Elphinstone, and say to him, maybe we're wrong to ramrod this Bill through the Rules Committee. Maybe we are wrong. Did you ever think that you could be wrong?

But I want you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want the high-profile people that are left here today to go to their Premier and ask him on Monday to take his place in this legislature and tell us what he thinks about the Rules Committee and see if he could say that we should be using the Rules Committee in a time of heat and a time of conflict and a time of impasse, that we should be using the Rules Committee to make this here GRIP Bill law in this here legislature. See if he could say it. I challenge you. Do it.

And I challenge the members that are all chirping from their feet, be sure that they stand up on Monday and say what they believe. Say what you believe. Put it on the record. So then when I get calls from your own riding, I will say, well your member spoke; I'll send you a copy of *Hansard*. That's not a difficult thing to do.

Then we have another member that's been around a long time and that's . . . we've already discussed the member from Churchill Downs. I wrote his name . . . his seat down here. Regina Elphinstone — he's been a member that's been here a long time. But one I would like to talk a little bit about is the member from Quill Lakes.

When he's here he's always chirping from his seat more than anybody, and why doesn't he stand up and be counted? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask him to stand up and be counted on Monday and say exactly what he thinks. No smiling, no chirping from their feet — stand up.

I've only got a few minutes left, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to close this way. I want to close . . . I want to close this way, that this is to me . . . this is the second time I have spoke on this motion — I spoke on the motion, now on the amendment — and I am sad.

I always say when I stand on my feet in this legislature that it's another proud day for me to speak in this legislature when I'm speaking on . . . even when I'm speaking on your budgets or your throne speeches or whatever, I'm always proud to stand and express myself. But I am not proud to be standing here today, debating on what we've been debating for four days.

I would like to go home this weekend and tell my people in Arm River that we've been discussing the most important Bills that's important to people in Arm River. And that would be like the farm legislation, all the farm legislation, and several other Bills. That's what they want me to report on.

They don't want me to go home this weekend, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and say, we're still in that House for the fourth day and nothing is breaking; we can't break them down — we can't break them down. But I sincerely say to everyone, before we come back here on Monday, I ask the House Leader, the Premier of this province, and the Deputy Premier, the member from Churchill Downs, I ask them to sincerely put their minds to work on what common decency and what morality is in this province. Because what you're legislating and what you're asking to do is even immoral. It's absolutely immoral.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Canora, I ask him again, and I ask the member from Swift Current, who are very . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. It now being 1 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 1 p.m.