

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Of farmers and citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to allow the 1991 GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) program to stand for this year.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much. It gives me pleasure, Mr. Speaker to introduce to members of the Assembly someone I think we all know, the president of the SGEU (Saskatchewan Government Employees Union). George Rosenau was re-elected — we'll all appreciate the value of this — was re-elected about three weeks ago I think, if my time is correct.

Government is a partnership between those in executive branch and the many workers who strive with diligence and competence to provide services to the public. Mr. Rosenau is the duly elected spokesman of those people, and I'm sure we'll all want to take a moment to congratulate him.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce an individual who is with Mr. Rosenau in the Speaker's gallery. This individual is Pat Gallagher who is director of membership services with Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union. And I look forward to meeting with Ms. Gallagher and Mr. Rosenau after question period to discuss matters of mutual concern. So please give her a warm welcome, as well.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature five members of my constituency which they are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. They are Daniel and Zoria Poilievre and their children Joanna, David, and Christina. I hope they have a pleasant day in Regina and I ask all the members of the legislature to welcome them. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Ms. Stanger: — Mr. Speaker, as member of the Constitutional Committee I rise today to talk about a unity project that is being undertaken by malls all across Canada, and their retailers. Canadians will be asked to participate in a national grass roots movement and

demonstrate their desire to keep Quebec within Confederation. They will do so by filling out a friendship card available through shopping centres across the nation. These cards will be stuffed into mail-bags and picked up at a designated time.

In early August they will begin to gather these bags in Victoria, B.C. (British Columbia), St. John's, Newfoundland and shopping centres. They will be picked up along the Trans-Canada Highway to Quebec. In each major city, smaller trucks will gather the city's mail-bags and add them to the tractor-trailers.

The collection of friendship cards at each pick-up point is an essential part of the media promotion to generate growing awareness of the program amongst all Canadians, but especially political leaders and Quebecers. The collection route will be timed to reach Quebec City in late August while the National Assembly is in the process of debating the referendum issue.

The single mission is to deliver one friendship card to each single household in the province of Quebec — to dramatically reach out to the people of Quebec and make it clear to them that we believe we belong together.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to announce today that the Pearl Group of companies has chosen Melfort as the site for a processing plant that will utilize cereal grain and straw as feedstock to produce ETBE and a number of other products. The plant will employ approximately 32 people and will not be reliant on any government aid.

The good news for Melfort does not end here. Caldwell Power Drill of San Bernardino, California is also planning on relocating to Melfort pending the successful sale of a community bond issue. It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the owners of this company have already bought houses in Melfort indicating their optimism in the relocation.

Mr. Speaker, these developments in Melfort are further proof of the economic revival taking place in this province. Furthermore, it vindicates this government's position that the private sector does not need to be enticed with lavish grants and government loan guarantees.

These companies know a good thing when they see it, and that is a confident province populated with resourceful people. Mr. Speaker, these companies are seeing the initiatives and the chances in Saskatchewan — the opportunities — and they are taking it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Thomson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On July 8, the Minister of Economic Development announced an enhanced Destination Saskatchewan tourism program.

Mr. Speaker, tourism is one of the mainstays of our

provincial economy. It generates roughly \$780 million in revenues each year. It employs almost 16,000 people directly and another 5,600 indirectly.

Mr. Speaker, there are four components to the new Destination Saskatchewan program. First is the travel-generator program. For your information, we define a travel-generator as a tourism project or activity that has the potential of attracting significant numbers of tourists from outside the province.

This program will provide financial assistance for major new tourism initiatives. There will also be a marketing development component which will provide support for out-of-province marketing of events, bidding support for conventions, and the development and marketing of inbound tour packages.

Thirdly, a tourism association component will give operational and marketing support for key non-profit tourism groups. Fourthly, the planning and research component will provide assistance for tourism project, feasibility studies, market research, and destination area planning.

Mr. Speaker, earlier changes made to the provincial tourism strategy are already shown impressive results. In the first five months of this year, inquiries at Tourism Saskatchewan . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Crofford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently had the opportunity, along with a lot of other colleagues here, to attend a gathering at SaskEnergy, and became aware that SaskEnergy has developed a unique relationship with Energy & Chemical Workers Union members and management employees.

The joint dialogue process is a co-operative venture that empowers SaskEnergy employees to discuss and resolve issues and problems. Working towards common goals and objectives, this process is an alternative to the traditional confrontational style of union-management relations.

SaskEnergy's joint dialogue committee is responsible for a number of achievements, including the improvement of gas service men training program, the employee development program, the re-establishment of employee orientation seminars, and the corporate mission statement, and participating in the business process review.

This notable co-operative venture has gained international recognition. Recently an Australian delegation of union and management visited Saskatchewan on a fact-finding mission to understand the workings of the joint dialogue process.

And I wish to commend SaskEnergy union and management employees for their very positive contributions to service delivery in the economy through

these innovations, and also just to say that the atmosphere in that enterprise was very positive and it was enjoyable visiting with them. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we witnessed perhaps the greatest outrage against the democratic functioning of this Assembly in history. What is happening should be clearly, clearly reflected. We have a government bent on imposing a unilateral rule change with the force of closure to achieve passage of a Bill that eliminates fundamental rights under the common law, Mr. Speaker.

Democracy is a fragile thing. It rests not on a firmament of indestructible law but on a thread of trust that those who hold power in the name of the people will wield that power with a heavy awareness of the need, the absolute commandment, not to stray from the democratic process. Today that trust is broken; that thread is snapped. The bottom line in this series of debates is the government's decision that it will remove the legal rights of Saskatchewan people, and if it needs to trample the democratic institutions of the people in the process, so be it.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a sad day for Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cline: — Mr. Speaker, we're learning in Saskatchewan that economic development does not mean risking a lot of taxpayers' money in large corporate megaprojects. It means taking Saskatchewan talents and resources and building from our strengths.

And I want to relate to the House an example of prairie ingenuity going on in my home city of Saskatoon. Select Millwork has been hit by the recession in the construction industry but to cope the company has used ingenuity, necessity, and market demand to bring to life a new creation. Select Millwork is now leading the way in the manufacture of a new-age economical casket. Originally designed by an Alvena company that went into bankruptcy, Select was confident they could produce and market the contemporary design successfully.

These coffins are of a lacquered finish and available in white, black, or green with woodgrain highlights. Select Millwork has recently sold 20 of the new coffins and expect to sell between 30 and 60 each month.

The best part, Mr. Speaker, is that this company has embarked on this innovative venture without any government hand-outs. And local business like this, Mr. Speaker, gives us all confidence that we will indeed rebuild our economy. And this is good news for the opposition . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to GRIP

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, over the past few months this province's people have been subjected to a very sad and hurtful litany of NDP (New Democratic Party) government mistakes, including tax increases, pension plan cuts, changes for diabetics, hospital and school closures. But, Mr. Speaker, the worst mistake is the fact that this government believes it has total licence to change people's lives retroactively and without consultation.

Will the Minister of Agriculture tell this House why it is he has refused to compromise. Why does he stubbornly and without regard to farmers' needs, refuse to remove the retroactive parts of the GRIP legislation and let farmers have their day in court to prove whether the government is right or wrong once and for all?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the clauses of the Bill will become apparent to the members opposite when they allow it to be introduced, and we will have adequate time to discuss it then. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, the open and accountable government and arrogance is a joke in the country. And, Mr. Speaker, I want the members of this Assembly to understand that and the people opposite to understand that.

They're using their majority to strip the opposition of its rights, and by virtue of this fact are stripping farmers of their rights. They are not consulting with farmers. They are taking them to court. They are not helping farmers. They are throwing them off their land. They are not telling the farmers the truth; in fact they are legislating a lie, Mr. Speaker. Once again . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member for Morse knows full well that that is unparliamentary, and I ask him to withdraw the word, legislating a lie.

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw. Once again, Mr. Minister, why are you so afraid of farmers? Why won't you let them have their day in court? Why won't you pull all together your retroactive parts in the legislation, in exchange for the opposition co-operation on the Rules Committee, to have something to date you have so far arrogantly refused.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is fully aware that the process of change to the farm legislation that began with a hurriedly put-together collection of items into a Bill that didn't result in a federal-provincial agreement last year until September 19, after most people's crops were in the bin, that our review of that very flawed program began on the basis of legislation introduced by your government with a committee appointed for the most part by your government, that the report that came forward I'm sure is

very much like a report that would come forward in any case, identifying the serious weaknesses in the old program and weaknesses that many analysts have identified and the changes about which they concurred.

The bottom line on agricultural support in Saskatchewan is that the programs that the members opposite engaged in with the federal government in terms of taking on of the province responsibility and allowing farmers to be ravaged by the costs of programs they cannot afford, simply has put agriculture in very tough straits here.

And I ask the members opposite to stop their negative bickering and get together with us in encouraging the federal government to offer the third-line programming that every government in Canada agrees was offered by the federal government. And you know that as well, and now you refuse to support.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, this government's arrogance is only outdone by its stubbornness. You won't compromise. You won't let farmers have their day in court. In fact, you and your colleagues are afraid to meet with them. Rural people are ashamed of your ministers, Mr. Premier. They're afraid of them and they're ashamed of them.

Rural people met in SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) meetings, they've had livestock regional meetings, and you would rather fly over the drought areas than go down there and visit with them. And to top it all off, your Crop Insurance minister said: who says Crop Insurance was intended to save farmers in the first place . . . and Crop Insurance.

My question to you, Mr. Minister, is this: will the Minister of Agriculture not today admit he has totally failed the farmers? He has lost their confidence and any respect he might have had. Mr. Minister, will you tell the farmers you are wrong, or will you continue your stubborn and arrogant way and keep this retroactive, regressive GRIP legislation on the Table?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite makes obviously as many statements about which he has no knowledge as they engaged in governing without any knowledge for the last 10 years.

The fact is that a good chunk of the agricultural caucus drove through, meeting with communities, across the southern part of the province. The only thing that was not apparent to the members with whom we spoke was where the members of the constituencies that supposedly are elected there were to deal with these farm programs and to deal with the crisis with respect to the federal responsibility on this matter. I think you have your own taxpayers to answer and your own constituencies for not being there and dealing with their issues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, I met with representatives

of the hog board from various parts of the province yesterday and they told me this minister isn't worth his salt. If he would have some salt in his . . . and jam, he would reinstate some of the programs that he cut and sawed off.

I want to ask the minister this question: is there any compromise the Minister of Agriculture would accept which would allow this House again to function normally, or be so hidebound by his blind ambition that he will, like a deaf and dumb mule, pack this regressive GRIP program off into the sunset no matter how many farmers he loses in the process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I've been in this business long enough to realize that sometimes, sometimes minds with little else to occupy them, cannot construct much more of a question than that. But there's very little in that question that deserves a response.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to try and get through to the minister one more time. Your Premier professes compromise on the constitution, on the constitution of our country. He says compromise is the way to go. Would you compromise some of the things, given opportunity, for the people of the province of Saskatchewan under the GRIP legislation, to allow them the opportunity to choose between '91 and '92 GRIP? Would you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, if he were to analyse honestly the reality of farm programming when you would realize that the question he asks is one that couldn't be accomplished if he wanted it to be. The fact is that the 1992 GRIP program is based on advice from producers that there were serious flaws in the old one and that the . . . running side-by-side programs is an option that is only real in the political . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. There was very little interruption when the member asked his question and I ask the members to please extend the same courtesy to the minister in answering the question. Order!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — The only place in which a side-by-side option has any reality is in the dream world of the politics of the members opposite. The fact is that the program is in place. It represents the advice that producers gave. It recognizes clearly — and this government has never denied that — that the program that was begun by the members opposite last year and foisted on people across Canada, which cost governments and producers too much, is one that needs serious redress. And we, I want to tell you, have raised with the federal government at the agriculture ministers' meeting the cost-sharing question, the third-line triggering question that you people have denied to support, and the other issues about making a program out of this that is useful for farmers and stabilizing to the industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Mr. Speaker, our phone in our caucus office and my constituency office and my personal office keep ringing off the hook from all over the province. Keep those bells ringing, Mr. Speaker. They say to you, Mr. Minister, they say keep those bells ringing because they don't want the changes to the GRIP program that you've introduced.

My question to you is this — and I've got them from all your rural constituencies, if you want to know. I could name them and I did in debate — my question is this: will you not prove the people of this province are wrong when they tell us your government has absolutely no regard for democratic rights and let the farmers have their day in court without the interference of your retroactive legislation? Will you allow them to do that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I think if the member opposite were to speak with absolute integrity, he would possibly recognize that the ringing that is happening in his head was there long before anybody's telephone started ringing.

There is a general recognition that we need to get on with implementing the farm program so farmers know what they're doing. There is a general recognition that farmers need more income support. We need the support of the federal government to provide the third line of defence that was promised and that your leader recognizes because he sat at the federal-provincial table along with the other ministers who recognize that the provinces were promised third line of defence across Canada.

If you want to sit there now and deny it and deny that kind of support, go ahead. But don't pretend to the people of Saskatchewan. . .

The Speaker: — Order.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I enter this debater to direct a specific question to the Deputy Premier. The Minister of Agriculture just said that it was a dream, that there was problems. Let me say . . . preface to my question, Mr. Minister. There is, Mr. Deputy Premier, an agricultural crisis, and that's not a dream. There is a drought, serious drought in parts of the province, and that's not a dream. There is a court case before the people of Saskatchewan today on agriculture and GRIP, and that's not a dream. And there are rule changes in this legislature that are historic, and that's not a dream.

In that evidence, Mr. Deputy Premier, realizing the plight of rural Saskatchewan people and the survival of democracy in this Legislative Assembly, would not you respect the rights of individuals and the public process and let the Minister of Agriculture introduce his legislation without the retroactive nature, so that in fact people can have their day in court, so that we know that there is respect for democracy at a time of crisis on two

fronts in this province, Mr. Deputy Premier.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about a Bill that he will not allow to proceed to the proper forum for its debate, and then on the other hand talks about appropriate democratic process. Mr. Speaker, I simply ask the members opposite to be somewhat consistent in their actions and their words.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — I would go right to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. The NDP censorship has put a stranglehold on free speech and debate. It will lead to forced changes in the fundamental element of Saskatchewan's charter and charter of rights.

The Premier of the province of Saskatchewan has paraded in front of the television cameras his defence of democracy and compromise. And when you're looking at the constitution, the Premier of Saskatchewan says, well we'll be co-operative and we'll compromise. Yet when it comes down to changing rules in Saskatchewan's legislature, the NDP act like tyrants.

I ask the NDP Premier: will you treat Saskatchewan people and this Legislative Assembly with the same respect that you treat changes in the constitution, and have co-operation and consultation and allow people to go through the democratic process like we encourage across the country?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Leader of the Opposition, we have been seeking to give you and your opposition the opportunity to deal with resolutions and government business, and you have sought all manner of means to avoid that.

Last night, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, you adjourned . . . for instance you adjourned this House for five hours. And if there's any more charitable reason than the fact you wanted to go watch a ball game, I'd like to hear it from you. That's irresponsible, and that can't continue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking here today about the cowardly acts of a large majority government. If I go to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, the NDP Premier . . . and they know that we have offered many compromises to look at 1991 GRIP and 1992 GRIP. Let the farmers have their day in court. Look at ways that we can put some money in the hands of farmers.

And I quote the P.A. (Prince Albert) *Herald*, of February 23, 1991, simply says this, and I say this in front of the NDP Premier: tax increases are not needed to pay for GRIP and NISA (net income stabilization account) program, says NDP leader, Roy Romanow. End of quote. Now they hide and won't let the farmers talk about their insurance program.

My question to the NDP Premier in the province of Saskatchewan: are you more interested in saving the career of a Minister of Agriculture who obviously made a mistake, or are you more interested in the public and in the farmers of Saskatchewan who are facing a crisis of historic proportions? Will you stick up for the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — The question, Mr. Speaker, was two part, and I shall try to deal with it briefly. We sought compromise with your party. We thought last week we had it. And just about the time we were ready to conclude an agreement, you . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order! On both sides. Let's have order and let the minister be able to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Just about the time we were to conclude an agreement with your designated representatives, you made us an offer you knew we couldn't accept, and it was so designed. We have sought compromise with you; it is apparent you don't want it. It is apparent, for some reason or other, you want to continue to obstruct this legislature *ad nauseum*. And the public have told us in the clearest terms that this must come to an end, and that the government business must go on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker I have to read on the record to the people of Saskatchewan, the direct quotes of the NDP Leader when he stood in this position. Because we're talking about, one, afraid of GRIP legislation and the people and the courts and the farmers, and now changing rules so that you can't get at it.

And I quote. This is the NDP Leader saying here about changes in the rules:

What new-found Democrats are these, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What new-found democracy is this? What kind of charade is this? What kind of an unprecedented action it is for these people to bring forward a motion for rules changes without consultation . . .

End of quote from the NDP Leader.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, to the NDP Leader: in the light of the fact that you can't face farmers and in the light of the fact you must force these rule changes, won't you now allow the people of Saskatchewan to talk in a general sense about this Legislative Assembly and let the Agriculture Committee and members of the back bench go out and talk to people about GRIP before you bring forward this legislation on the rules in this Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Premier, it seems necessary to remind you . . . it seems necessary to remind the former premier that we were prepared to send the motion on bell-ringing back to the committee if you'd let us

introduce the Bill without ringing the bells. We were encouraged in that view by your chosen representatives. However, as soon as we got to conclude an agreement, you pulled it. It is apparent, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, you want to obstruct the work of this legislature and the public of Saskatchewan have said that the work of this government must go on.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, it's abundantly clear that the NDP Premier with a very large majority is prepared to keep farmers from having their day in court. The NDP Premier is prepared to unilaterally change the rules in this Legislative Assembly. The NDP Premier is prepared to hide his ministers from the public. The NDP Premier is prepared to say, what we said before wasn't true; we've changed our mind, and say something else, which would be called hypocritical in any man's language. The NDP Premier, Mr. Speaker, is prepared to hide in this . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order. Will the members please quit interrupting. And I've asked the Leader of the Opposition, he's had ample time now, to please put his question.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, I have a question, and I'll put forward this in this dark day in Saskatchewan legislature, under the circumstances of these terribly difficult rules. Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the farmers can't go to court and the government won't respond, and in light of the fact that the NDP . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I've asked the Leader of the Opposition to put his question. Order. I will determine if there will be a next question. Leader of the Opposition, will you please put your question.

Mr. Devine: — Mr. Speaker, we have put question and question and question to this Legislative Assembly and to the deputy and to the NDP Premier. I really see no point in continuing this, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Order, order.

The division bells rang from 2:05 until 5 p.m.

The Speaker: — It being 5 p.m. and the time of daily adjournment having been reached the adjournment motion now lapses. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.