

The Assembly met at 1:30 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Sonntag: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to the rest of the Assembly, a friend of mine in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and his family. He was instrumental in me being here, who worked very hard for me. That may not meet with unanimous popularity across the province, but I would like to introduce you to them. Terry Paley, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and his wife Susan, and their son Vogeson and the newest addition, Bronwyn Paley. If all would join me in welcoming them here today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the other members of the legislature, a young exchange student from France. Mr. Toulemonde Amaury is from the region of Chapelle d'Armentière in France. He's here, as I say, on an exchange program. He's living at the farm of Harry J. and Donette Elder in Fillmore, Saskatchewan.

M. le Président, je veux vous présenter à toi et à tous les députés de la législature, un jeune étudiant de la France, M. Toulemonde Amaury. Il est ici sur un programme d'échange et il demeure présentement à la ferme de M. Harry J. et Donette Elder de Fillmore.

Je voudrais demander à tous les députés, et à toi, M. le Président, de l'accueillir chaleureusement. Merci.

(Translation: I ask all the hon. members, and you, Mr. Speaker, to warmly welcome him. Thank you.)

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, it is indeed my pleasure to introduce Norman MacAuley and Hettie MacAuley from . . . they're now living in Kelowna B.C. (British Columbia), Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, because Mr. MacAuley was the member for the constituency of Cumberland from 1975 to 1982. And he did a tremendous job, you know, for the people in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I wish all members to welcome him to the legislature today.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you, sir, and to all the members of the Legislative Assembly a very distinguished delegation and group of visitors to the province of Saskatchewan. They are seated, sir, in the Speaker's gallery ahead of you.

I will ask the members that I introduce to please stand as I introduce them and I hope that my pronunciation does do reasonably close justice to their importance and to their beings.

They are, Mr. Speaker, first of all His Excellency, Mr. Michio Mizoguchi, and Mrs. Mizoguchi, the ambassador of Japan to Canada, and the spouse of the ambassador.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — In addition we have Mr. Yuzuki Kaku, the Consul General of Japan in Winnipeg, and his wife, spouse as well.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — We have the deputy Consul General of Japan in Winnipeg, Mr. Kenichi Kudo.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — And as well, Mr. Yoshiko Kamo, the first secretary at the Chinese Embassy.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Now, Mr. Speaker and members of the House, this is the ambassador's first visit to the province of Saskatchewan. And while in this province he is going to meet with the Lieutenant Governor, myself, various ministers of the provincial government and the mayor of the city of Regina.

I think all of the people of the province of Saskatchewan know the importance of Japan to, not only this province, but to Canada and to the world economic situation. We welcome them to this province. We look forward to our various discussions and hope that they turn out to be mutually beneficial, both to them and to us. And we say to the ambassador and to his wife, come back again soon.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition it gives me great pleasure in joining with the Premier in welcoming the ambassador and his party to our legislature and our province.

We have long-standing relationships with Japan, and Japan certainly is a very important partner of many of Saskatchewan's people in their everyday endeavours. And we join in with the Premier in welcoming you, sir, and hope that your stay here is indeed an enjoyable one.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Lorje: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce three people to this House who perhaps are not as illustrious and distinguished as the delegation from Japan, but are certainly very important to me.

I would like to introduce my brother John Wilkening here from Calgary with two of his children, Jason and Cindy. They are former Saskatchewanians who have chosen to spend part of their vacation in this province and hopefully to spend a lot of money here as well.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Bradley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the legislature, a special person in my life who's sitting in the west gallery, my daughter Paula, who will be attending figure-skating school here in Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I want to additionally to the delegation . . . the welcomes that have been extended to the delegation with His Excellency the ambassador from Japan. Welcome, Mr. Art Wakabayashi and Mrs. Wakabayashi who are distinguished civil servants in Saskatchewan and in Canada. And I believe the title he now holds is Honorary Consul General — close? And I welcome him to the House and ask others to join me in welcoming him.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Mr. Draper: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to address a serious topic, and that is cross-border shopping. It is estimated that in Saskatchewan alone, 3,800 jobs were lost to cross-border shopping last year. Needless to say, these job losses have a very detrimental effect on our economy and the general welfare of our community.

This is particularly hard on the economies of Coronach, Rockglen, and Assiniboia, which are on the border of United States in my own particular constituency.

However, Mr. Speaker, sir, I am pleased to announce that cross-border shopping seems to be on the decline. Same-day trips from Saskatchewan to the U.S. (United States) for the month of May decreased 3.2 per cent from the previous year.

Also, it is encouraging to see that Regina retailers are coming together to promote a "Paid in Saskatchewan, Stays in Saskatchewan" campaign . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Draper: — . . . to encourage residents to spend their monies at home. Mr. Speaker, I applaud our retailers for taking this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we are all aware of the frustration consumers feel over taxes and high prices, but the solution does not lie in crossing the border. That is a cop-out. We must remember the spirit of community and co-operation and work together to build a prosperous Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knezacek: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On July 14 the Minister of Education released a report entitled *Into the Classroom: A Review of Directions in Practice*. This report details the progress being made in carrying out education reforms in Saskatchewan kindergarten to grade

12 schools.

I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that the report found a sincere commitment among Saskatchewan educators for the need for reform. There was also consensus that significant progress has already been made in the improvement of schools. New courses have been developed, learning opportunities have become more accessible, and progress is being made in meeting special needs.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to note that the Minister of Education has supported the recommendations of *Into the Classroom* and has stated that Saskatchewan Education will co-operate with the major stakeholders to develop a plan for implementation.

Mr. Speaker, these are times of rapidly changing social and economic conditions. This fact makes the work of schools even more important and challenging. *Into the Classroom* will go a long way towards meeting this challenge. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Scott: — Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to provide an update on one of North America's best-known endangered species. For decades, Saskatchewan has played a key role in bringing the whooping crane back from the brink of extinction. Individuals such as the late Fred Bard, former director of the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, led a continent-wide struggle to salvage these regal birds from oblivion.

In 1941, there was only 21 whooping cranes in the world, and many people figured they would be doomed like the passenger pigeon. During the past 50 years, the population has painfully and gradually increased to over 200 birds. The most recent report from Wood Buffalo National Park is that a record number of 40 nests were located this spring. As of late June a remarkable number of 35 chicks were surviving. Even if half these chicks survive to make the fall migration south to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, North America's tallest bird will have had a banner year.

The survival and recovery of the whooping crane proves that conservation efforts can produce positive results. At the same time, we see that such efforts take decades for results to be realized. It is far better for us to manage, use wisely, and protect all of our natural resources before they are in danger of disappearing. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's cause for cautious optimism as we look at the crop report for the province. Although we hear of rained-out vacations, farmers are pleased to see the life-blood of their crops. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it seems that it has rained in all the right places over the past week.

There has been a significant improvement in the shape of our crops over the past week, and that's cause for celebration.

Although the crops began without much soil moisture, the cooler-than-average conditions . . . we have seen the gradual greening of our fields, the kind of greening that lifts the spirits and brings a strong sense of renewal and the satisfaction of a job well done.

The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool report said over two-thirds of the wheat and barley crops are headed out and almost 20 per cent of the oat crop is headed. For durum, it's almost 60 per cent. For flax, 30 per cent of the crop has reached a flowering stage and for canola, over two-thirds of the crop has reached a flowering stage.

Although we could always use more rain, some areas of the province have received 20 to 30 millimetres recently and according to the weather report we can expect more. And with more rain comes the possibility of a good crop for Saskatchewan farmers this year.

In the face of such optimism, let's get on with the business of the House, pass the necessary farm legislation to ensure farmers . . .

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm delighted to report a turn around putting STC (Saskatchewan Transportation Company) tours and charters on the road again.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, the former administration had deliberately caused STC to be priced out of the market. Buses sat idle and of course STC employees lacked work. STC had idle equipment and the travelling public were directed away from STC charters and tours.

The new president, Peter Glendinning, set up a tours and charters committee including management, mechanics, cleaners, and drivers. This inclusive committee arrived at a tours and charters program, including a charter rate, that contributes positively to the overall revenues of STC and prices STC into the market again. The STC board of directors approved.

This allows the travelling public to now use the quality personnel and equipment of STC at competitive rates. The result: buses are being utilized; people are being employed; STC is generating much-needed revenue; the travelling public can now use our provincial bus company. Charters are heavily booked this summer; fall and winter charters are being booked now. People are again welcome to use STC because of the new attitude best summed up with "on the road again".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave to introduce some guests.

The Speaker: — If the member would wait until we're finished with statements by members, and then if she got

up . . . Are there any further statements by members?

If not, I recognize the member from Saskatoon Broadway.

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The minister has to add, does the member have leave?

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Atkinson: — I'd like to thank my colleagues for giving me leave. I see that my guests have just arrived in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to all members of the legislature two women that are in Saskatchewan who are visiting us from Nicaragua. These women are representatives of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers of Nicaragua and they have been involved in a linkage program between farm women and ranchers in Nicaragua and the National farm union women here in Saskatchewan. I would like to introduce Martha Valle and Elsa Amador. These two women are very active in farming and ranching in the country of Nicaragua. They are here to visit Saskatchewan and see what kind of farming we do.

As well they're accompanied by Shannon Storey, a farm woman from Perdue, and their interpreter who I'm afraid I don't know her name. But she's from the city of Saskatoon.

We are going to be meeting with this delegation of women after question period. I know that they have much to teach us and I welcome you to the legislature, and we'll see you at 2:30.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Lorje: — With leave, Mr. Speaker, also to welcome the delegation from Nicaragua.

Leave granted.

Ms. Lorje: — Thank you. I would like to join my colleague in welcoming them and to comment very positively on the kind of courtesy and hospitality that was extended to me when I travelled in Nicaragua in 1989 as part of the Saskatchewan international labour program.

People representing unions such as these women here today were very courteous to me while I was there, and I hope that all Saskatchewan people will be able to show them the same kind of courtesy and learning opportunities as I experienced. Welcome to Canada and to Saskatchewan.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Negotiations on Rules Change

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Acting House Leader. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House the Acting House Leader, who's been forced to replace his colleague, the new-found Democrat — who was recently found in New York attending the Democratic convention at taxpayers' expense, I might add — well this fellow said that the NDP (New Democratic Party) was willing to trade bell-ringing for the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) legislation.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, he was trying to blackmail the opposition into giving up on farmers in return for keeping the bell-ringing tool, a totally unacceptable attempt to worm their way out of this mess that the NDP have created.

Mr. Minister, is this the last word from the government? Is this the last word from the NDP? Is it going to be that blackmail is the only answer that they have left for us?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer the question to say to the members of the House that it is well known by every one of us that there have been endless meetings, endless propositions and counter-propositions, all to no avail.

Since the opposition's point of view is that the issues of a bell-ringing motion and their view on GRIP are inextricably linked; that being the case they shall always be inextricably linked whether now or 60 days from now or whatever the time frame is now.

It seems as though we have reached an impasse. The impasse in these circumstances has to be resolved, as it is in a democracy, by a majority vote. And we would want the members of this legislature to exercise their individual best judgement to exercise the vote at the appropriate time on this matter.

People want us to get on with the government business. They want us to advance the government agenda. They do not want us to be subjected to feelings of revenge or any other motivations which may be existing out there. They want us to do the job.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad that the Premier has seen fit to get into this debate. Mr. Speaker, the Acting House Leader and now the Premier is making as many errors talking about the process as the Agriculture minister is making in trying to manipulate 60,000 farmers through the court process. The NDP is simply saying, it's either my way or the highway — and gravel ones at that, Mr. Speaker. And even that policy is now being changed.

But, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: does the government have any formal compromise to make which would help us to get this place back to normal? Mr. Speaker, everyone, including yourself I now believe, has seen the

exchange of correspondence and knows that the government has never put any compromise in writing — never. Will you do that, Mr. Premier? Will you instruct your Deputy House Leader to put it in writing because that is the only way that we will . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. I think you've asked your question. Let the Premier respond. If you have another question, ask it later.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member again for the question, and I repeat what I said earlier to him. The hon. member will know that in various discussions, even as late as Friday last, dealing with the Acting House Leader or at least the Deputy Leader, the member from Thunder Creek, and yourself, sir, from Rosthern, as I'm advised, we were very close to a settlement.

That proposition . . . I hear members yelling opposite: you never put it, we don't buy it, we don't accept it. I mean, again this is part of our problem. They do it in open Chamber. It is impossible to get a firm offer from the opposition members opposite. Verbal positions are buried in written positions; written positions are then buried subsequently.

I think the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that we must admit that the government does not believe that bell-ringing and the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) Bill are inextricably linked, and the opposition does believe . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order, order. I want to ask the member from Wilkie not to keep on interrupting. There were no interruptions when his colleague asked a question, and I expect the same courtesy from you, sir.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you. I'll just wrap up by saying that this is the position. There's the fundamental impasse. And the fundamental impasse is that the people opposite simply do not like what is being, they think, proposed for GRIP. They have a right to do that, but they do not have a right to bring democracy to its knees. People have elected only a few short months ago a new government with a new agenda, and we intend to pursue it.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Directly to the Premier. Mr. Premier, the government's budget, your budget, is tearing apart at the seams. As the public and your own back-benchers can tell you, the government has made all the wrong decisions.

Mr. Premier, is it so important to the NDP to take millions of dollars out of farmers' pockets that you, sir, are quite willing to abuse the legislature, abuse the judicial process, abuse the opposition, and abuse farmers in order to blackmail their way to their own conclusion? Why are you so afraid to compromise? Are you afraid that it might actually help farmers?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, it is exactly this last

kind of question which I think illustrates the dilemma that the Conservative opposition has placed itself in — the dilemma of total incredibility. Listen to the last question: are you so afraid to help out the farmers of Saskatchewan?

Now whether we are ideologically apart, as we are in a number of issues, that kind of a question must surely lack any credibility. How can any political party of any ideology want to purposely hurt the farmers? But there are differences of policy, differences between your version of GRIP and our GRIP, I admit. You may not like it. But the reality is we campaigned on it; we were elected on it. And we intend to introduce the amendments and the legislation based on that.

You people do not like that, and you will use every tactic available to you in order to halt the proceedings of this legislature to an end. Don't look to us for compromise. We have offered compromise after compromise. Let's acknowledge the fact that this is an area where we agree to disagree.

I would ask you to drop your motivation of revenge for what you think we did to you during the SaskEnergy debate, drop that motivation, get on with the idea of governance, and get on with the business of dealing with the people's business, which is exactly what the people everywhere in the province of Saskatchewan want.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a new question to the Premier. No, Mr. Premier, our motivation is behind us and we will not drop our attempt to help the farmers and the taxpayers of this province.

You say, am I right in criticizing you for what you are doing to the farmers, that we are politically motivated. Sir, this is what you've been doing to farmers over the last couple of months — gasoline increase, 3 cents a litre; power bills have gone up; gasoline bills have gone up; telephone has gone up; FeedGAP (feed grain adjustment program) has been eliminated; cash advance has been eliminated; E&H (education and health) tax from 7 to 8 per cent; GST (goods and services tax) is not now being refundable to farmers because you didn't harmonize; and if we're lucky enough to make a little bit of money, now you've got 10 per cent on the personal income tax increase . . . 10 per cent personal income tax increase. And you are saying that you are for the farmers? How do you square that, Mr. Premier?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — You see, Mr. Speaker, both by tone and substance the dilemma in which the Conservative opposition finds itself. The question of bell-ringing is linked now not only to GRIP, but this last question, to a whole list of perceived abuses in the minds of the opposition. And a list which I am sure with just a little bit of imagination, the hon. members opposite could expand for ever. Of course it's a false list, but none the less it is a list.

Under those circumstances, it is clear to any responsible person, even the Liberal Party leader, that it is impossible

to resolve this matter through negotiation because they link bell-ringing to this long list of perceived abuses. In this circumstances, that amounts to an abuse of the democratic process under the legislative session.

In these circumstances one can only conclude, sir, that you and your leader, the former premier, are motivated by revenge by what you think we did to you during the SaskEnergy debate. And far from standing up for the farmers of Saskatchewan, you are standing up — I'm sorry to say this — for some sense of petty feeling of revenge.

I tell you, hon. member, you're not going to get away with it because we got elected on changes which are being accepted by the people of Saskatchewan. There is a change in government. Please, let's understand that we cannot agree on everything — this happens to be one of the issues — and the people want you to get to work. Get on with dealing with the business of this province and the province of Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's betrayal of the electors is almost complete. The final betrayal will play itself out in the next couple of days. You were elected, Mr. Premier, because you said you had a better way, that you would do more for less. I just had a long litany of things that you have done for this province, Mr. Premier, and I suggest what you are doing is wreaking rural revenge on Saskatchewan for your '82 and '86 defeat.

But, Mr. Speaker, this government is not interested in democracy. It does not care about the process. And the Premier has admitted it just publicly. It cares not for the rights of farmers or the rights of individuals to have their day in court. And louder than the bells that are ringing in these halls are the bells that are ringing in our offices right now saying and pleading with us to keep our stand.

Mr. Premier, we must and we will stand by farmers, and we will stand by the taxpayers . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Does the member have a question? I'd like him to put his question, please.

Mr. Neudorf: — We will stand by the taxpayers and the farmers of this province. I guarantee you that. No, Mr. Speaker, I do not have any further questions. We're not getting any answers. I move this House now adjourn.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before we call in the members, I have a fairly lengthy statement that I wish to make today.

Once again, during this session . . .

An Hon. Member: — No, no. You can't do it like this. Call in the members.

The Speaker: — Okay. All those in favour of the motion of adjournment please say aye. All those opposed to the motion please say no.

All right, next order of business.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on Bell-Ringing Situation

The Speaker: — Before we call in the members, I have a statement that I wish to make. It's a fairly lengthy statement, I hope members bear with me.

Once again during this session, the proceedings of this Assembly are threatened by the protracted ringing of division bells. Once again, I am forced by circumstances to intervene in what I believe to be the best interest of this Assembly. I do not take this responsibility lightly, but as I have stated before, my primary responsibility as Speaker is to support the parliamentary process.

In the time since my ruling of June 29, members have associated the issue of bells with the disposition of the GRIP Bill. Events have forced me to deal primarily with the bells, but I intend to allow further opportunity for negotiations on the GRIP dispute.

On Tuesday, the opposition obliged the bells to ring for almost five and a half hours until the House adjourned at 10:30 p.m. Yesterday, the bells rang for nearly 3 hours, again until the end of the sitting day when the motion to adjourn the House, moved by the Leader of the Opposition, lapsed. And today once more the opposition has shown its apparent readiness to ring the division bells.

On these occasions it was evident that the opposition objected to the possible concurrence of the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures which contains a recommendation to limit the duration of bells for recorded divisions. They were spurred on Tuesday when the government's Deputy House Leader gave oral notice of closure indicating the intention of the government to conclude the debate on the committee report.

For the benefit of the public, I should mention that the use of closure is allowed under rule 34 of the Assembly rules.

Debate on this report was expected to be called for final debate yesterday. When the item was to be called under orders of the day, it was reasonable to anticipate that the motion for closure would have been proposed and that upon adoption the debate on the second report would be concluded and decided no later than 1 a.m. Thursday morning in accordance with the provisions of rule 34.

This did not happen, however, because a motion to adjourn the House was moved during question period. Yesterday the opposition leader made it abundantly evident that he and his party object strenuously to the policies of the government and that they would take whatever measures were available to them to make their protest effective.

By forcing the division bells to ring all day on the motion to adjourn, the House was prevented from transacting any business the whole day. Now today the same tactic is being used. The goal again is to prevent the House from reaching orders of the day and thus deny an opportunity

for the government to move closure on debate of the second report.

In my ruling on June 29 when the bells on the vote on the GRIP Bill were suspended, I indicated that it was the responsibility of members, through the Rules Committee and the House, to change the rules to limit bell-ringing.

Subsequent to that ruling, the normal rule change process was followed. The committee met three times and reported its recommendations to the House. That report has been debated at length. The only steps remaining to complete the process are to conclude the debate and hold the vote.

Members on both sides of the Assembly are in agreement that it is necessary to limit the length that the division bells may ring during a vote. But at the same time, some members are saying that the use of prolonged bell-ringing is justifiable in certain instances to prevent the government from introducing, and the House from passing, a particular piece of legislation that some members view as illegitimate or pernicious. This position implies that the end justifies the means.

As Speaker, my responsibility is limited to the means only, which is the parliamentary process. It is not my role to judge whether the end sought by the government is good or bad; justifiable or insupportable. At the same time I wish to point out that other parliamentary procedures remain available to members to fight the ends sought by government.

It is fundamentally important that the Speaker adheres strictly to a procedural point of view and seek to maintain the balance between the need of the majority to reach decisions and the need of the minority to be heard. This is a basic characteristic of any deliberating body, and as Speaker I am bound in duty to maintain this balance to the greatest extent possible as allowed by our rules and practices. This is my highest priority.

As I have told the House in previous rulings, the Chair cannot allow the use of obstructive tactics to become an intolerable abuse of the process. Obstruction cannot be allowed to cripple the work of the Assembly. It cannot be allowed to prevent members from carrying out their responsibilities. When obstruction is taken to such an excess, the Chair has a duty to intervene. In the best interest of the Assembly, the Chair has a duty to act.

I would remind members of the references I cited to statements of Speakers of this Assembly and the House of Commons in Ottawa in my ruling of June 29, demonstrating the unequivocal obligation of the Chair to exercise its responsibilities and to ensure that the House is able to conduct its business.

It is perhaps ironic that I am being compelled to intervene to call a recorded division on a motion moved to protest the adoption of rules that will prevent the abuse of prolonged bells from happening again. But so be it. Faced with the circumstances of this situation, I have no choice but to intervene.

Members of the opposition have made it plain in the

Assembly and to the media that they will do their utmost to obstruct the decision of the Assembly to adopt the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures. Statements made by the opposition leader yesterday made it evident to me that they are prepared to use the bells to force their will on the House. This cannot be allowed to continue.

A minority must not dictate the actions of the Assembly, especially after the issue has been debated. As I've already indicated, the Chair will act to ensure that the House is not prevented from making decisions. I am ordering the bells to be silenced and the vote to be called within one hour of the conclusion of my ruling. The House will be allowed to decide by a vote of its majority what is acceptable and what will be done. It is neither parliamentary nor democratic to permit continual obstruction by the use of tactics that mock the principles of this institution. If the House wants to establish time limits on bells, the House must decide.

It is the duty of the Chair, even in the face of bitter and earnest opposition, to make sure the House is given the opportunity to make that decision.

While this decision will permit the House to resume functioning, I am painfully aware that my ruling will not restore the spirit of co-operation which must exist among parties if this House is to work effectively.

The problem of the GRIP Bill still remains. Recent comments made by all party representatives suggest that negotiations had nearly succeeded in resolving the dispute. In the hope that negotiations might be resumed, I have decided to maintain the suspension on the GRIP Bill on the same basis as in my ruling of June 29 for at least two more weeks. I trust that in the days to come, members will be able to find a compromise.

I direct that the vote on the adjournment motion will be taken at 3:11 p.m. today. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 2:11 p.m. until 3:11 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — Nil

Nays — 44

Romanow	Hamilton
Van Mulligen	Johnson
Thompson	Trew
Wiens	Draper
Simard	Serby
Tchorzewski	Whitmore
Teichrob	Sonntag
Shillington	Flavel
Koskie	Roy
Anguish	Cline
Goulet	Scott
Solomon	McPherson
Atkinson	Kujawa
Kowalsky	Crofford
Carson	Stanger
Penner	Knezacek

Upshall	Harper
Hagel	Keeping
Bradley	Carlson
Lorje	Renaud
Calvert	Jess
Murray	Haverstock

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Mr. Speaker, in questions put by members, item 42, I hereby supply the answer.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

MOTIONS

Motion for Closure

Hon. Mr. Shillington: — Before the order of the day is called for resuming debate on item no. 10 in adjourned debates, I move:

That the debate on the motion for concurrence in the second report of the Special Committee on Rules and Procedures and any amendments or subamendments proposed thereto be not further adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

(1515)

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.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is serious public discontent over our political system and how it functions. A Gallup poll taken some 10 years ago demonstrated that 61 per cent of those interviewed were in favour of parliamentary reform. Today the numbers are staggering. In the eyes of the people, politicians are now mere manipulators, game players. They're seen as power brokers who, once in power, forget the reasons why they were elected and do as they wish until shortly before an election, at which point they tell the people what they want to hear and the sham starts all over again.

The ongoings of this legislature over the last few weeks simply emphasizes the need for true parliamentary reform. Imagine how different the events would have unfolded if potentially controversial Bills could be forwarded to an all-party committee where problems are addressed in conjunction with those members that the public most affected by the proposed changes. Why should representatives of the people be afraid of the

people?

Public input in all-party recommendations could have allowed us to avoid the impasse that led to the initial bell-ringing. I am convinced that greater emphasis on dialogue and conversation, consultation, will lead in the longer term to more efficiency and effectiveness. We need imagination. We need courage, open-mindedness, and commitment if we wish to contribute to making the parliamentary system evolve and work more effectively.

I am saddened by the entrenchment of the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the Leader of the Conservative Party, and their respective, unwavering followers in this Assembly. How proud are they that good government and democracy have been sacrificed to the endless battles between the government and the opposition?

Over the last three years closure has been . . . Pardon me. Over the last years closure has been used three times in this province. There was no need for closure until the potash privatization debate on August 4, 1989. Less than two years later it was used again when the education and health tax was changed to the PST (provincial sales tax) in 1991.

It is being used once again, Mr. Speaker. The fact that this Assembly was able to go for 84 years without closure, but in the last few years it has been invoked three times, is a clear signal that the NDP and the Progressive Conservatives have been incapable of getting along with one another to the detriment of our province.

MLAs (Member of the Legislative Assembly) were supposed to be elected to locate problems, to offer a wide range of alternative solutions, to choose one in consultation with the people, and then to go to the public with that decision, showing that the best decision had been made.

Today MLAs seem content to devote most of their time to deciding what should be done and persuading and manipulating the public to accept their policy rather than discussing these issues in a non-partisan fashion and coming up with some constructive solutions through consultation.

Good governing and good management are not founded on manipulation and arbitrary action. When the world beyond this building is facing a crisis, Mr. Speaker, it is all the more imperative that the legislature demonstrate some leadership and take action. But how can it be when it is crippled by the overly partisan bickering between two parties.

Elected representatives sent here to lead and to listen to the people are failing to break the chains of partisanship and help the people of this province out of their crises.

The government does not want to listen to the people, the opposition does want to let the House return to business — and I believe that — while neither is showing much desire to make the legislature a constructive and productive institution that is capable of helping people whose taxes simply keep running up.

The rules and procedures that need to be changed to make this House meet the needs of the people are difficult to reform, and that is because, Mr. Speaker, there is so much partisan suspicion. We cannot change the rules for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan because parties are too worried about losing some advantage. Meanwhile, the longer we wait to reform this legislature, the farther it falls from grace in the public eye.

What have politicians gained if they destroy public respect for the legislature and elected representatives in order to further their own popularity or their party? If the people have no more faith in their institutions, they will have no more confidence in their political parties or their elected representatives.

Just when the people of Saskatchewan are looking for guidance, Mr. Speaker, to sort out the economic and agricultural crises, the institution empowered to offer some leadership is falling short of the task.

If the government truly wants to lead us out of this present dilemma it should show some willingness to reform this Assembly so that it can actually be productive and avoid heavy-handedness that it has demonstrated over the last weeks.

Positive steps that could be taken could include the introduction of measures that empower the public and better enable opposition and government members to represent the people of Saskatchewan within this Assembly. It is unreasonable to say that the opposition should lose the tool of bell-ringing when it is one of the few means that they have to bring attention to and encourage public participation on an issue.

If the government wanted to get rid of bell-ringing, it should have offered the people a chance to participate in the governing of this province through all-party committees. They should have been willing to give the opposition and their own members more chances to speak openly, chair more standing committees. They should have been willing to ease up on the iron reins of discipline and offered free votes as an exchange.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, and with great disappointment to myself, they really offered nothing, leaving one only to conclude that they have little commitment to public consultation and true reform. They have little commitment to solving this crisis and giving the legislature a chance to rise above its own crisis and start solving the economic travesty facing Saskatchewan.

And what happened to the recommendations made by the NDP caucus in its own 1987 paper on democratic reform? Were these ideas quickly forgotten during the metamorphosis in which the NDP caucus transformed to become the government caucus? Where is the government's long-promised committee on democratic reform that was promised in the throne speech, and the throne speech before that, Mr. Speaker?

While the Premier may feel the opposition is, and I quote, virtually impossible to negotiate with, negotiating does not appear to be one of his priorities or strengths either. I wish to remind the Premier how he reacted when closure

was invoked on August 4 of 1989. The Premier was critical of the then Conservative government for, and I quote:

... coming in and using the heavy hand of its majority and arbitrarily deciding in its opinion that the opposition's debate has been too long, in its opinion that our arguments have been irrelevant, in its opinion that we ought not to be talking about it.

The Premier, then leader of the opposition, described the act as, and I quote: unwarranted, undemocratic, underhanded, "unwarranted attack to the rules," and described it as a black day for democracy.

Further, Mr. Premier, you described the move as "discredited and desperate." You said the actions of the government were that of a bully, and that such actions are a means of "guillotining the opposition."

I ask the following members of government to rise and speak to this amended motion: the member from Saskatoon Eastview, who claims to be committed to democratic reform but has never demonstrated it in this Assembly; the member from Cumberland, who has an important private member's motion on parliamentary reform before this Assembly; the member from Regina Victoria, who has been committed to proper process but has participated to date in the government's disregard for proper process.

The amended motion is reasonable, Mr. Speaker, and provides hope for future reforms that the members of this House should welcome. Although the main motion to limit the bell-ringing does have many merits, proper process must not be ignored under such serious circumstances and it is because of that that the people of this House should abstain from that motion.

I plead with government members who genuinely care about parliamentary reform to demonstrate that commitment today and vote in favour of the amended motion.

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, I will ask for leave to introduce some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Goulet: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce my sisters up on east gallery. Just immediately to your right is my sister, Millie Cumming, who is visiting from Saskatoon, and Arlene Goulet, who lives here in Regina.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Special Committee on Rules and Procedures (continued)

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to add a few comments to this extremely important and significant debate in the life of this legislature. We are engaged in a process as legislators, of revising the rules of our legislature, and that's an extremely important process and I am sure one that no one of us, as elected members, takes lightly.

Mr. Speaker, indeed when we are privileged to hold a seat in this legislature, part of that privilege and part of that responsibility is to serve as stewards, caretakers of this institution and its traditions, which have been handed to us over generations and which we intend to hand on to others. We're not the first members to sit in this House, that's for sure, and we will not be the last members to sit in this House. And while we are here, we do serve as stewards and caretakers of this legislature and its traditions.

And therefore the debate we're engaged in is not an insignificant debate and one that I'm sure no one of us takes lightly, Mr. Speaker. Indeed we are all in some ways sworn to protect what we believe are the principles upon which this legislature is founded.

Mr. Speaker, in the short length of time I wish to take in this debate, I'd like to talk about some of those principles, the principles that I believe are essential, that we as the elected members of this time in history maintain.

Number one, Mr. Speaker, no one of us ... the fundamental principle it seems to me, of this legislature, is that no one of us occupies a seat in this House except at the will of the people who put us here. We are here only at the will of the people of Saskatchewan. It's the people of our own constituencies who through the democratic process have exercised their right, they have chosen their members, and they have chosen their government. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, we must be at all times servants in this Chamber, of the people of Saskatchewan, the people who put us here.

Mr. Speaker, in the past few days and weeks the people of my constituency and people across this province have been saying: I am convinced — to all MLAs — it's time for you people to be doing the work of the people of Saskatchewan. It's time that this legislature in Regina got back to work.

That's our first responsibility, Mr. Speaker. As members of this House we do not sit here except at the will of the people of our province, the will of the people of our constituencies who put us here to conduct their affairs.

And, Mr. Speaker, every four years, in our democratic process the people of our province make their choice on who they will to govern their province.

The second principle, Mr. Speaker, of this legislature, which I believe is essential to preserve and maintain, is that principle which understands that this legislature is a forum first of all of debate. It is not first of all Mr. Speaker, a place of decision making. Decision making is done in other agencies and avenues of government. This Chamber first of all is a forum for debate. And that principle must reflect itself in our rules.

(1530)

Mr. Speaker, I learned this, I learned this principle of the legislature first of all from a former premier of our province, the Hon. Allan Blakeney. Mr. Speaker, I do recall, and any of us who I think were here that day will recall, some of those comments made by Mr. Blakeney in his last speech in this Assembly, in which he outlined to those of us here and to those of us who will follow the legislative debates, his view of the principles of this House. And he made that point so eloquently, that this House first of all is a forum of debate.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote for the record today some of those words from the Hon. Allan Blakeney in his last speech to this House.

He, in that speech asked us, invited us, to compare our system of government with systems of government that we observe in other parts of the world. And he said:

When we look around and consider the human condition generally there are many things which depress us, but some things in which we can take some pride.

And one of the things which gives us some cause for encouragement, as we look on the world scene, is the fact that free men have developed institutions to govern themselves. We've seen great advances in the world in technology and economics, but we've also, I think, appreciated that technology and economic achievement is not enough. We must also find some way for fairness and physical well-being to be available to the largest possible number of people, and also ways to permit the human spirit to soar.

And so we have devised these methods of public or parliamentary government, and we are involved in that process. And I am sure that those of us who have been involved in it think from time to time that it's a pretty untidy process, and we wonder whether it's all worthwhile. If I may say something to the newer members, I believe it is worthwhile.

... But I say to members of the legislature, we're not primarily here to make decisions — other agencies of government make decisions; we pass upon them. We can, on rare occasions, cause the executive arm of government to change their decision, but rarely.

And, Mr. Speaker, here's my point.

Our job fundamentally is to talk about (those decisions) ... to discuss them, to question (them), to explain them, to reply to questions, and all (of) this is so that the voters and the public will understand.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the fundamental principle of this House, our fundamental job, is to talk, is to discuss, is to debate. It's for members of government, of Executive

Council, to be available to answer the questions and the concerns.

Mr. Speaker, this is first of all a forum of debate. And when an opposition chooses through various legislative tactics to remove that privilege, Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change in the rules.

Mr. Speaker, what we've seen happen over the last almost a month now is the cessation of debate in the people's legislature. Mr. Speaker, if a fundamental principle of this House is to permit the opportunity for elected members who are here to serve their constituents and this province to debate, and that right is refused by the minority, then, Mr. Speaker, it is time in Saskatchewan for a change in the rules.

Mr. Speaker, a third principle that must guide our legislature is that principle which says this legislature must guarantee two fundamental rights — the right of the majority to govern and the right of the minority to be heard. If the right of the majority to govern is removed, we enter a situation that is anarchy. If on the other hand the right of the minority to be heard is removed, we enter into a situation which can only be described as dictatorship.

And so when we are involved in this debate about the rules, that principle too must be maintained — the right of the majority to govern, the right of the minority to be heard.

With those three principles in mind, Mr. Speaker, first of all that we are here to serve the people of Saskatchewan; number two, that this legislature is first and foremost a forum of debate where the right to speak is precious and should be provided and guaranteed; and number three, the principle which says the majority must have the right to govern and the minority must have the right to be heard, with those three principles in mind, Mr. Speaker, then I invite members present to put into context the rule which is now before the House, the proposed rule change, to see if it fits those three principles.

Mr. Speaker, the question of ringing bells. Does the ringing of bells indefinitely serve the public interest? If our role is to serve the public, does the ringing of bells — indefinitely — serve the public interest?

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's an argument on both sides; there is an argument on both sides of that question. There's no doubt about that. If the bells have been used to provide the people of Saskatchewan an opportunity to voice their opinion in a debate, if while the bells are ringing the people of our province have been given an opportunity to provide their opinion, then arguably bell-ringing serves a useful purpose to the people of our province. Mr. Speaker, if it is simple, plain obstructionism, if the bells are being rung simply to obstruct the majority government, then, Mr. Speaker, there is no purpose served for the people of our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've had an experience here this year where the bells rang for some — what was it? — 18 days; 18 days, Mr. Speaker, an unprecedented ringing of the bells for 18 long days. And I ask you and I ask other members present in the House this afternoon: at the

conclusion of those 18 days when we returned to this House, do you recall petitions being presented by members opposite having been collected over the 18 days?

Mr. Speaker, I recall the bell-ringing incident in 1989 at the close of which over 120,000 signatures of Saskatchewan people had been collected on petitions. The public was involved and the public was served.

Mr. Speaker, during the time this extended bell-ringing period we've just gone through, the 18 days, do you, Mr. Speaker, or do any members opposite recall a time when a public meeting was held in this province, sponsored by the opposition where members of the public could contribute their opinion? Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear of one. There was certainly none in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, if the bell-ringing is used as a vehicle to allow people to express their opinion and to contribute to the debate, then it can be argued there's a purpose. But, Mr. Speaker, when bells are used as simple obstructionism, any credibility that has attached itself to that tactic is lost, Mr. Speaker. And in the current situation, in the current situation it is my view that the use of the bells have not served the public of Saskatchewan and therefore has violated one of the principles of our legislature.

Of the second principle, Mr. Speaker: does the bell-ringing serve that principle which says this is a forum of debate? Well the answer is obviously not.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote. We've heard a lot of quotes from members opposite in the course of this debate. I want to quote a member opposite who said on May 31, 1989 — and I am referring to a quote from the current member from Rosthern — he said, Mr. Speaker:

Silence in a democracy is a death knell, I would suggest to you, in such a system. I would further suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the Neudorfs in Germany know that the precursor to the sound of jackboots is silence in an Assembly such as ours.

This, Mr. Speaker, is the man who has silenced this Assembly over the last month. Mr. Speaker, he went on to say:

I believe, Mr. Speaker, very firmly that the Legislative Assembly is the corner-stone for free speech; it is the democratic foundation upon which we are built; it is the embodiment of the principle of responsible government. And that is what I stand for, and that's what the members on this side stand for. And it is a hope that that is what the members opposite will also see their way to stand for.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Rosthern in 1979 made an eloquent argument, an eloquent argument for the role of this House as a place of debate. Mr. Speaker, the obstructionist tactic of ringing the bells indefinitely has silenced this House and silenced debate and therefore violated that principle upon which this legislature is founded.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, does this unlimited access to bell-ringing protect the right of the majority to govern and the right of the minority to be heard? It may, Mr. Speaker, be argued that bell-ringing offers protection to the minority to be heard, but it does, Mr. Speaker, without question, have the potential to eliminate the majority's right to govern.

Mr. Speaker, in October of last year the people of this province spoke loudly and clearly. They wanted a change. Across this province they voiced their opinion — they wanted a change. They wanted new policy and new direction. They gave to this government a mandate, Mr. Speaker. In many areas of government and public policy they instituted change.

Mr. Speaker, in my view the members opposite have, one, either not grasped that reality, even until today; or number two, they are simply using the tactics that we've seen in the last few weeks as revenge — revenge, Mr. Speaker. Their motivation may well be revenge and spite in this Legislative Assembly.

The people of Saskatchewan gave this government a massive majority to institute new change and new direction in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, we are undertaking that change at the will of Saskatchewan people in this very first sitting, in this very first budget of the new government.

Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, over the past few weeks the people that I have talked to in a variety of corners of this province, including a number of people at the Big Valley Jamboree, including a number of those 550 seniors who were gathered earlier in Moose Jaw this week for the seniors' games, the message was loud and clear: they want their legislators, they want their representatives, they want their government, to be at work, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we meet that responsibility of service to the people of our province, to ensure that freedom of speech in this Chamber and the freedom of debate on which it's founded continues, and to ensure that the minority will be heard. Because, Mr. Speaker, I remind you in the proposed rule change there is provision to the opposition that is more generous than provisions to any other opposition in this country, Mr. Speaker, to ensure, to ensure that the voice of the minority is heard.

But, Mr. Speaker, the people of our province, the people of Saskatchewan, are saying that the right of the majority to govern must be maintained. We elect people to do the work of our province and, Mr. Speaker, because that is the view of the people of Saskatchewan, I support this change in the rules and I would encourage all members to do the same.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Koskie: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I take a great deal of concern in entering into the debate. I want first of all to say that, as a veteran member of this legislature — some 16 years I've spent in this legislature, and prior to that I spent some four years in the premier's office, Premier Blakeney's office, as a special assistant.

And I want to say that I have a great respect for the institution and for democracy. And I do think that what is necessary is sanity to prevail. And I want to deal just a little bit with the history as I know the legislature. I go back to '71 and I recall there were members on the opposition side, members like Dave Steuart, Senator Steuart; Stuart Cameron, who is a justice on the Queen's Bench now, or Court of Appeal.

There were other great debaters in the House, and that carried on. And I learned to respect the House and the debate. And when we went outside of the Chamber, there was no continuation of hate or vengeance.

(1545)

But I'll tell you, in 1982 when the former premier and his 55 additional members came into this legislature, they essentially showed absolutely no respect for this institution. I recall, Mr. Speaker, that there was merely eight of us in opposition. And the scenes that took place in this House, any premier should have been totally, totally dissatisfied with.

I recall eight of us sat on the other side of the House. And they literally sent over when a premier who had been a premier respected in this province, and heckle as loud . . . so loud that you couldn't even carry on speaking. And that is where the respect for this institution broke down. And throughout the whole term of the former premier's reign in office, he showed a total lack of respect for this institution.

I want to indicate some of the areas where he demonstrated this. I take a look at the filing of reports. Never, never did he bother meeting the deadlines for filing reports with the legislature. The auditor, which is a servant of this Assembly, he had his Justice minister at the time and concurred with by the former premier, a total personal attack on the integrity of an officer of this legislature because the auditor gave them a bad report and indicated that he could not account for 50 per cent of the spending of the former premier's regime.

This is the background that we're dealing with — a former premier and the record of how they governed and the disrespect for any of the traditions of this Assembly. And that is what we're dealing with here, trying to get some work done on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. And today what we see is the continuation of hate and vengeance by the Leader of the Opposition and his members.

So they didn't file any reports. They blasted the auditor answering questions in this legislature; absolutely refused to answer in a civilized manner as former Premier Blakeney had so excellently done. The budget process completely broke down. And on and on it goes.

So while we on this side agree that you have to work with the opposition and you have to have some constructive dialogue, I want to make it clear to the people of Saskatchewan that that's almost an impossibility with the background of how they have shown total disrespect for this institution.

I want to turn just briefly to the member of the opposition that spoke this afternoon. And she spoke on this motion, and she says, I essentially agree with the substance of the motion, but I don't like the process. Sitting on both sides of the fence. I want to say to the hon. member that the editorial in the *Saskatoon Star* indicated that any reasonable people in five minutes could decide the issue on bells.

And as my hon. colleague has indicated, the motion or the rule changes in respect to the bells is the most generous of anywhere in Canada — anywhere in Canada. What is she really saying? Don't get rid of the bell, but I agree with the bells limitations as set forward. Are we to hold the House to hostage or are we going to address the issue as the public is demanding. That's the clear indications that we get.

And I want to say that it has been a great honour in this House, and I think that we owe it to the people of Saskatchewan to act in a mature way. And governments do have an agenda and when they put forward their agenda they are going to be judged by the people of Saskatchewan. And that's how democracy works.

And all we are asking is to continue on in an orderly manner and to put forward the government's agenda and let the people of Saskatchewan judge our actions. That's how it has to work.

And I don't think you can take a sanctimonious position of agreeing with the substance of it but not the process. Because as the press indicated, any reasonable people could settle it in five minutes. And that's what we have done. And we brought the most generous possible protection to the opposition and to the public, the interests of the public.

And so I therefore support the resolution of the amendment of the rules.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have leave for the introduction of some guests.

Leave granted.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the members of the House here, I'd like to introduce 32 young people who have gathered in your chambers . . . or your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-one of them are constituents of mine and they're members of the Norquay 4-H Club. The other 11 are 4-H members visiting from Ontario. And they are down here in Regina today doing some touring around, and they've taken some time out of their busy schedule to take in the proceedings of the House here.

And I will be joining them on the steps for pictures in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. And then after that, we'll be getting together for some refreshments. And I'll ask all the members of the House to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Special Committee on Rules and Procedures (continued)

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is not an occasion which gives me particular pleasure in which to rise in this House and to speak, but none the less I feel that it is important to say a few words.

I've been in this legislature — it will be off and on, I guess, October of 1967 — 25 years. We actually didn't sit in October of 1967; it took the shake out period after the election. But shortly thereafter I took my seat in the legislature. Actually as I recall, initially back where my friends and colleagues are in the opposition side, and then eventually as the legislature developed, where the current Leader of the Liberal Party is sitting.

And this is an institution which, Mr. Speaker, I can attest through personal experience, has witnessed many turbulent debates and has witnessed many turbulent and unexpected developments.

I hearken back to the time when the government in its wisdom, headed by my colleague and friend, former premier Allan Blakeney, decided that the impasse in negotiations between the government and the potash industry in Saskatchewan and because of the Supreme Court decision on potash, that it would be in the public interest to introduce legislation establishing a publicly owned corporation called the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan and also introducing legislation with respect to purchase and so-called take-over of some potash corporations in pursuit of the establishment of PCS (Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Inc.).

That, Mr. Speaker, was one of the highlights of my legislative career. At that time the official opposition was not the Conservatives. The official opposition was the Liberal Party. We had campaigned in 1975 on this issue and were re-elected.

When negotiations with the industry broke down, based on the mandate that the voters gave us, we proceeded to introduce the appropriate legislation. Which legislation, having been introduced in November at the time of the Speech from the Throne, was debated continuously and day in and day out for a period, if my memory serves me correctly, well into the new year, January, February.

There was, during that very passionate debate, periods of not only debate and lengthy speeches, but bell-ringing, amendments, subamendments, heated words, hurt feelings. There was a large campaign which embroiled this legislature outside of this legislature by interested members of the public — the potash corporations, the workers, individual concerned citizens, individual organizations, chambers of commerce. All sought to embroil the members to one side or the other of this

particular debate.

Mr. Speaker, that debate was probably the most tumultuous and most intellectually inspired debate in my years in the legislature that I can remember. And I can tell the members of this House that it was a debate which featured all the best elements of parliament and politics. It featured ideological differences, economic considerations, social concerns, and personality.

The dynamism of the then leader, currently retired senator Davey Steuart, people like Cy MacDonald, Tony Merchant, now Mr. Justice Ted Malone, Mr. Justice Stuart Cameron — all of these were articulate spokespeople in opposition to what the government was doing. I felt, because I was the one piloting the legislation through the House and sat here for three and a half months in doing so, that there were times the Bill would never make it, that the opposition might walk out and never come back. I thought that the government's will might be broken.

I even at moments — I shouldn't be saying this — wondered whether or not what we were doing was the correct thing, but eventually again came back to the conclusion that it was the right thing to do. And I tell you in a moment of candour, there were days on end where I was personally aggrieved at what was said about myself and about my government, by the members opposite — aggrieved for all of the duration that it took for me to be aggrieved sitting in this legislature.

A cardinal rule was that once the debate was finished and you left this legislature, it didn't matter what you said or how you handled yourself in debate, outside we were all servants of the public. And above all there were days when I feared that this institution would not survive that debate. And here we are, Mr. Speaker, 16, 17 years later in this institution which has survived and which during that period has seen other debates, and some raucous debates including the debates in 1989 with the proposed privatization of SaskEnergy when the official opposition sat on this side.

And this institution survived that potash debate, and it survived the SaskEnergy debate, and it will survive this debate because no matter what we may think or feel amongst ourselves the fact of the matter is there is no other credible alternative in the form of governance that we have in this province. Everybody knows it.

And no matter how hurt the feelings are and no matter even if a majority has to rule from time to time in moments of total impasse, this House is as strong today as it ever will be notwithstanding what the members of the opposition might say. That is the strength of Saskatchewan . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Now I want to move from that background and that historical perspective and that personal perspective — which I readily admit is clouded perhaps by my recollection of events but I believe they're accurate — to today's circumstance.

This report which we're debating deals with a change in

the rules pertaining to bell-ringing. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about bell-ringing, having been involved in bell-ringing both as opposition leader and as the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan.

Bell-ringing and where does it lead, not only the legislature but the official opposition and governments? What are the possible outcomes of bell-ringing? Essentially they boil down to two options at the end of the day. At the end of the day whether the bells are rung for 17 days or 18 days or 21 days or 21 minutes, one of two things happens. Either the government acquiesces on the Bill or the measure that it introduces which prompts the bell-ringing, for its own reasons through compromise and negotiations or a change in policy or whatever reasons, it either acquiesces — in which case the opposition says we're not going to ring the bell any more — or the government in its wisdom decides that it is not going to acquiesce, that the policy or the measure which has been introduced which has prompted the bell-ringing is a policy which is necessary either for financial considerations or is necessary because it improves the lot of the community or the sector of people which are being affected by the legislation or for whatever reasons. In which case the other alternative is that the opposition acquiesces and the bell-ringing stops and there is a vote and the legislature decides and determines.

(1600)

That is the essence of democracy — full, fair opportunity to debate fully, as we did during the potash debate or as we had in the SaskEnergy debate and as I am no doubt, absolutely positive, we will when the GRIP Bill is recalled again — full and fair opportunity to debate, to communicate your views, even to hold up proceedings so that you can see if you can rally the support of the public at large.

But democracy also has one other important component to it. At the end of the day there has to be a decision. And there can only be one of two outcomes. At the end of the day either the government acquiesces and the Bill is withdrawn, the measure is withdrawn, or in the alternative at the end of the day the opposition acquiesces and the measure progresses. What is not an option is the suggestion that the measure should somehow float into Never Never Land and neither be decided by an opposition's decisions or by a government's decisions, that the measure should not even be introduced or that the measure should not even be debated. At the end of the day that is not consistent with the parliamentary, democratic process. It would grind democracy to a total and complete halt. It would bring this legislature into disrepute.

Now in 1989 we were involved in a bell-ringing episode. In 1989 in the bell-ringing episode we took the following position: that the government of the day did not campaign in 1986 on the privatization of SaskEnergy. I believe, Mr. Speaker, the record will confirm the absolute, total truth of that statement. We argued moreover that not only did it not campaign and get a mandate on the privatization of SaskEnergy, it promised short few weeks or months before time that they would never, whatever they privatized, they would never

privatize a public monopoly which was a public utility, like SaskEnergy. I am confident the record will show that.

I am confident that if my memory is correct, that on or about May 9, 1988, I think it was, maybe '89, the then deputy leader and deputy premier of the government, now Senator Eric Berntson, told the legislature in black and white in *Hansard* that whatever they would privatize, they would not privatize SaskEnergy.

We know that that was not the situation. We know that they introduced the legislation. And we took the position that since the voters did not approve of this course of action, since it was so drastic, so fundamental to the essence of what has been Saskatchewan culture, is so embedded in sharp ideological differences, privatization versus non-privatization, that we wanted to prevent the passage of the Bill and to alert the Saskatchewan public to what was being done and we walked out for the period of 17 days.

I will not go into the history of what happened during the 17 days. My colleague from Moose Jaw South has indicated that very ably, with the rallies and the petitions and the public support which was garnered in opposition to what the government was doing because I think the public believed that what they were doing was wrong and also that they did not give the government of the day the mandate to do so.

Now what happened? What happened was, coming back to my analysis, one of two decisions. And the decision that was taken by the government of the day for its own reasons was to acquiesce and to withdraw the Bill and to indicate to the public in effect that the opposition was right and that this Bill of privatization would not proceed and, as a consequence, the bell-ringing came to an end.

If, however, the government in its wisdom had gone the other way and had decided that it was going to persist in the privatization of SaskEnergy — notwithstanding the lack of mandate, notwithstanding what it told the legislature, notwithstanding what it told the public of Saskatchewan day in and day out — if it decided in its own wisdom to proceed, then the situation would have boiled down very quickly, as it did in that period, to the official opposition deciding whether it had to acquiesce.

If, Mr. Speaker, the opposition of the day had taken the destructive course of the current opposition of the day, of non-acquiescence, thereby stalemating the democratic process, then, sir, the institutions and the officers of this hallowed Chamber and the rules and all the appropriate changes would have been totally and completely justified in having taken place.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Now what is behind this current situation? Behind this current situation is a clear communication to all of the opposition leaders — the official opposition leader, the third-party leader — that the government, for financial reasons, for policy reasons on GRIP, is introducing legislation.

We understand that they do not like it. But we're not

going to acquiesce on that, because we have been mandated to do that. We campaigned on that. We're not misleading the public of Saskatchewan in this regard. We think that these changes are going to be accepted, are being accepted. If we're wrong, the remedy in a democracy is at election time, the appropriate time. We've said that clearly.

We've said we will negotiate any kind of reasonable changes as long as it's consistent with the fiscal and substantive changes to the GRIP that we recommend. I won't bore you about the details of the endless attempts at negotiation. I say, with the greatest of respect to the Liberal leader, she can say for whatever political or other reasons that she wants about the lack of negotiating skills that we may or may not have — that's entirely up to her — but I tell you in cold truth . . . And if you would acknowledge, in the interest of, as you say, non-partisanship and politics, the truth of it, you would know the torture that you yourself were involved in — and I say torture — of trying to find an agreement. It was not possible.

I've concluded it was not possible because the opposition has decided that because it acquiesced for its own reasons, we have to acquiesce for their reasons too, and as a consequence have brought the proceedings of this House to a standstill — a standstill which is simply not permitted in the political process, Mr. Speaker, not permitted.

This is not our fault. There comes a time when we have to understand amongst reasonable men and women who disagree and agree that there's a time to disagree, that we agree to disagree. We have surely at the end of all of these days agreed to disagree.

And I would tell you, Mr. Speaker, that as I saw over the last nine years the bankruptcy of this province's finances, strait-jacketing the new government, myself as Premier, strait-jacketing the people of the province of Saskatchewan, from farmers to small-business people, as I've seen the bankruptcy of the economic situation in the province, I for one will not support the final bankruptcy, and that is the bankruptcy of this institution because an opposition has decided in its own wisdom that it is going to wreak revenge on me and the people of the province of Saskatchewan. That is unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Permit me to close, Mr. Speaker, in the time permitted to me — the last three minutes, I guess, or approximately that as I'm watching the watch, clock — let me close by saying: is democratic reform required? The answer is yes. This report is democratic reform.

The Leader of the Liberal Party says she supports it. The Leader of the Conservative Party says he supports an end to bell-ringing. The difference is, the Leader of the Conservative Party says he only supports an end to bell-ringing if the government acquiesces on the main part of the Bill. He says, decouple them.

But if we decoupled them, would his position change 60

days from now or six hours from now or six weeks from now? Of course they would not, and he would not give up the ringing of the bells motion. So decoupling is not possible. It's not logical. With the greatest respect to the Leader of the Liberal Party, it's not possible.

We either have to deal with this matter later or we deal with it now. So we deal with it now. And this is democratic reform. It's positive, democratic reform. We are not voting on GRIP. We are voting on modernizing this Legislative Chamber with all the other chambers of Canada in order to support democracy, not to attack democracy, and that's why everybody should be on side.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — In eight months that we've been in office we've done much. We've had the Gass report; we've had the tabling of documents and reports in a timely fashion; the Crown Corporations Committee; questions are being answered in a timely fashion; independence of MLAs is being fostered. Have we done it all? The answer is no. Do we intend to do more? The answer is yes. This is an important aspect of the reform.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan won't be fooled behind what has taken place today. They weren't in the debate of potash in 1975. They weren't in the debate on SaskEnergy in 1989. And let us not despair, they won't in the debate of 1992. They know where the principles and the commitments of democracy lie and what this report that we're debating is all about — the enhancement of democracy. This institution is stronger than any one of us, including any petulant behaviour by any group of MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, that is how we got here. I put this case because it gives me no pleasure to be in a circumstance where there is not consensus. But as hurtful as it is to be in a position of non-consensus, it would be more hurtful and a betrayal of my 25 years in this Chamber, on all sides of this House, of my betrayal of the fundamental principles of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, this is what this report is all about. It's an enhancement and a growth of democratic reform. I ask all members to join us in the vote in support. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Amendment negated.

Motion agreed to.

(1615)

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 63 — An Act to amend The Ombudsman Act

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Ombudsman Amendment Act, 1992. Under the amendments, restrictions on the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, which do not occur in other provinces, will be removed. This will help to ensure that the government remains accountable to the people it serves. The Ombudsman will now be able

to review the administrative acts of ministers and deputy ministers.

This amendment represents a significant extension of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. The Ombudsman will also be able to review the actions of government officials in relation to intergovernmental matters. Furthermore, he or she will be able to review the actions of arbitration boards established by provincial legislation.

The Saskatchewan legislation presently requires that the Ombudsman be a Canadian citizen. This requirement will be removed. The requirement that the Ombudsman receive the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council before delegating his or her authority will also be removed. This requirement may be said to infringe upon the independence of the Ombudsman. The requirement that persons complaining to the Ombudsman be Saskatchewan residents will be removed, so will the requirement that complaints be made within one year of the event giving rise to the complaints.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that these amendments will enable the Ombudsman to work more effectively in responding to the concerns of the Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Ombudsman Act.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, at this time I would suggest that giving us the opportunity to further look at the Bill as it's introduced and then speak to it more clearly, I would move for adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosthern. Why is he on his feet?

NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Mr. Neudorf: — Mr. Speaker, by leave, I would like to make the following motion:

That this Assembly, in view of the unprecedented action of Mr. Speaker and his direct refusal to abide by the rules of this Assembly and his subordination of the rights of this House to the will of the NDP government, resolve that it no longer has any confidence in its presiding officer.

I so move.

Leave not granted.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 64 — An Act respecting Arbitration

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Arbitration Act, 1992. The Bill will replace The Arbitration Act which is outdated. The Bill is based upon the Unified Law Conference of Canada's uniform legislation in this area.

The guiding principles of the Bill are: parties should have

the broad freedom to design the arbitration process to meet their needs; people who enter into valid arbitration agreement should abide by the agreement; the process should be fair to both parties; opportunities for delay should be minimized; the arbitrator's award should be readily enforceable, subject to a review of a specific list of flaws in form or substance.

The Bill applies to all arbitrations conducted under agreements and other statutes unless the act is excluded by law or the international arbitration Act applies.

Arbitrations commenced after the Bill comes into force will be governed by this Bill. The previous Act will continue to apply to arbitrations commenced prior to proclamation of the new Bill.

Under the Bill, arbitrations remain a matter of contract between the parties. The parties to an arbitration agreement can design their own arbitration process by expressly excluding or modifying provisions of the Bill. However, all arbitrations governed by the Bill are subject to a list of specific compulsory provisions in section 4.

Arbitrators must be independent and impartial and must disclose to the parties circumstances which may cast doubt on his or her independence and impartiality. Procedures for challenging and removing arbitrators are provided.

The Bill requires that arbitrations be conducted in a manner that treats parties fairly and equally and affords an opportunity to present a case and respond. In this context the arbitration tribunal determines its own procedure. Arbitrators are required to decide the dispute in accordance with the law and the rules of equity unless the agreement provides otherwise.

The Bill seeks to minimize the opportunities to delay the arbitration either by a party refusing to participate or by seeking court intervention. A party who has an objection during an arbitration must raise it promptly or risk losing the ability to do so.

The Bill clarifies the role that the courts play in arbitration proceedings. The courts will not intervene in an arbitration unless the agreement provides otherwise. However the courts can keep the process moving in the face of resistance, protect the position of the parties during the proceedings, and ensure that the arbitration is conducted in accordance with the agreement. The court can also prevent inequitable treatment of parties and enforce awards made in Saskatchewan and elsewhere in Canada.

In summary, this Bill preserves the underlying contractual nature of arbitrations, addresses many procedural and substantive aspects of an arbitration, and updates the legislation. The Bill is consistent with the efforts of other Canadian provinces that have adopted legislation with the Unified Law Conference of Canada's model act in mind.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Arbitration Act, 1992.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, again as I indicated before, in order to allow the opposition the required time to see the Bill and to peruse the Bill and come with the arguments that we would need to follow through on the Bill, I would ask to adjourn debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 65 — An Act to amend The Homesteads Act, 1989

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The Homesteads Amendment Act, 1992. The amendments proposed by this Bill will eliminate the requirement for the land title system to enforce compliance with The Homesteads Act, 1989. However the consent of the non-owning spouse and a certificate of independent acknowledgement will still be required before owning spouse can dispose of the homestead.

Additional amendments are also being made to ensure that if a non-owning spouse is wrongfully deprived of homestead rights, he or she will have recourse against the owning spouse and the land title system.

Mr. Speaker, these amendment were carefully crafted to meet the goal of reducing the work-load of the land titles system while continuing to ensure that the rights of non-owning spouses will be protected. I am confident that we have achieved an effective balance of these objectives in this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Homesteads Act, 1989.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, again the opposition must ask for the appropriate time to review the Act and come forward with the arguments. We must be very careful in how we peruse the Act. And therefore I move adjournment of debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of The Queen's Bench (Surrogate Procedures) Amendment Act, 1992.

Mr. Speaker, the Surrogate Court has historically had jurisdiction over wills and estates of deceased persons. This Act will amalgamate the Surrogate Court with the Court of Queen's Bench. It repeals The Surrogate Court Act and transfers a substantive law from that Act to The Queen's Bench Act.

Mr. Speaker, even though The Surrogate Court Act seems to set up a separate court, in fact the judges of the Surrogate Court are the judges of the Court of Queen's Bench. The court officials for both courts are the same people. The Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench

has recommended that the courts be amalgamated to streamline the operations of the courts.

The Surrogate Court Act allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to appoint official administrators at the various judicial centres around the province. The role of an official administrator is to administer an estate when there is no one else willing or able to administer it. Historically, trust companies have been appointed as official administrators. These amendments will establish the Public Trustee as official administrator throughout Saskatchewan. This is a budget-related measure which will increase revenue to the Consolidated Fund.

Another change being implemented by this Bill is to continue the effort begun in recent years to put our legislation into clearer language. The Surrogate Court Act was originally passed in 1907. The wording of many of its provisions have not been changed since then. The result is that some sections of the Act have been criticized in recent years as being almost incomprehensible. The sections that are being transferred into The Queen's Bench Act have been reworded to solve that problem.

Under The Queen's Bench Act, the province pays all Court of Queen's Bench and Court of Appeal judges an annual fee of \$3,000. This honorarium will be eliminated.

In addition, it is expected that some efficiencies will be achieved in court operations as a result of the elimination of the need to maintain the formalities of a separate court.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of An Act to amend The Queen's Bench Act, repeal The Surrogate Court Act and make Consequential Amendments to Certain Other Acts resulting from the Amalgamation of the Surrogate Court and the Court of Queen's Bench.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've been listening to the minister, I've been listening very closely. And there were a number of things that the minister has talked about, and I think there is a lot of potential in the . . . necessary amendments to the Act that were needed.

But certainly we must take and will be asking for a little more time to peruse the Act and come forward with more questions or anything that we see, make suggestions for the minister and for the officials. And therefore at this time I adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Mrs. Teichrob: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to outline the purpose and the major provisions of this Bill. These amendments to The Education Act consist of two main parts. The first deals with a licensing agreement for the use of copyright materials and the second deals with procedures for the closure of schools in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, new federal copyright legislation has

imposed much stricter rules on teachers and students in terms of their legal right to photocopy public materials protected by copyright. These restrictions have been imposed to respect the legitimate right of the producers of copyright material to be properly compensated. However the new rules have had the effect of creating difficulty and expense for educational authorities.

To help overcome these problems, a system of licensing agreements is being developed. Under this system an organization called the Canadian Reprography Collective, or Can Copy for short, is representing the interest of publishers of copyright materials. Can Copy will enter into licensing agreements whereby teachers and students will be entitled to copy materials in return for a licensing fee to be paid to Can Copy. Can Copy will then turn the money over to the publishers.

Mr. Speaker, it would obviously be cumbersome and ineffective for each one of our school divisions, colleges, and universities to enter into a separate licensing agreement with Can Copy. Therefore in consultation with our partners in education, we have worked out an arrangement whereby the Minister of Education can enter into one licensing agreement on behalf of all school divisions.

The cost of this agreement will be taken from within the appropriation for school grants as agreed upon with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association. A similar agreement for post-secondary institutions may be worked out later.

Mr. Speaker, the legal authority for the Minister of Education to enter into a licensing agreement with Can Copy already exists. However, because the agreement will result in third parties, school divisions or other educational authorities obtaining legal rights, a provision is needed in the legislation to require these third parties to comply with the terms of the agreement.

Also a mechanism is needed to ensure that the minister cannot be held legally and financially liable for violations of the licensing agreement by a third party. The new section 10(3) of The Education Act incorporates the necessary provisions.

As I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, the second main part of this Bill deals with school closures. As a result of court decisions last year, boards of education and the public have been left in some doubt as to the process and the time lines which boards must observe when they wish to close a rural school or discontinue some grades in a rural school. These amendments are intended to eliminate the ambiguities and set out a clear and reasonable process to follow.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the process prescribed in the new provisions is as follows. First, a board must hold a meeting of the electors of the district in which the school is located to advise them that closure is being considered. The board must give proper public notice of this meeting.

Following the meeting there must be a period of at least

three months for consultation, after which the board can announce its final decision. A further period of at least three months must then follow before the closure takes effect during which the board must consult about arrangements for the pupils affected. Finally, the period of the year during which a board is entitled to close a school will now be limited to the summer vacation between the end of school in one school year and the start of school in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that these amendments will effectively balance the needs of boards of education and the interest of parents and pupils. They achieve the following objectives: they eliminate the confusion which has resulted from court decisions and set out a clear process which will be known in advance by boards and the public; they incorporate a requirement for broader public consultation by a board before it makes its final decision.

Although the courts have indicated that such consultation is necessary, the present legislation includes no requirement for it. The minimum period of time between initial notice of intent and the effective date of closure will be six months, as at present.

(1630)

However, boards will no longer be able to close schools during the school year at times which might be disruptive to pupils and families. All of the prescribed procedures and time lines will continue to apply only in those cases where a board of education does not have local consent for its proposed actions. Where such consent exists, boards will continue to have the authority to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, I must acknowledge that in our consultations with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, the SSTA did express a preference for a different approach to this legislation. The SSTA suggested that all procedures and time lines be eliminated from the Act leaving boards simply with an implicit general responsibility to act in a fair and reasonable way.

There is no question that in most cases boards of education do attempt to handle school closures in a sensitive way. Nevertheless, our government believes that because the closure of rural schools is of such importance to rural residents, it is appropriate that the legislation set out clear rules to be followed consistently across the province.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments dealing with a copyright licensing agreement and with rural school closures will help us to maintain an effective school system throughout Saskatchewan.

I am therefore pleased to move the Bill No. 68, An Act to amend The Education Act, be now read a second time. Thank you.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was listening to the comments being made by the minister, I can appreciate the problems that many teachers and certainly school boards and school districts face across our province in the neighbourhood of copyright legislation and being able to recopy material. And certainly we all appreciate the fact too that I think that any educator

enjoys the ability of being able to go and research material and, rather than trying to have this material and substantial time lines available, being able to write for it and have it available when they want to get to the class-room. It is certainly much easier to copyright the material.

And we also want to respect the rights of the copyrighter. And I think from what I hear this Bill is going to address copyrighting and allow educators that process. And we will have more to say as we get into further debate on the Act.

Also regarding closure, school closure is something that is really affecting a lot of schools across our province. And I'm not sure if this legislation is even going to be satisfactory to . . . and I think the minister has indicated a lot of school boards still have a lot of problem with it. A lot of parents will have a lot of problems with it.

And no doubt in view of the number of things that are taking place right now . . . even regarding the legislation and circumstances that people will face regarding added taxation and lack of job opportunities, and people even leaving the rural area, it's going to create a greater problem and something that a lot of small communities are going to be looking at to try and stay alive because I believe the presence of a school in a small community, the presence of a school, the presence of a hospital, the presence of a care home are things that people look at as being very beneficial to the livelihood and the ability of that small community to survive.

So no doubt as we get into the debate on this, Mr. Speaker, we will have a number of things to add as well. So at this time, I move to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

Bill No. 57 — An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I'll move second reading of The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 1992.

It's my pleasure today to rise in the House to describe changes to The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act. As you're aware, Mr. Speaker, the changes in this Act are the result of an extensive consultation process, one in which a broad range of people concerned about the issue of farm debt in Saskatchewan put themselves to the task with a great deal of energy in order to come forward with a creative solution to a problem that has plagued farmers as a result of circumstances in the market-place that has made farmers victims of circumstances beyond their own control.

The difficulty with the farm debt situation in Saskatchewan is that we're dealing with it in the context of an income crisis that is a result of international trade that had not been adequately addressed by the federal government in its responsibility for international trade and its responsibility for agriculture and the protection of farmers and their income base in the face of events

beyond their control.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan farmers have enjoyed prosperity in the past and, mark my words, we will have the opportunity again when the market conditions are no longer skewed by international price wars. But the question is, will we have our farmers in place here to be part of that more competitive market-place? Not if we do not stand up for our farmers in the face of the crisis they are now confronting. We must move on many fronts, Mr. Speaker, and this legislation before the House today is part of that overall plan.

Mr. Speaker, the agricultural industry in Saskatchewan is the foundation upon which most other economic activity in this province is based. Without our farms, without our farmers and our agricultural industry, we do not have teachers and nurses and lenders and business people in our small and large communities.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the agricultural economy does improve, we want everyone to enjoy the benefits of that vibrant and healthy agricultural sector once again.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan government is determined to do its part, even though the federal government has denied its responsibility that it has agreed to with respect to third line of defence for Saskatchewan farmers in standing up for us in the face of this international crisis.

Our government is not sitting back. We knew the problem was there when we were elected, and we immediately moved to do something about it. One of the first acts of our government was to establish the farm discussions with the financial community in order to get agreement from them to hold off foreclosures and to offer 1991 leases to farmers who had previously lost their land, so that the farm debt advisory committee had time to do its work. By January the committee had begun its consultations and after many hours of hearing briefs and responding to ideas by farmers and others, they brought their report forward, and that report was released on March 27 of this year.

The recommendations of the report were in the areas of security of tenure, the debt review process, the availability of credit, homestead security legislation, entry and re-entry into farmers, and farmers exiting the industry. The committee viewed its recommendations as a package that addresses the needs of the industry. As I mentioned earlier, these recommendations were based on consultations with a very broad sector of people in Saskatchewan. Over 300 briefs and presentations were heard by the Farm Debt Advisory Committee.

It gives me great pleasure today to introduce the farm security amendment Act, 1992, which is the legislation proposed as a result of that consultation. I am pleased to have the opportunity to present it to this House on behalf of those who did design the program for us.

Mr. Speaker, this is grass roots legislation, and it is legislation which will help to preserve our Saskatchewan farming industry. It ensures that farmers may continue to farm land which they have turned over to lending

institutions to settle debt — debt, Mr. Speaker, which is the result of international market conditions beyond our farmers' control, debt that is incurred through no error or mismanagement on the farmers part.

Mr. Speaker, we as Saskatchewan legislators must do all that is in our power to control what we can in our own province when we are so vulnerable to outside market conditions. Will we stand by and let trade wars between Europe and the United States destroy our agricultural industry? We will not. Will we sit silently as the Government of Canada neglect to move in its capacity to intercede on our behalf? We will not.

To do so would be to abrogate our responsibilities and our heritage. If we make no effort to save our agricultural industry, we deny the history of this province; we deny the legacy left to us by our pioneers and settlers. They came here specifically to farm on land that they could call their own. And, Mr. Speaker, we will do everything in our power to ensure that our farmers have the opportunity to call that land their own again.

This government, on the advice of the Farm Debt Advisory Committee, has proposed changes to provincial mortgage laws which will strengthen the security of tenure for Saskatchewan farmers through a six-year leaseback program. Leasebacks have been offered by the lenders, but in most cases the time allowed under the leases is not sufficient to allow the farmers the opportunity for financial recovery and repurchase of the land.

This program, Mr. Speaker, will extend that time period to enhance the opportunities for farmers to recover financially.

Mr. Speaker, agricultural lenders now hold approximately 1.4 million acres of farm land as a result of debt settlements. Approximately 1,000 Saskatchewan farmers per year have foreclosure actions initiated against them. There are many other farm families who find it necessary to transfer land in order to remain viable producers. And, Mr. Speaker, our farmers need time to recover from these circumstances; more time so that the benefits of a future possible GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) agreement can be realized; more time so that they can benefit from improved prices and the world market-place which is more reasonable and more fair; more time so that the provinces can push the federal government to live up to its commitments to provide the necessary third line of defence payments.

If farmers have the time in which to recover, they will recover. And today, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan is proposing legislation to give them that time. This legislation will help farmers to help themselves. This is one step in this government's efforts to attack the farm crisis facing the Saskatchewan agricultural industry. This is one step of several.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will also address the Farm Debt Advisory Committee's recommendation for voluntary mediation. It also provides for farmers to use more of their assets as security to obtain loans. This will make it easier for farmers to obtain loans.

Mr. Speaker, the 1990 and 1991 realized net income in Saskatchewan for Saskatchewan farmers was about half of long-term averages. Statements that the crisis is all but over do not accurately reflect the situation for Saskatchewan farmers. It will take a long time to recover from this crisis after experiencing incomes at the levels we have seen in the past two years.

While there is improvement in income projections for 1992, it is only because third line of defence money the federal government committed to last year that was not made available to Saskatchewan farmers until this year. The ongoing international grain-subsidy trade war continues to create problems for us. The United States export enhancement program, the EEP, may cost our Canadian producers \$1.1 billion in the 1991-92 crop year. There is no prospect of an end to this insanity. There is no sign of a GATT agreement. And, Mr. Speaker, there is no end in sight for the financial crisis for farmers.

The Government of Saskatchewan must do what it can to protect our farmers as they continue to attempt to survive these very tough circumstances. Security of tenure is the corner-stone of the report by the Farm Debt Advisory Committee. And it is with security of tenure that we can begin to help our farmers.

Mr. Speaker, this government is tackling the serious problems facing our agricultural industry. It will take time. But we are determined, and we will succeed because, Mr. Speaker, we are confident that the grain and oilseed economy will straighten out. We are convinced that our Saskatchewan grains will create prosperity for agricultural sector once again. And, Mr. Speaker, when that day arrives, we would like our Saskatchewan farmers to be there.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the members of this House to support the amendments to the Act, and I hereby move second reading of The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 1992.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, just a few short comments before I move to adjourn the debate on the motion for today.

Certainly many farmers across the province of Saskatchewan are facing a lot of difficulty. And over the last number of days we have been hearing from farmers right across . . . especially the northern part of the province where the area, a large area of the province, is experiencing substantial drought. And it's . . . I find it amazing, Mr. Speaker, that at one moment the government would be talking about the fact that they're ready to support farmers, and then the other moment they would be talking about legislation that would certainly take away farmers' rights and privileges, and indeed remove a fair bit of the funding and the financing that farmers were counting on in order to stabilize the farm economy and stabilize their farms. And if that program would . . . ability would have still been there, in the GRIP '91, possibly the fact of this legislation wouldn't be necessary as farmers were able to sit down and put a . . . project a cash flow for the lending institutions.

And in many cases, I understand, Mr. Speaker, talking to some of the people involved in the farm debt review board, they were sitting down and finding out that many lending institutions, including Farm Credit, were indeed negotiating, negotiating very seriously. And I realize that there are a number of farmers out in rural Saskatchewan though that did find themselves in very severe financial difficult straits, and regardless of what we had before them, they're going to need a little more. And I assume that's what this Act is attempting to do.

We're going to be asking of the minister whether ACS (Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan) is going along and working under the same guidelines. And I think there will be a number of questions we must raise.

There will be a number of concerns that farm groups have out there. Certainly one of the concerns people . . . the number of people will have is, how do we address the situations where individuals have knowingly gone out, put themselves in a difficult situation, and now they're going to get another reprieve while their neighbour who has worked so desperately to try and make his payments and honour his commitments may find himself on the outside looking in.

There are a lot of concerns we have out there, a lot of questions that we will be raising. But certainly I think as we have indicated over the past number of days, we are willing to work on behalf of rural Saskatchewan because it not only affects the farm family and the individuals on the farm, but it affects everyone in our rural community.

So therefore at this time, Mr. Speaker, I adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

(1645)

Bill No. 54 — An Act to amend The Farm Financial Stability Act (No. 2)

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1992, (No. 2), and as well at the proper time, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1992, (No. 3).

It's my pleasure today to rise in the House to describe the changes to The Farm Financial Stability Act. These changes are a direct result of the extensive consultation that we had just discussed with respect to the previous Bill. These changes are part of an overall plan to remove debt from the agricultural economy. And they are only one part of this government's initiative to tackle the issue of farm debt.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan moved immediately upon coming into office to tackle this issue, and we have made every effort to ensure that people across Saskatchewan were consulted. And they have given us their input and their ideas.

The committee made recommendations which have resulted in several pieces of legislation that we are

introducing in this legislative session. One of the recommendations of the committee was to discontinue the counselling and assistance program or CAFF (counselling and assistance for farmers program) program provided by the Department of Agriculture and Food.

This legislation before you today addresses changes to the CAFF program. The Farm Debt Advisory Committee felt that CAFF was extremely costly and of benefit to only a limited number of farmers. At present, there are approximately 750 clients with active guarantees enrolled in CAFF, and the total loan guarantees is approximately \$35 million. There have been some defaults on the loan guarantees: approximately \$75 million by 881 farmers for an average default of \$85,000.

The Farm Debt Advisory Committee felt this was an unnecessary charge on the public purse. The Farm Debt Advisory Committee recommended that the counselling assistance for farmers program be discontinued. And this recommendation was acted upon immediately. The government announced in March that the program would no longer accept new applications from new clients effective April 1, 1992; financial counselling provided by CAFF also discontinued as of April 30, 1992.

The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act (No. 2) provides for no new clients to be accepted and terminates counselling. The Act also provides for the termination of the current CAFF administration, effectively July 31, 1992.

Further, new guarantees for operating loans or consolidation loans to existing clients will also be terminated at that time. However the government has made provision for the existing clients. It would be not fair to farmers involved in the program to terminate the program completely and immediately. As such, the program will be phased down gradually so that farmers affected by the CAFF program have time to deal with the changes within their farm management programs and their lending agreements.

Mr. Speaker, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1992, (No. 3) provides for the phase-down of CAFF after July 31, 1992, by the Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan.

Effective August 1, 1992, ACS may continue to provide extensions of existing guarantees to existing clients until March 31, 1995. This phase-down period will provide farmers with time to honour their commitments under existing operating and consolidation loan guarantees. The phase-down period will also reduce the obligation of the provincial government to pay on guarantees. And effective August 1, 1992, ACS will be responsible for paying out existing guarantees to lenders in the event that cases of default do occur.

Mr. Speaker, the Farm Debt Advisory Committee proposed the termination of the CAFF program after extensive consultation with the agricultural community in Saskatchewan. This recommendation is only one of many that will address the farm debt issue. These changes to the Act are only one small part of our larger attack on farm debt.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the members of this House to support the amendments to the Act. And I move second reading of The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1992, (No. 2), and if in order, The Farm Financial Stability Amendment Act, 1992, (No. 3). Thank you.

The Speaker: — I think I have to inform the Minister of Agriculture he'll have to move those two separately.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out a number of things that I think fly in the face of seriousness about the minister to attack farm debt in the province of Saskatchewan.

We have witnessed today the disgusting approach that the minister has taken and forced his colleagues to take over the course of the next few days, of introducing the GRIP Bill that is going to seriously erode the opportunity of farmers in Saskatchewan to compete with their neighbours on the west, their neighbours on the east, and totally destroy the opportunity to be competitive in the province of Saskatchewan against odds that are dominated by the willingness of other provinces to participate in the GRIP program.

Mr. Minister, you have undertaken to seriously erode the financing of the livestock cash advance. It's going to seriously cost the province of Saskatchewan thousands and thousands of jobs over the next two years.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has taken the feed grain assistance program and made us non-competitive in Saskatchewan against all odds of the Alberta industry which have drawn our livestock through the years.

He has made us non-competitive with Manitoba. He has made us non-competitive with the United States in dealing with the industry in agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, this minister is absolutely, totally disgusting when he talks about the kinds of things that he does in his second-reading speech here today.

He said he's going to take and make a new approach to the approach of debt in the province of Saskatchewan. He's right out of his mind, Mr. Speaker. He has absolutely no understanding of the consequences that his role as a Minister of Agriculture has been in the province of Saskatchewan. It's absolutely disgusting that he should even consider bringing these kinds of things forward in light of the fact that he has done absolutely nothing to enhance agriculture in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the province of Saskatchewan gave him a mandate, and I'll tell you what the mandate was in October of 1991. Mr. Speaker, the mandate of that government at that time was to say to the province of Saskatchewan: I am going to give you an enhanced GRIP that will offer you an opportunity to compete in the national and international scene, that is going to be better than what we have here today. And the Premier had the gall in February of this year to say in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* that he would not have to tax one single nickel more in the province of Saskatchewan to deliver a better GRIP.

And you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? The people in the province of Saskatchewan are going to lose on the average \$30 a cultivated acre across this province. And that has been documented time and after time by individuals all across this province. And that is in my mind beyond a shadow of a doubt this Minister of Agriculture taking and squeezing the very life-blood out of agriculture like no minister has ever done before.

Mr. Speaker, I stood in this province and debated whether I was going to allow myself to farm and ranch in this province in 1975. And in 1978, based on the kinds of things that the ministers of Agriculture, the then Kaeding and MacMurchy, were doing to the province of Saskatchewan, competing with tax dollars to buy land that I was not given an opportunity to, competing with all kinds of money to deliver that, I said no, Mr. Speaker; I'm going to fight that. I'm going to fight that trend till the very last.

And do you know what? They are nothing. They are absolutely nothing in devastation compared to what this man has perpetrated on the province of Saskatchewan in agriculture.

There is absolutely no way that this man should even be considered as a Minister of Agriculture. There are many on the other side of the House that have demonstrated in the kinds of things that they have done in the province of Saskatchewan that they would be better ministers of Agriculture than this one right here.

And that, Mr. Speaker, has been evidenced across this province by the people who have called in and said that he has absolutely no reason to be the minister. And all he is doing is . . . We're waiting for the end of the session to get rid of him because the Premier is going to fire him. When all of this is said and done, he's going to be gone.

The people in his constituency are saying this is a one-term government. The strong NDPs in my constituency are telling people on coffee row this is a one-term government. And it's perpetrated on the province of Saskatchewan by individuals like that who consistently have said no to the hog industry, no to the beef industry, no to the grain industry in every way shape and form.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what this individual has done. He has totally ripped apart all of the opportunity. And here, here was an opportunity to develop a counselling program for the province of Saskatchewan that would enhance and provide counselling to those people who were literally strapped and not knowing what to do — driven there by declining markets, declining prices in the markets, and lack of an opportunity to sell.

And, Mr. Speaker, that man has literally chopped agriculture at the knees. He met today with agriculture people in the livestock industry. And, Mr. Speaker, my observations of what he probably did . . . and I heard this by the grape-vine that he even left early because he couldn't continue to attend.

Mr. Speaker, the people, the people in the province of Saskatchewan, expect more from a Minister of

Agriculture. They have a high standard that they have had over the past 20 years that is not matched by this individual. Not at all. Mr. Speaker, he is absolutely, totally disgusting in his approach to agriculture. That, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what this individual has done. I can name individuals who have that same . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I think the member knows that he's not on the Bill right now, and I would ask him to get back to the Bill that is before the Assembly.

Mr. Martens: — The member opposite raised the debt problem in the province of Saskatchewan. And I'm raising the debt problem in the province of Saskatchewan because he knows very well that he is undercutting every opportunity for them to pay that debt.

And as Mr. Art Crone said to us the other day, and as reported in the newspaper, he is going to have to deal with ACS and all of the debt problems that he has perpetrated on the people of the province of Saskatchewan, because he doesn't give them the income and protect them in the income side of their responsibility. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what this individual has done consistently in everything he has done.

That, Mr. Speaker, is why we have kept people who are on CAFF. That is why we have counselling and assistance to provide an understanding, and their peers to allow them to provide understanding to the difficult situations they are in.

And you, Mr. Speaker, are cutting it down at the knees. You're giving more of the same kind of people less and less to deal with. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what this Bill is about. And that is what that minister is about. He is chopping agriculture and slicing it in half.

And you go into the northern part of the province of Saskatchewan and you deal in Cudworth, for example, where the municipality is asking, members of the municipality, are asking the people of the municipality to withhold the taxes because they can't afford to pay it.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what's going on. And you are going to take the counselling out of that area, you're going to take the assistance out of that area, and you're going to provide for the people of the . . . of that area no economic return for the kinds of things that they're prepared to do.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is absolutely, totally disgusting. And it's been perpetrated in this province by that minister and by this Premier who appointed that minister and hasn't got the courage to ask him to quit doing what he's doing and demonstrating how incompetent he is.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely disgusting what he is doing. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more to say on this item and I am going to ask to adjourn debate at this point.

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 5 p.m.