

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present the following petitions to the Assembly:

To the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly sheweth:

that back pain and other highly prevalent neuro-musculo-skeletal disorders are extremely costly to the Canadian economy;

that scientific evidence clearly illustrates that chiropractic treatment is the most cost-effective and efficient therapy for such disorders;

that in the face of an ever-increasing pressure to adopt expensive new forms of high technology treatment, chiropractic care has proven to be a low technology, low cost, conservative, and safe form of treatment, consistent with the true "wellness" model of health care;

that the government publicly asserts it remains committed to the basic principles of medicare, namely universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability, and public administration;

that the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to chiropractic patients;

and that the government's proposed restrictions on this therapy will clearly cost more both in dollars and in patient disability.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I have four such petitions, Mr. Speaker, to present to the House. They are from around the province, various places — Regina, Edenwold, Regina Beach, Milestone. I present these to the Assembly.

Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the petitions I have here today are also petitions with respect to chiropractic treatment in the province.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment, and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, there are . . . I have 11 petitions here from various parts of the province — Yorkton, Kennedy, Lanigan, Yorkton again, Margo, Saskatchewan; Coleville, The Battlefords, Wilkie, Maidstone, North Battleford — quite a few from North Battleford here. These are basically from all over the province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have several petitions numbering six or seven, I would say, and the prayer . . . I'll just read the prayer, Mr. Speaker.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment, and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions come from all over the province, I would say. I can see Ituna, Wishart, Esterhazy, Yorkton, Melville — a lot of Melville, Yorkton — Broadview, Broadacres, Summerberry, Grenfell. And it goes on and on, and it pretty well covers the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two sets of petitions again today, Mr. Speaker. I have GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) petitions, and I won't go through the entire preamble because we've heard it many times, but I will read out the points here:

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

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

And I have petitioners here from Humboldt, Canwood, Prince Albert, Spruce Home, Henribourg, P.A. (Prince Albert), Paddockwood, all over northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I also today also have petitions from the chiropractic people complaining to the government, and I'll only read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And here we have people from Regina, Pilot Butte — mostly Regina people in these particular petitions today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too have some petitions to present to the Assembly. And I have more than normal because of the flood of petitions coming in.

To the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in legislature assembled:

that the government publicly asserts it remains committed to the basic principles of medicare, namely universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility, portability, and public administration;

that the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to chiropractic patients;

Mr. Speaker, I will not, since my colleague read the prayer before, I will dispense with that, other than to note that many of these petitioners come from such diverse places in Saskatchewan as Melville, Yorkton, Langenburg, Norquay, Sturgis, many more from Yorkton, Langenburg. And to show the concern that is really around, one even from Russell, Manitoba.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to read the following petitions and enter them today:

To the Hon. Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in the Legislature Assembled:

The Petition of the undersigned citizens of the Province of Saskatchewan humbly sheweth:

That impaired vision is a highly prevalent disorder, costing millions of dollars and causing distress to thousands of Saskatchewan people;

That early detection of eye disease and related medical conditions by optometrists is a highly cost-effective, painless and effective part of our health care system;

That quality optometric care is vital to the working poor and that there is a direct correlation between workplace safety and good vision;

That the government publicly asserts it remains committed to the basic principles of medicare, namely universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability, and public administration;

That the government is acting to destroy these principles as they apply to optometric patients;

And that the government's proposed deinsurance of optometric care will clearly cost more both in dollars and patient harm,

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the Government to reverse its decision to deinsure optometry and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against optometric patients by refusing them coverage under medicare equal to other patients.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I have 44 pages of petitions today, and they come from all over the province. I see Val Marie, Swift Current, Moose Jaw — well, they're all over — Wymark. It's just from all over the province. And I would enter these now.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to too provide to the Assembly some petitions. It says here:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment and that your Honourable Assembly withhold consent from any government proposal to discriminate against chiropractic patients by charging them fees not assessed for any other medical treatment.

And I have here, Mr. Speaker, people from White City, Indian Head, around Regina, and other places around the province. And I want to submit them here for the Assembly today.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Deputy Clerk: — According to order, the following petitions have been reviewed pursuant to rule 11(7) and they are hereby read and received:

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

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to

reverse its decision to eliminate full coverage and universal access to chiropractic treatment.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I wanted to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Assembly, my two sons: my oldest son Matthew, my younger son Travis. Matthew is seven and Travis is five. They're here with us today to watch the proceedings, so I'm sure that all members will be very well behaved, including the House leaders.

But I seriously want to welcome them here, and I want to ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to the House today.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you, and through you to other members of the Assembly, a group of seniors from the Sturgis READ Club. READ stands for retired elderly active doers.

The group, which is in the Speaker's gallery, is on an educational and fact-finding tour here in Regina. I had the pleasure of joining them for lunch, and they've just finished a tour of the Legislative Building. I invite all members to help me welcome these very special guests from Sturgis.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. MacKinnon: — In addition, Mr. Speaker, among the members from the Sturgis club is a very distinguished guest. Reverend Edwin Wright is the president of the Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. which is the largest seniors' organization in the province.

Reverend Wright was elected president at the organization's annual meeting in Humboldt in June. I invite all members to join with me in welcoming Reverend Wright and congratulating him on his election.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Cunningham: — Mr. Speaker, I also would like to welcome the READ Club to Regina and hope they have a good tour, and a progressive one. And I'm going to be meeting with them after question period and I'm looking forward to the meeting. I ask the members to welcome them again.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many members in this House will have heard me speak in the past about the fact that I was born and raised in the Sturgis district. And our guests today from Sturgis are people that I have known all my life.

Included in the group is my uncle, Hugh Mitchell and my Aunt Olga, as well as lifelong neighbours, Elmer and Lena Sjolie, as well as all the rest, who as I say I grew up with. And I'm just terribly pleased that they're here today and

that the Assembly has welcomed them as they have.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langford: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce the second vice-president from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool here sitting in the east gallery. I'd like everybody to welcome you.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I also want to welcome Leroy Larsen. But additionally, I want to introduce to you and through you to the other members of the Assembly here some people fairly important in my life, my wife and four children and a niece and a nephew. They have come to join us here in the city for a few days. And I would ask the members opposite not to say anything my children may use against me in the future for the time that they are here. My wife, Cheralyn; my daughters, Teresa, Stacey, and Nicole; my son, Lauren, who just turned 15 yesterday; my nephew, Jason, and my niece, Susanna from Winnipeg. I ask you to welcome them.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Changes to Health Care

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My first question is not to the Minister of Agriculture so he and his family can relax for the next few moments.

But my question is to the Minister of Health. Mr. Speaker, Madam Minister, over the past few weeks we've been asking you a number of questions, looking and searching for some concrete answers for rural Saskatchewan hospitals and we have yet to get anything other than fluff.

People believed you when you said and you promised to increase funding to health care. Now they know, instead you will be closing some rural hospitals and eliminating jobs. Would you table today, for everyone to see, the studies of the effects your decisions will have on small towns and villages, Madam Minister? Or are you simply afraid for people to know the truth?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is the members opposite, while they were in government, had no long-term, strategic plan for the development and improvement of health care services in this province — none whatsoever. And they had nine years to put one together and they didn't have the courage to do it.

This government, however, Mr. Speaker, will be going out to rural communities where there are small rural hospitals, and to regional centres. And we will be talking with the people of Saskatchewan to get their input and their ideas about how we can reform the health care system.

We have some ideas that we will be presenting to

communities. And we will be asking them to engage in the discussions with respect to their hospitals and other health care services, and how we can improve programming for health care services for Saskatchewan people.

It's time, Mr. Speaker, for the people of Saskatchewan to look at reforming their health care system, not only to improve the quality of health care services but also with a view to cost efficiency in the health care system. Because the members opposite, as a result of their mismanagement and incompetence, have drummed up a \$15 billion deficit in this . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Toward the end of her remarks the minister was beginning to show a little bit of the arrogance that your government is becoming very, very popular for. And I want to pursue that just a step further, Madam Minister.

While you're busy anticipating the closure of many rural hospitals, you are also opening up some hospitals. Tomorrow, on our initiative and on the initiative of the member from Kindersley while he was in that area helping to get the support for this hospital, in Eatonia, there will be a hospital opening tomorrow. But now he has been told by the board, whose instructions were followed, by your officials when you said the member from Kindersley may not speak at that because we don't want it to get political.

And then to be politically correct, Madam Minister, you are now . . . and you have asked your member from Biggar, the NDP (New Democratic Party) MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) from Biggar to speak at this opening of the Eatonia hospital. How do you equate that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I think that if there are MLAs who wish to speak at that opening, then by all means they should speak at the opening, Mr. Speaker. I think that this . . . who speaks at openings with respect to hospitals is up to the people in the area and the boards of those communities to make those requests of people, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, is that there are a number of facilities that are opening in the province, and there will be government representatives and government speakers at these openings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, I am very glad now that you are able to change your mind. The board is telling us that their officials on your . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order, order. I want to ask the government members, please not to interrupt, okay? Let the member ask his question.

Mr. Neudorf: — The board was told by your officials on

your instructions not to allow the member from Kindersley to speak. That is what the board is saying; that's not what I am saying.

Now, Madam Minister, over the last couple of weeks we have seen what your wellness model means to rural Saskatchewan — simply put, devastation, devastation for rural Saskatchewan.

Madam Minister, the contract with the college of dental physicians . . . pardon me, dental surgeons must be renewed by August 31, 1992. Now it's quite obvious that the people will once again be forced to accept a unilateral decision on your part about the dental plan. Time is running out, Madam Minister; August 31 is approaching.

Will you tell today what your plans are so that the people of rural Saskatchewan can be prepared?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, if the member from Kindersley wants to speak at the opening, that's his business. It's up to the board to invite him, Mr. Speaker. And these red herrings that they throw out are absolutely ridiculous and very petty, I might say.

But on the other hand, with respect to the dental situation, the Government of Saskatchewan is reviewing the various options. Because what the members opposite did when they were in government is they removed dental services out of 330 communities by eliminating over 400 dental workers in Saskatchewan — over 400 dental workers.

We are looking at ways within the fiscal situation — which is horrendous in this province because they virtually bankrupt the province — within the ambit of this fiscal situation, we are looking at ways in which we can bring services back to our schools in rural Saskatchewan. And that research and development is taking place right now.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Madam Minister, a very simple question. Are you going to reinstate the old dental program as you promised before the last election? You went around the countryside complaining, as you were just two minutes ago, about what we did with the dental plan, that you were going to reinstate the old dental plan as it was. Are you going to live up to your promise, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite did away with the old school-based children's dental plan and they fired some 400 dental workers as a result of a very poor decision, taking dental services out of rural Saskatchewan and making it very difficult for young children in rural Saskatchewan to even get the most basic dental services. That's what they did.

And what we promised the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, was to take a look at reintroducing more school-based services. The members opposite, when they say we said we were going to reinstitute the plan

exactly as it is, are misleading the public and they know it. Because that's not what we said and that's not what we wrote to the dental workers. They are misleading, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps we can get Madam Minister to dispense with the political rhetoric and simply answer a simple question. Madam Minister, here it is. Is it true that your new dental plan includes de-insuring dental work for children?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, the hypocrisy they engage in . . . where they virtually decimated the school-based children's dental plan and prevented many people in remote areas in rural Saskatchewan from accessing these services. This is their hypocrisy. Today they stand up here and talk about de-insuring.

What we are going to look at, Mr. Speaker, is a way of getting fundamental, basic, preventive, services back to people in remote communities and rural Saskatchewan. That's what this government is looking at, and I'm waiting to hear the recommendations from the task force that's taking a look at the issue.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you're skipping around the issue, but I will assume that if the plan does not include de-insuring dental work for children, will you prove it by tabling your working paper? Because surely, Madam Minister, with August 31 approaching, your working paper is probably complete. Will you table that so that the public can know so that they don't have to sit back wondering what is going to happen to the dental plan after they have recognized what you have done with chiropractic services, optometry, diabetes, and all these other kinds of things?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I wonder, Mr. Speaker, when the member opposite saw the light with respect to the children's dental plan and when he changed his mind and his group of MLAs' minds with respect to the children's dental plan and the validity of many of those preventive services that are provided to people throughout Saskatchewan. I'm wondering when he changed his mind, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, is people will not go without dental services until we have had . . . we've received a report with respect to the new direction we'll be taking in children's dental services. Services will continue for the public in the mean time while this report is being prepared.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Well, Madam Minister, being that your wellness program only works if people are well, it would follow that your school-based dental program will only

work if children have no dental problems. If your new school-based dental program consists of more than just handing out tooth-brushes in schools, then tell us. Because obviously a tooth-brush is not going to make a toothache go away.

Will parents, Madam Minister, will parents have to pick up the costs for taking their children to dentists? Will you tell us that, Madam Minister?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, right now rural Saskatchewan parents are picking up the cost of travelling to the cities and staying in the cities, meals and hotel rooms with respect to getting dental services for their children because you virtually decimated the school-based children's dental plan — well you did — with respect to the school-based aspect. And you made services in rural Saskatchewan — and fired some 400 dental workers — you made services virtually inaccessible.

Now the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is that's what they did when they were in government. We are looking at developing a plan that will bring fundamental, preventive services back to rural Saskatchewan children in their schools and hopefully . . . And it isn't a question of simply tooth-brushes. The members opposite are simply silly in their question . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Madam Minister, you know full well that there are many more qualified dentists in Saskatchewan now than there have ever been. And these dental services are available to all people in rural Saskatchewan. That is a bunch of huff that you were just disposing of there, Madam Minister.

Now seeing that you will not table any information today, will you give us a date when you will be announcing this new, super — so-called super — dental program of yours? And will you, Madam Minister, commit today that you will allow for appropriate consultation process to take place before this is imposed on the people of Saskatchewan? Or will the opposition, or will the opposition have to release it, as we did with the wellness model?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — The members opposite first say: produce your document; what are you going to do; show it to us. And now they're saying, will you allow appropriate consultation? Well, Mr. Speaker, they can't have it both ways. The fact of the matter is, is the government is consulting. And when we have undergone that consultation, we will make the new direction available for the public to provide more input and information with respect to.

There will be consultation, Mr. Speaker. There is no question about it. And consultation is taking place now. The members opposite, however, they want to have it both ways. First they demand to know what we're doing,

and then they say they want consultation. And they're totally inconsistent in their approach. First they destroy the childrens' dental plan, and then they try to defend it. I wish they would tell us where they were coming from, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Okay, Madam Minister, you want to talk about consultation, let's talk about consultation. You can talk about all these meetings and all of these consultations, but let me tell you, Madam Minister, that I have met with the chiropractors, I have met with the optometrists, I have met with dentists, and do you know what they're telling me? They are telling me that you did not consult, you did not consult with them about anything until it was a done deal, Madam Minister. And your hasty decisions are reaping their rewards now in those fields.

The people, Madam Minister, are getting used to that kind of treatment from the NDP — unilateral decisions made with no consultations. Now, Madam Minister, will you give the dentists of Saskatchewan your word today? Before their contract runs out, will you promise to consult with them before making yet another unilateral medicare decision and imposing it on the people? Will you give them your word?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, this is another example of Tory misleading the public, of Tories misleading the public. The fact of the matter is, is on the committee that's taking a look at it, there is representation from dentists. But this is the way they operate.

Now, with respect to consultation, I would like to ask the member opposite how much consultation he had with the dental therapists and the dental workers — the some 400 across this province — before they fired them. And how much dental therapists did you . . . how much consultation did you have with the rural communities in Saskatchewan before you wiped out the school-based children's dental plan? How much consultation?

What I have here is a document that was tabled in this House, as a matter of fact, that lists many, many people with whom we've consulted on numerous issues. This government is not wanting in consultation. It's not wanting in consultation, Mr. Speaker.

The consultation is adequate as far as this government is concerned, and we will continue to consult with the public in the hope that our decisions will reflect their concerns.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From Madam Minister's remarks, there will be some people in Saskatchewan that are happy that she has now committed the government to restoring fully the old dental school program. Those were your remarks, Madam Minister.

Now, Madam Minister, I've spoken to many individuals about your government's decisions regarding medicare

in Saskatchewan and there's one consensus that is coming through clearer and clearer. Your wellness plans means: get well, stay well, or farewell. That is the essence in the summation of your wellness model.

And many people are hurting from your terrible decisions, Madam Minister. One particular gentleman has an aunt who lives close to Regina — in a town here — and she received a document, which I have with me, she received a document entitled: resident income test form. And she got that from your government.

Could you explain, Madam Minister, exactly what the purpose of this form is — and I have it right here — and why seniors all over Saskatchewan are receiving this form?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I think what the . . . Mr. Speaker, first of all, with respect to farewell, with respect to farewell — that's what the people said to the Tories last October.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — With respect to the document that the member opposite is talking about, I would ask him to table it. We'll take a look at it and we will tell him what it is about. So I ask him to table it.

Mr. Neudorf: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I will be only too happy to table the form that her department has sent out if the minister is not aware of what the form is.

Madam Minister, then maybe the next questions are also not going to be answered by you, but I'm going to ask the question anyway. Is it your intention to change universality in senior facilities? If not, why is it necessary to test the income of seniors and why are some seniors being forced to pay \$200 more per month than other seniors?

Hon. Ms. Simard: — I've asked the member to bring the form over. We'll take a look at it and then I'll provide him with the information that he requires.

The fact of the matter is, is we have provided a safety net, for example, with respect to the drug plan that allows people — seniors and others who cannot afford their drugs — to get special protection and special compensation. There are other programs in the government that allow for low income seniors and low income people to get special consideration by the government in tough economic times. And so I wouldn't be surprised that there will be a mechanism by which the department determines whether or not someone needs this extra protection.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the Minister of Health once more: Madam Minister, the senior I'm talking about has seen her monthly residence charge jump from \$726 a month to \$937 a month. She's looking at an increase of \$211 per month, which means she has only a little over \$300 a month to pay for her

prescription drugs, which you have increased; your telephone service, which you have increased. She has less money left to pay for her clothing, for her presents for her grandchildren, and so on. She cannot afford to pay her residence charge each month without going in the hole by about \$200 a month.

Now, Madam Minister, to make matters worse, your government has cancelled the seniors' heritage fund. What do you tell these seniors, Madam Minister? What do you tell these seniors? What do you tell these seniors? That because they gross over \$1,500 a month . . . or 15,000 a year — which is below the poverty line according to your figures — do you tell them that you don't care if they can't pay their bills each month because of your harmful decisions that we've been talking about this afternoon?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the member opposite tells seniors — that they went from \$140 million surplus in this province to a \$15 billion debt. I wonder what he tells the seniors about his responsibility for the fact that now we have to engage in budgetary reductions with respect to programs that are available.

The fact that this government is trying to get a handle on the outrageous debt legacy they've been left with . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. There wasn't any interruption at all when the member asked his question. I'd ask the members please not to interrupt when a minister is trying to answer.

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder what the members opposite say to seniors who built this province to what it was, to see their heritage for their grandchildren destroyed by those members opposite. I wonder what they say to seniors in that kind of a situation.

It is true that there are budgetary reductions in health programs and in other programs throughout this province to pay for the huge debt legacy that you have left us, but I say to the hon. member, he has an obligation to explain his actions to the seniors.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering, Madam Minister, how long it would take you to get into the political rhetoric. When you don't have an answer, the deficit becomes everything.

The Speaker: — Order. I just asked the members opposite to not interrupt when the minister is speaking. I'm asking the government members to not interrupt when the member is trying to ask his question.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to you, Madam Minister, the end justifies any kind of means to get there and you're doing it on the backs of the seniors.

I'll tell you what we did when we were in government. We took our six-year moratorium off of nursing homes.

We continued to build nursing homes for seniors. That's what we did while you were busy buying potash mines — dry holes in the ground, creating no new jobs. That's what we did, Madam Minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the senior that I'm talking about is one of the lucky ones because she has a family to help her. Many people do not. Many seniors do not have a family to rely on. What about those seniors who gross between \$900 a month and a thousand dollars a month? According to your department, they're paying 751 and \$801 a month.

How do you, Madam Minister — my question, Mr. Speaker, to Madam Minister, if I can just be heard over some of the other members — how do you expect these seniors to be able to survive on less than \$200 a month, Madam Minister? What are you going to do to help them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Mr. Speaker, the government has set up safety nets for people who are on low income and have difficulty meeting their expenses. Anyone who is in that situation can contact the government and their situation will be reviewed.

The fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker . . . and I have a seniors' commentary here, a newsprint that talks about the budget and shows the need for budgetary restraint of the nature that this government has put forward during the budget. This is a seniors' commentary and what they say is on the whole those seniors, particularly those on low incomes, didn't fare too badly.

They go on to talk about the increase in grants to home care and how that is a bright side. The government increased funding for home care by \$6 million, a hike of almost 20 per cent, a hike of almost 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The seniors know . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Before I ask the member to . . . I think all members know that I do have a timer up here. And in this particular case again the member took more time than the minister took in answering the question. But I keep very strict time of the members asking questions and the minister giving them. There's time for one more question and I'll recognize the member from Rosthern.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I promise this is my last question for the afternoon. Madam Minister, it seems the word "closure" has become one of the NDP's favourite words. Closure on this motion, closure on that motion, closure of rural hospitals, closure of rural schools, and now closure of senior facilities.

You who belong to a party who claim to be the only people who care about children are now backtracking on your promise to reinstate the old dental plan. Your government, the NDP, who have claimed for quite some time that you are the only ones capable of caring for our seniors, are scrapping the seniors' heritage fund, increasing taxes to seniors, increasing prescription drugs for seniors, and now you're making seniors dig deeper

and deeper into their pockets just to pay for their well-being. How do you account for that, Madam Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Simard: — Another example, Mr. Speaker, of the Tories misleading the public. What this seniors' commentary says — which is the accuracy and the truth — is that the heritage grant program was not eliminated. Did we not just hear him say it was eliminated? Which many seniors thought might happen. Instead, the eligibility ceiling was reduced.

The seniors go on to say, Mr. Speaker, that government found itself caught between the devil and the deep blue sea — the devils over there. But without stern economic measures at this time, the situation would deteriorate even further. The seniors of this province have more common sense and more commitment to Saskatchewan than the members opposite, who constantly act like little schoolboys.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I would like to ask leave of the Assembly to move a motion:

That the House recommend the appointment of Derril McLeod as Information and Privacy Commissioner pursuant to section 38 of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Leave granted.

(1445)

MOTIONS

Appointment of Information and Privacy Commissioner

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I thank the legislature for giving me leave, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Minister of Social Services:

That an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor recommending that Derril McLeod, Q.C. of the city of Regina in the province of Saskatchewan be appointed Information and Privacy Commissioner pursuant to section 38 of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a couple of comments before we support the government with the motion. First of all I would like to add that I was pleased to be part of a government that first brought forward the freedom of information Act to the Saskatchewan people.

We all are aware of the fact that it is no secret that politics have changed over the years and especially here in Saskatchewan, politics has become a subject that is talked about as often as the weather. I think it is right, Mr. Speaker, that people should be able to obtain details

about their tax dollars, how they are being spent, have the ability to obtain information about government economic activities and so on. The freedom of information Act, used in its intended form, provides that information for the public.

I'm also pleased that the former government's freedom of information Act provided for a privacy commissioner to help implement and oversee the Act. I believe, Mr. Speaker, if allowed to perform his duties properly, Mr. McLeod will be able to offer the public of Saskatchewan a service that they have never previously had access to.

We hope that this is a sincere effort to protect people's privacy and provide information to the people of the province, and that Mr. McLeod will not have his efforts hindered by a government that seems to be interested in putting limitations on freedoms of individuals.

I sincerely hope that the powers given to the new Privacy Commissioner by the NDP government will indeed have a tremendous benefit to the people of Saskatchewan so that this individual can do the best job ever. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

APPROPRIATION BILL

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski that **Bill No. 86 — An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 1993** be now read a second and third time.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that we finally have an opportunity to bring this matter to a resolve and a conclusion because, as members of this legislature well know, the importance of the interim supply Bill in providing timely payments to third parties, municipalities, to non-government organizations, to people on Saskatchewan assistance, is dependent on the passage of an interim supply Bill.

That's one of the reasons why, as I rise to speak, Mr. Speaker, I never cease to be surprised and somewhat concerned that the members opposite would prolong a debate on something like an interim supply Bill which has a tradition in this House over many, many years of taking no more than 15 or 20 minutes to pass.

An Hon. Member: — Give me a break.

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now the member from Thunder Creek looks and he says, give me a break. Well I will try to do that as I go through my remarks, Mr. Speaker, and clarify some of the misleading things that the members opposite have been saying in this debate.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, there is no denying the fact that in

the last couple of years, interim supply debates have taken a little longer than the usual 15 to 20 minutes. But, Mr. Speaker, that does not change the circumstances whatsoever. The fact is that the members opposite, although they rose in this House and spoke at length about not being able to ask questions, were not being totally factual in what they were saying because, Mr. Speaker, this is the third interim supply Bill that has been brought before this legislature in this session.

The first one, the members opposite had five days in which they asked questions in interim supply. The second interim supply Bill, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite took two or a little in excess of two days to ask questions. Mr. Speaker, in this interim supply Bill, all of last Thursday into the evening, the members opposite rose to ask questions. So for them to make the allegations that they did not have an opportunity to ask those questions, Mr. Speaker, is just not the facts. I want to make that clear into the record.

The other thing I want to clarify, Mr. Speaker, for the record and for the public, is what an interim supply Bill is all about. The members opposite fully realize that all that an interim supply Bill does is provides one-twelfth of the appropriation which the whole budget requests. The reason for that is so that the legislature can approve that one-twelfth expenditure, Mr. Speaker, and that the government does not do it arbitrarily. It's a very important accountability measure.

Now having asked the questions on the first interim supply Bill, on the very same budget, which has not changed because it has not yet been voted on, Mr. Speaker, there are not many new questions that the members opposite could possibly need to ask. So for the members to say that they have not been able to get questions in, Mr. Speaker, is just not correct.

They also very well know, and so does the public know, that all of the expenditures of interim supply and all the proposed expenditures of the government will be brought into this House when the estimates of all of the departments are considered by this Assembly. And there, at that point, Mr. Speaker, all of the appropriate questions can be asked by the members and all the answers will be provided.

The record on interim supply and what cannot be asked, and what cannot be asked, is very clear. I bring to your attention, Mr. Speaker, a ruling that was made. And this is one of several rulings made in 1990 by the former Speaker, your predecessor, who happened to be a Speaker during the time of the former administration.

And here is what that Speaker ruled, Mr. Speaker. He said on May 10, 1990, that:

... members must realize that this is not an appropriate place to get into detailed questions on the operation of specific departments' programs.

And then he went on to say:

And the purpose of interim supply is to grant money for the operation of the government

departments and programs on an interim basis while reserving to the Legislative Assembly the right to complete the detailed review of estimates at a later time. For this reason members must reserve their detailed questions on estimates and government financial policy for the regular review of the main estimates.

Now how can anything be more clear, Mr. Speaker? That is the way the ruling of the House has been and continues to be on these matters. So what do I conclude and what can the public conclude from what the members opposite have been doing in the last three days? The only thing that we can conclude, that they are still doing what they have now been doing for 58 days in this Legislative Assembly — wasting time.

I don't understand why. The members, on the one hand, argue that they want to ask questions. On the other hand the members opposite won't allow the estimates for the various departments that have come to this Legislative Assembly so that they then are provided with an opportunity to ask those questions.

The only conclusion therefore, Mr. Speaker, that the members are not interested in having the work of the people of Saskatchewan done in this legislature which they elected every member of this House to do. I find that unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

When the motion was before the House the other day, Mr. Speaker, every one of the 10 members in the opposition and even the Liberal member had an opportunity to speak. They say they're being muzzled. Well they're not being muzzled, Mr. Speaker. Because even though they were given an opportunity to speak, only three of them spoke. All the rest of them did not avail themselves of that opportunity to speak in this debate.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, I'm not going to take too long but I want to clarify one or two other things. I want to make this one comment and I don't want to do it in a controversial, adversarial kind of way. But I want to make it, Mr. Speaker, because for all the years that I have been a member of this Assembly I have felt very strongly about this matter. And so I'm going to make this one brief statement, and that is in reference to a comment made by the member from Arm River yesterday with regard to public servants.

Well I want to say for the record, Mr. Speaker, that the public servants of this province are as good and maybe even better than most public servants across all of Canada. And we should be proud of them because of the work that they do. And I think that the time has passed . . . the 1980s under the former administration should be put aside when it was fair game, it seemed, for politicians, both Conservative and some Liberal — and I'm not including the member who sits in this House in that — to attack public servants who are unable to defend themselves out in the public and in here, simply for cheap political gain.

They work for a living just like fishermen do and like farmers do and like labourers do and construction workers do. And for the member for Arm River to stand in

this House and say what he said about public servants yesterday — for which he was then told that he could not sit in the House for the rest of the day because he was called by name — is unacceptable. And I want to say that I for one do not want to associate myself with those comments, and neither do my colleagues on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Now, Mr. Speaker, people are asking, what is going on in this legislature? And they are also saying that they are extremely upset by the fact that the opposition, the official opposition, is not prepared to do the work that they were elected to do in this Assembly.

There has been nothing but total obstructionism for the 58 days that this Assembly has been sitting.

And when the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, presented itself the other day to deal with Bills . . . I think it was on Thursday evening. Or was it Monday evening? This Assembly dealt with six Bills. Six Bills came to this Assembly and it took all evening to get those Bills through even though members opposite did not rise to speak on any one of them.

They did not rise to speak on any one of them. What did they do? Every time a Bill came up for second reading, Mr. Speaker, the Conservative members of this Assembly rang the bells for 30 minutes, which is the time limit allowed for the ringing of bells, without ever speaking to the Bill, in order to use up the time of the House so that other business could not be brought to this Assembly.

I don't think, Mr. Speaker, that there needs to be any more proof of the fact that the issue here is not interim supply in the minds of the members opposite; the issue here is not with responsible government; the issue here isn't to get on with the work of this Assembly and deal with the legislation and deal with the estimates. The issue simply here is that the members of the official opposition are not doing their homework and preparing themselves so that we can get on with the work of the people's business which is what they expect us to do here.

And the other reason, Mr. Speaker, is that for some strange reason, and I pleaded with them here in a positive way on another occasion, they refuse to accept the fact that the public of Saskatchewan on October 21 of 1991 made a very important decision. And some of us thought the decision was the right one. The people obviously did, because they're always right. And some decided it was not the right one. But that's irrelevant, because the decision of the electorate is always the right one.

(1500)

And so the time has come for the members in opposition to put the memories of that election behind them and begin to make a contribution to this legislature in a positive way. Let's get on with the business of this House because that's what we're here for.

Now the argument was made by one of the members opposite — I think it was the member from Kindersley —

who said that if the government would provide them . . . Or was it maybe the member from Moosomin? Does it really matter? It's made on behalf of the opposition. But they said that if the government provided an idea of what the work would be for any particular day, they'd be quite prepared to get on with it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, for the last several weeks that's exactly what's been happening. The House Leader for the government side has indicated to the members opposite what a certain amount of work agenda would be done in any particular day, and the members of the opposition agreed. And then as the day progressed they never got to that work, Mr. Speaker.

So there is no sense in thinking that you can deal with those members opposite on that kind of a basis.

The bottom line to all of this is this: one, the people of Saskatchewan elected us here to do their work for them. They did not elect us here to waste the time of this Assembly. Two, an interim supply Bill in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is not unusual. It is only providing one-twelfth of the amount of the full budget for one month of expenditures. And if the next month there needs to be an interim supply Bill, the Minister of Finance will have to come in here once again and introduce an interim supply Bill.

And when that's all over, there is still the opportunity for considering the estimates of the Department of Finance and every other department in detail — as should be the case because the government should be accountable — at which time the members can get the information that they rightfully should have and which the public of Saskatchewan should rightfully have.

So really, Mr. Speaker, what we have been doing here since last Thursday is not what I would have liked us to be doing. We should have been on to other business several days ago if it wasn't the desire of the Conservative members opposite to filibuster, to waste time, and to delay on one issue which is in their mind, the issue that they want to delay on, and that is the GRIP legislation.

Well even that, Mr. Speaker, is no reason to delay the work of the interim supply which is now one day late. And therefore some of the people who are going to get their payments, which they require and which they need and which the government is obligated to provide to them by law, are going to get them late. That's hardly a justification, Mr. Speaker, whatever the motives of the opposition are, to do that kind of a delaying tactic and causing people to suffer because of what they're doing.

I'm glad that this debate is over. And when another interim supply that is necessary comes to the House in this session or some other session, the Minister of Finance will rise and provide answers once again within the limits of the debate that are provided under the rules, just as has been the case on previous interim supply Bills this year including this one which we're considering now.

I'm glad this debate is over, Mr. Speaker, and we can get on with the business of the House, because I for one do not support the position taken by some members of this

House that it's appropriate to waste the time and the taxpayers' money for doing nothing while there is an agenda in the legislature to be accomplished.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support second and third reading of this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 3:05 p.m. until 3:35 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 35

Van Mulligen	Johnson
Thompson	Trew
Wiens	Serby
Tchorzewski	Sonntag
Teichrob	Flavel
Shillington	Roy
Koskie	Cline
Anguish	Scott
Goulet	McPherson
Atkinson	Wormsbecker
Kowalsky	Crofford
Carson	Stanger
Penner	Harper
Hagel	Kluz
Lautermilch	Carlson
Calvert	Langford
Murray	Jess
Hamilton	

Nays — 10

Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	Toth
Swenson	Goohsen
Boyd	D'Autremont
Martens	Haverstock

The Bill read a second and third time and passed under its title.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

MOTION FOR CLOSURE

Hon. Mr. Tchorzewski: — Mr. Speaker, I guess I should repeat the motion. Before the order of the day is called for resuming the adjourned debate on item 12, a motion to proceed with the vote of first reading of a Bill respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation, I move:

That debate on the motion to proceed with the vote on first reading of a Bill respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation be not further adjourned.

The division bells rang from 3:39 p.m. until 3:49 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 34

Van Mulligen	Johnson
Thompson	Trew
Wiens	Serby
Tchorzewski	Sonntag
Teichrob	Flavel
Shillington	Roy
Koskie	Cline
Anguish	Scott
Goulet	McPherson
Kowalsky	Wormsbecker
Carson	Crofford
MacKinnon	Stanger
Penner	Harper
Hagel	Kluz
Lautermilch	Carlson
Calvert	Langford
Hamilton	Jess

Nays — 10

Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	Toth
Swenson	Goohsen
Boyd	D'Autremont
Martens	Haverstock

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Vote to be Taken on First Reading of Bill

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wiens.

Mr. Martens: — As I said on Friday last week and beginning the discussion, Mr. Speaker, I talked about the historical day that it was for the people of the province of Saskatchewan and this Assembly. I want to point out a number of things that I think are historical. We've had, I believe, four closures in the last month — that's historical, I believe, in every sense of the word — and three in the last day. I think that is historical. I want to point out a number of things today that I think are of interest, and I want to point them out in a sense of why I believe the government is acting in this overpowering way.

The Minister of Agriculture sent a letter out to every producer — and I got one in the mail as well as everyone else — dated July 21. And in that letter — I believe it was in reaction to the letter that the Minister of Agriculture for Canada sent out — and in that he makes a statement like this:

The province, in spite of its limited financial capacity, has taken on a dramatically increased role in providing income support to farmers.

In my belief, Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. In every budget, in every budget line, in every budget line across the Department of Agriculture, there is a reduction, Mr. Minister. And that, Mr. Speaker, is what . . . This minister says it is otherwise. And what . . . At the bottom of this, one person had the courage to send it back, so far. Two people from Marcelin, Saskatchewan, said this:

Maybe you should have kept the old GRIP format and we wouldn't need to go begging to the federal government. But because you're so cheap or too cheap to pay up doesn't mean farmers should do your dirty work and write to the federal government. Do your job.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what they wrote to the Minister of Agriculture as a result of that. And that is what I believe the people of the province of Saskatchewan, along with the opposition, believe. That is a fact. Do your job, and then you won't have to go begging to everybody else to have the farmers write in, if you did your job in the first place.

The second . . . I just want to quote, Mr. Speaker, in today's paper, the *Leader-Post* said a number of things I think that are significant. The newspaper article says that there are a number of reasons why GRIP is on the list of things that we in the province of Saskatchewan believe should be discussed.

The first reason is this:

GRIP was not only just another PC government program — it was one of the cornerstones in their re-election platform.

Yes sir, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, what did they lose? Mr. Speaker, every farmer in the province of Saskatchewan is going to have a broken contract later this day, Mr. Speaker — later this day.

The second and nearly as obvious reason for the Tories opposing changes to GRIP is the abysmal way the NDP government has attempted to carry out those changes.

Mr. Speaker, we have attempted . . . and the press have realized, and the people across this province have realized that the abysmal attempts of the government opposite, and I believe that minister, are at the root of all of this.

Just how wrong the NDP government has been in attempting to retroactively change the rules of the old program via the new GRIP bill — the reasons behind the 18-day bell-ringing walkout and the source of much of the problems this session — is something the NDP still doesn't fully appreciate.

They don't understand. Closure. Unilateral changes to rules. It's not been done in the history of this province where unilaterally changing rules to drive an opposing view into oblivion.

An unyielding, ham-handed government clearly broke contracts with farmers by not properly notifying them of changes to the program by the March 15 deadline.

And it goes on, Mr. Speaker. But I'm limited. I can read the whole thing, but I'm limited, Mr. Minister, and Mr. Speaker, by you opposite who told me that I have 20 minutes to finish this discussion. You told me that I have

20 minutes to talk about it and that's it. We'll throttle the opposition by that.

I want to tell you why I believe that this government is doing this. The first reason I believe the government is doing this in a Bill is because they're afraid to go to court. They're afraid to stand in the court room and say, we didn't follow the law. That's what they're afraid of. That's what this whole government — that's the executive branch of government — is afraid of.

The second thing they're afraid of, of having the trial jury decide that they are guilty by their own admission. The admission as evidence as presented in a court of law in Melville said that the Minister of Agriculture would provide to the court a letter, a statement of fact with the legislation saying that he had deemed to have sent out a letter prior to March 15.

That's the second reason why this government doesn't want to go to court. That's why they're putting it in this Assembly, so that they can have the freedom of expression in this Assembly and it cannot be held against them. They want to have this Assembly change evidence in a court of law.

The third reason, Mr. Speaker, they don't want to go to court and do this in a normal fashion is because they're afraid to testify under oath whether they knew about the time line. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that is clearly why the Minister of Agriculture and the minister responsible for Crop Insurance don't want to be involved in a court case. They will have to say that they knew. They will have to say that they knew in this Assembly by identifying in a court of law the Bill before this Assembly today. They will have to identify that they were not correct.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what they're going to have to testify on when they're asked or subpoenaed to the court. And they're afraid of that, Mr. Speaker. So they're going to have this Assembly change evidence before a court of law.

(1600)

The fourth reason is they don't specifically want this minister to have to appear in court. That is the reason. Because he will have to stand there and say, I knew, or he'll have to say, I didn't know. And one of them is the truth and the other one is not. And that is what he's going to have to say. And as I made my case on Friday, this minister will either tell the truth or perjure himself. That is the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker.

The fifth reason why this government doesn't want to go to court is because every one of those people in Crop Insurance who were fired do not have to toe the line today in relation to testifying before a court of law what the truth really is. And that, Mr. Speaker, is also what they're afraid of. That is what they're afraid of.

Item number six: this government is afraid of going to court because they don't want to have the GRIP committee testify that this minister stood there and told them, somehow we'll get around it — referring to the March 15 deadline. Somehow, Mr. Speaker, we will get

around it. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the sixth reason.

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is they have broken the rules of the agreement itself. Mr. Speaker, in the agreement is a rule that says that there must be a committee established to have the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan come to them, to this committee, to see whether their rights have been forfeited. That is what the agreement says.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is what this Minister of Agriculture has not done, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, he is in breach of the very contract itself. He has not given an opportunity for farmers in the province of Saskatchewan to appeal the decision on changes of GRIP to this committee, which would be their legal right. And that agreement has been broken. And that, Mr. Speaker, is exactly the reason why we think this Bill before the Assembly, that is going to be presented later today, is wrong. It's wrong because of those items, as I lay them out before you here today.

There are significant, I believe, issues of difference in philosophy in what the government believes for GRIP '91 and what we believe for GRIP '92. However I want to point out to this Assembly that our objection, our total objection in all of this, has been that this government mishandled, misused, and, Mr. Speaker, they are about to abuse, the justice system in the province of Saskatchewan.

I believe that as sure as I stand here, Mr. Speaker, that that is the reason why they're putting this Bill forward. And, Mr. Speaker, as long as I have the right to speak, which is being eroded every day in this Assembly, I will continue to talk to this executive branch of government about their loose use of the truth and their misuse of the opportunity to speak in this Assembly, and the privilege that the individual who speaks in this Assembly has, and that it cannot be used in a court of law.

This minister is going to say in this Assembly, I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, that he is going to tell this Assembly, that he is not in breach of the law. But he will not, he will not allow the court to determine that. He will want to determine that himself, because the 12 members of this cabinet think they're the jury, and the people in the province of Saskatchewan will decide that.

Mr. Speaker, there is going to be opportunity for me to discuss this in second reading, which is going to follow shortly. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am going to conclude my remarks by saying this. Never in my life did I expect to have people respond in a fashion on an issue as pointed as this one is. Because this one is, in my mind, Mr. Speaker, an illegal process in an illegal action done by this Legislative Assembly in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have said my piece and I rest my case.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as the representative of the largest urban constituency in Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Greystone, to enter the debate on the motion to introduce one of the most important

agricultural Bills in the history of our province. The member from Morse has eloquently outlined many of his concerns, and I have many concerns of my own, but from a different perspective.

This Bill is not just a farm Bill nor is it a Bill that will simply impact on rural Saskatchewan. The Bill presently under suspension is one which will influence the agricultural future, the economic future, the social future, and indeed I believe the political future of this province.

Over the past year two political parties have gone toe-to-toe in the political arena over who knows best for farmers. Never in the memory of Saskatchewan people has there been an issue which has created so much acrimony and disrespect within this legislature.

As someone who was elected on a promise to put the interests of people ahead of partisanship, I am deeply disturbed by the apparent lack of willingness to put politics aside in the interest of solving the problems which GRIP was developed to address.

This Assembly is faced with a decision, a decision about whether the proposed GRIP legislation should be introduced for discussion, while those of us in opposition know that there will be no discussion and no room for compromise. The recent actions of the NDP have given evidence that no matter what this Bill contains, good or bad, it shall become law.

And we know that in spite of all of the tools an opposition can employ to delay, a lopsided majority government will inevitably rule. This new government has proven to be more interested in power and control than in showing leadership and commitment to solving a very serious problem.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I am saddened that the debate in this Assembly will not be, nor has it been until now, about the merits or deficiencies of the gross revenue insurance program or the changes proposed thereto.

I am saddened that the debate will be about the right of the government to refuse to negotiate, to refuse to debate with an open mind, to refuse to allow criticism of its legislation because it has already decided the outcome before the process even began.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we are considering in this debate whether the suspension of the GRIP Bill should be continued or lifted, thus allowing it to pass and become retroactive law regardless of consequences, we must indeed consider the process through which this Bill came about.

It is obvious that the process that the Saskatchewan government implemented to bring about changes to GRIP was done in great haste and resulted in a program that left many Saskatchewan farm families in a desperate situation. Most importantly, the original program was not the result of broad consultation with the farming community across our province. With a reduced level of support under GRIP '92, the lower coverage will result in many farmers not even being able to cover operating costs. For farmers facing an average or below-average

crop this year, the difference between GRIP '91 and GRIP '92 will mean failure to realize a net income.

In assessing the changes made to GRIP, Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that everyone in the Saskatchewan government was concerned about a small number of individuals who were perceived as abusing the system. And admittedly there was room for abuse, and indeed I'm sure some abuses were being committed. The result however is that the government jumped the gun to implement changes which may have reduced the abuses, but have at the same time exposed most Saskatchewan farm families to a substantially higher level of risk. With the enormous array of risks and factors beyond the control of our farmers today, it defies reason to see the government creating one more difficulty for them.

Mr. Speaker, it was the present opposition who threw the initial GRIP together in pre-election haste. People are saying that GRIP '91 was full of holes. And every farmer in Saskatchewan can attest to that. And, Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives did have time to correct some mistakes. But people have been forthright about the problems with the initial program.

Mr. Speaker, we have an NDP government in Saskatchewan now. They are responsible for the process. They are responsible for the content. They are responsible for the outcome of their choices. They are the ones who chose to create a program that costs farmers more and offers less coverage. They are the government that chose to trip over the recommendations of their own Farm Debt Committee. Just when one committee offers recommendations to help address the farm debt problem, the government changed GRIP and undermined some very well thought-out suggestions.

The Farm Debt Advisory Committee recommended the phasing out of the counselling and assistance for farmers program that helped farmers acquire operating credit because they believed farmers could obtain credit without too many difficulties because of the '91 GRIP program. And just when the government followed the suggestions of their own Farm Debt Committee, they also rush ahead and change GRIP, undermining their own efforts to deal with farm debt.

As a result of their hasty changes to GRIP, Mr. Speaker, it is now much more difficult for farmers to get the credit they need. But now CAFF (counselling and assistance for farmers program) is gone, and farmers have no defence behind which to safely stand. It appears in this government that the left hand did not know and still does not know what the right hand is doing, and only confusion reigns over the situation.

But when this Minister of Agriculture claims to be acting in the best interest of farmers because he has consulted with them and then hides behind a majority government to ram changes through retroactively to cover two left footprints, farmers are saying that he is not speaking for them.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I stand here today to deliver my message on the GRIP motion, I can honestly tell you that I have talked to many Saskatchewan farm families, and I

have been forthright with them. I don't tell them that I have any ultimate solutions for agriculture. And they in turn have chosen to be forthright with me.

Farm families are watching what is going on in this legislature and they are telling me, they are saying, nobody is really speaking for farmers. The whole thing has now been reduced to petty politics and we, the Saskatchewan farm people, are being sold down the drain with the muddy water.

When we talk about bringing this Bill back for a vote, every single person in this Assembly had better take a good, long look in the mirror to see the person who is going to rise as an elected representative in this House and cast a vote on behalf of what is right for agriculture, what is right for people, and what is right for democracy in this province.

And there is not one member in this Assembly, particularly in the government, who should be so arrogant or so naïve as to think that voting to ram this Bill through is one of the rights of power. Not one of the members of this Assembly should forget the impact that bad decisions can have on the economy of this province, on the lives of our people, and on the communities that make up the social fabric of both rural and urban Saskatchewan.

GRIP '92 isn't just some new form. It isn't a shiny pamphlet in some easy, flip-of-a-coin decision for many Saskatchewan farmers. Many of these people signed up for a new, improved version, Mr. Speaker, only to find that when they applied for operating money this spring, their lenders could not calculate the bankable income and said no to financing. Farm families are left feeling bitter and betrayed when they could not even count on the support of their own government in an attempt to achieve lender confidence.

I can say with certainty that if the Saskatchewan government was really serious about supporting farmers and making much-needed improvements to GRIP, they would have heeded the advice to place far more emphasis on the index moving average price which over time reduces the support price to farmers. In a period of increasing costs, lower support prices only add to the increasing debt load facing many farm families.

(1615)

But let's face it, Mr. Speaker, this government was in a hurry. They were in a hurry to respond to pressure from disgruntled people. They were in a hurry to take away the political soap-box from which the outgoing Conservatives had preached to farmers for so many years. They were in a hurry to get on with some changes, any changes, to take the heat off their new Agriculture minister. And so they unilaterally opted out of GRIP '91 as quickly as the former premier had opted in.

So now here we sit — a motion to proceed with a Bill to retroactively justify changes to a program which is still unworkable; an arrogant government which has removed all reasonable chance at creating a spirit of co-operation in this legislature. The Premier and the

Leader of the Opposition engaged in a childish game of sand-box politics over who did the best job of creating an unworkable farm safety net program.

And while we engage in this non-democratic, non-productive, non-sensible process, the lives and the livelihoods of thousands of farm men, farm women, and children swing and sway in the delicate balance between future and foreclosure.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the reality of the situation, not what is going on in this Assembly. This is not reality. Farmers who come in from a long day and crunch their numbers, calculating anticipated yields and input costs and farm subsidy expectations, they're not worried about the government invoking closure. They are worried about the bank invoking foreclosure.

While we ring bells and read petitions and spend hours talking about everything and nothing to stall the process and forestall the inevitable, farm families are lying awake at nights in fear of their future.

While the Leader of the Opposition and his caucus do enter into insults across the floor and wait for the return volley and retorts and defences and accusations from the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, I know that this is political game-playing at its worst, and that there is a different reality for farm people across this province. Because, my fellow members, there are real quarrels, there are real family breakdowns, there are real suicides that are happening over the decisions that we make or we fail to make inside this Chamber. And there must be more that we can be doing.

I would like to think that it matters what I have to say about whether this Bill comes back before this House for debate. I would like to think that the members of this government will make their final judgement on the Bill based on its ability to improve the lives of people in this province. Or if it doesn't, that we would go back to the drawing-board to create a better and more effective legislation. But I continue to be discouraged, discouraged by government members whose talents, capabilities, and compassion are laid to waste by either an iron fist of party discipline or the mob mentality that has come to characterize the New Democratic Party.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I do the best to participate in the process, wanting to be a reasonable voice.

I will in closing state what I believe to be the best course of action for the province of Saskatchewan. And I hope that members will hear my comments, not from a political point of view, although I don't know if they have that ability, but as constructive suggestions as to what could be solutions to an admittedly difficult problem.

During this period of tremendous pressure on farm families, I must question the wisdom of the government to reduce the farm support programs giving Manitoba and Alberta a competitive advantage.

And I strongly urge the Minister of Agriculture, before returning this Bill to the floor, to meet with the ministers of Agriculture from Manitoba and Alberta with one item on

the agenda — to achieve concurrence on a prairie grain belt GRIP and a third line of defence request from the three prairie provinces.

My second recommendation is for the leaders of all three political parties in Saskatchewan to come together and exert pressure on the federal government to deliver on whatever agreement emerges from the three ministers of Agriculture. We must become a unified voice that works collectively in the best interests . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I hate to interrupt the member, but I've been listening to the member from Shaunavon, and this is not the first time. The member from Shaunavon does interrupt at least three or four times on every day that we have debate. And I wish that he would read the rules, and knows that when another person is debating, he is not to interrupt.

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The \$40 million offered recently by the federal government is an insensitive refusal to acknowledge the severity of the problems faced in dried out regions of our province.

And finally, I suggest that we must revisit this legislature as players on a team bigger than politics. We must sit down and repair the broken parts of GRIP so that it will run smoothly over all the farmers' fields for as long as we need to rely upon it. This would be an accomplishment of which we could all, regardless of our political stripes, be proud.

In the mean time, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to pull in the horns of its majority in the interest of progress and productivity. I urge the opposition to act less in its political self-interest from time to time and more in the interests of farmers, if that is truly who they are wanting to serve.

And for my part, I will support whatever efforts are made to revise this legislation, which I will not be voting to bring back to this House until a more concentrated leadership effort is put forward by the government to bring the opposition parties on side with this Bill by negotiating its necessary changes.

The Speaker: — I'd like to inform the Assembly that Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor is here to give Royal Assent to the interim supply Bill. This must be done by leave. Do we have leave?

Leave granted.

ROYAL ASSENT

At 4:23 p.m. Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took her seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following Bill:

Bill No. 86 — An Act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of Money for the Public Service for the Fiscal Year ending on March 31, 1993

Her Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and

assent to this Bill.

Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 4:25 p.m.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Vote to be Taken on First Reading of Bill (continued)

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I realize that the time allotted to me has been limited by the motion that's been presented by the government . . . or the Minister of Finance today.

And I would just like to make a few comments, first of all, regarding the original motion presented by the Minister of Agriculture, a motion that was placing a limit on this Assembly regarding the further debate and restrictions or interference and the ability of the government to bring forward their Bill on GRIP and suggesting it was time that it would come forward.

Mr. Speaker, over the past number of days and weeks we have discussed in this Assembly many of the reasons why we feel, as an opposition, that the GRIP '92 legislation should not proceed to this House. We find, Mr. Speaker, that over the process and period of time, the government has acted unilaterally to bring forward changes, to in fact push their way upon the members of this Legislative Assembly and the elected . . . the people, the electors of this province.

And as my colleague from Morse indicated earlier, certainly we have seen, through editorials and in the press, over the past number of weeks and months, individuals have taken the time to at least indicate to the province of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan, the reason for the debate that has taken place.

One of the comments made today was the fact brought forward by one of the editorials said:

The image problem the NDP has on the GRIP issue has now been compounded by the way it has tried to cover up its mistake through what has been nothing short of political bullying.

Unilaterally ending bell-ringing, repeated use of closure to limit debate on other issues, and even hints that it may use time allocation on the GRIP Bill itself have revealed the NDP as the ruthless, uncompromising sort it can be.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also go back to comments made in this House back in the 1989 debate regarding closure used at that time on a Bill that had been before this Assembly that had been debated for some 30 days, or almost a month, prior to the use of the closure motion.

And a comment made at that time by the member from Saskatoon South, where he indicated: That is why, Mr. Speaker, I find this piece of legislation so abhorrent. He doesn't have — referring to the Government House Leader of the day — he doesn't have the right to decide

how long I can speak in this legislature. He doesn't have that right. The people of Saskatoon South have elected me to speak for them.

And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues and I feel that the people of Saskatchewan, peoples in our constituencies, have elected us to speak for them as well. We must also remind people of Saskatchewan we will, over the next few days as we get into further and prolonged debate on the GRIP question, the fact that this opposition has laid out a number of ideas, a number of options.

We've asked the government to give consideration to a number of options regarding the GRIP Bill that the government intends to bring forward to this Assembly. We've asked the government to offer the farmers the ability to choose between the '91 and '92. We've asked the government to consider the recent federal offer.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the recent offer that has been presented by the federal government, the offer would have put more money into the hands of individuals who, this year, through no fault of their own are facing the reality of a crop loss — a major crop loss. And we know there are many areas across this province where many thousands of acres have already been ploughed down. Crops have been ploughed under because there was nothing there.

And in fact recent dry weather is going to wither even more of that crop. And I think, Mr. Speaker, as farmers take a closer look at the GRIP motion, as they take a closer look at their cropping situation, as they look at what they're going to be harvesting, where three weeks ago many farmers were expecting a fairly average or above average crop, they may find — should the very high, hot, dry weather continue — that that crop may not be as bountiful as they were anticipating and that, indeed, the '91 GRIP may not be all that good for them as well.

(1630)

We also ask the government to consider the fact that Alberta and Manitoba worked together with the federal government to make minor changes to their programs and allowing farmers in those two provinces to have even a better program than they had last year, giving them the ability to guarantee a bottom line and yet at the same time be productive and put the inputs into their crop and grow the crop or become the efficient and effective farmers they would like to be.

Mr. Speaker, our problem with the GRIP Bill centres around the fact that this province depends on agriculture. Agriculture is a mainstay of . . . it's the economic machine of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's why we find it very abhorrent that the government would move unilaterally, would make a decision to bring in its third motion of closure in the last two days to limit the ability of the members on the opposite side of the House, the opposition members, to continue to raise questions regarding the legality of the Bill that is going to be coming before this Assembly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to quote from the

Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* of, I believe it was, July 23 . . . July 18:

On the eve of a political showdown, Premier Roy Romanow swept into North Battleford Thursday to spread the gospel of good GRIP.

But just a few kilometres away, farmers remained oblivious to the message.

"You don't have to have a sharp pencil to see the program isn't as good," said Stewart Mitchell, the owner of a mixed farm just southwest of The Battlefords . . .

. . . the argument of Premier Roy Romanow that the situations are not (as clear) . . . is as vacant as the NDP's legislative morality. He says that because the NDP campaigned to change the Gross Revenue Insurance Plan, it has the democratic right to push through its Bill.

But did the NDP campaign on the promise of making changes after the GRIP deadline and using the power of government to, as the Tories say, "tamper with evidence" in a case now before the courts?

However the most offensive aspect of the government's behaviour has been the way it's ramming through arbitrary changes to the legislative rules. Ignoring the parliamentary tradition of all-party consensus on such changes, the NDP has applied 30-minute time limits to the bell-ringing. And to do it, the NDP brought down the heavy fist of closure to silence debate after only four days. This can only be described as a tyranny of the majority.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that the debate has been limited. And I realize that I could go on for the 20 minutes allotted to me. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, I have given in a few short minutes the reasons that I stand in this Assembly today to speak against the way the government has unilaterally decided that they are going to run this Legislative Assembly. That they're going to tell the people of Saskatchewan, tell the opposition that this is the way we're going to do things and if you're going to stand in our way, we will use whatever measures are available to us. And that's why I find it very abhorrent that the government would use closure in the underhanded way they have. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. We rise here today to speak on the motion to return GRIP to the floor of the House. The motion is whether or not the government should be allowed to bring in a law that will break the contracts, not only . . . set a precedent not only for farmers but for everyone else in the province. Should the government be allowed to deem that events have happened that indeed did not happen?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, history shows us that there was not a letter sent out on March 15. And no matter what the

Minister of Agriculture says, no matter what his legislation says, there was no letter. This is the crime that the NDP government is perpetrating with their GRIP legislation. There were indeed problems with the '91 GRIP program, but there are many, many more problems with the GRIP '92.

One of the concerns in my area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the GRIP legislation and whether or not it should be allowed to come back before this House, is the area averages rather than the individual averages. That is one of the main problems that I see in the program.

Also there's no protection for crop failures, for drought, under the '92 GRIP program. Those protections were indeed there under '91. Everyone, when the Bill comes through, will have crop insurance, but everyone will receive the same type of funding under the GRIP revenue insurance. Whether or not these people have a good crop or a poor crop, they will still receive the same amount of funds, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In 1991 farmers knew they had a bottom-line minimum that they would receive from their crops. In '92, no such thing. They know what their crop insurance guarantee is, but GRIP there is no . . . nobody knows what the information is going to be, what the dollars are going to be at the end of the year, because it's all based on what the whole area seeded and what the revenues are from those crops.

Last year they could take their GRIP information, their money, their bottom line to the bank and get a line of credit based on that. This year they could take their crop insurance, a much, much less amount, a much smaller amount. Last year they could get good lines of credit based on the GRIP program; this year, not so.

In 1992 not a single farmer knows how much support he is going to receive from the GRIP program because it's all based on what the prices will be for the '92 crops. Last year people knew; they had a bottom line that they could take to the bank.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's the deeming portion of this legislation that is the most offensive. The government is going to deem that they did perform an act that they did not do so. And that is what is most offensive. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is why I will be voting against this motion.

Mr. Muirhead: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman. This is a sad day for Saskatchewan today. Especially, Mr. Deputy Chairman, because we're moving to closure; when this government, with their arrogance, has said that we are going to stop debate when it hasn't hardly started.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, who are the losers in Saskatchewan today? We can say it's the farmers. But to me it's every individual in the province of Saskatchewan. Every individual, every one is a loser. Because I'm not . . . My remarks are not going to be in detail today, because I'll do that in second reading and committee. It's going to be because of the retroactive legislation, which is a sad day for Saskatchewan, where a government is deeming to have this letter that it's going to tell the courts that they did

get a letter that the farmers never received. That is a sad, sad day. And it's a sad day for democracy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a sad, sad day.

And I know that before three years is up — or whenever the next election will be — that this message will be imprinted into the voters of each and every one in the province of Saskatchewan. They'll know. So many people don't know exactly what's happening here. So many of the public do not know what's happening in this legislature. They just think it's '91 versus '92 GRIP. That's not the case. That isn't what we've had all this impasse here for this last while. It's been because we as an opposition have been told that we are your bosses, and we will tell you when you can speak, and we will tell you when you cannot speak, and we will tell you for exactly how long.

Now that is not democracy. We've had closure before this here session. We've had closure twice before in this province in the history, and it was after hours and hours. In fact the potash Bill, as I said in my remarks yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was 120 hours. And the House came in on March 7 or 8, and on the 4th of August we had closure in this House and then allowed them another 80-some hours of speaking.

Now it's down . . . We had our, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Minister of Finance said this afternoon that he was prepared and he did answer questions in the interim supply Bill for five days. It went on five days, counting the weekend, but there was closure brought on that Bill in five hours because the interim supply Bill started at a quarter to 3 on Thursday, and when the member from Estevan was speaking at quarter to 9, with the two-hour supper break, a total of five hours, they interrupted him. The House Leader stood up and said, we are now moving closure. That's never happened in the British Commonwealth of this great . . . in the whole world.

It's never happened. It has never happened — not in a Commonwealth. It probably hasn't even happened, my friends, this probably never even happened in the socialist countries of Europe. Probably the only place it's ever happened is in communist Russia, and today they wouldn't do it.

In this country we are turning right to a dictatorship type of a government. And if anybody, Mr. Deputy Speaker, says that it's not dictatorship, then tell me, when you stand up to vote, when you stand up to vote in this House and look yourself in the mirror and say, I think it's right that we change the law so the courts are going to believe that a letter was sent to the farmers on March 15, 1992, which is absolutely false and did not happen, how could any government any place in the world do something like that? It is wrong — absolutely wrong.

But the man, the individual that has escaped all this here argument and all this dissension, has been the gentleman that has been in Ottawa for days and days and days. He seems to be able to stay out of all this.

Our Premier of this province has never, ever been in this picture of what's happening in this House. I know he's in Ottawa — he's not there maybe today, Mr. Deputy

Speaker — and I know he has to be there over the constitution. I know he must be there. But when he's here, he does not get involved in what's happening in this legislature. He does not get involved. He stays away from being involved with closure and all the things that's happening here. He's the man that lets the dirty stuff happen.

And I feel sorry for the Minister of Agriculture. He has been the scapegoat here. He is the man that has been dictated to by the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance has said, I would like to tell you, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, I would like to tell you that I have funds so we can have a GRIP Bill, the '91, an improved '91 GRIP Bill so the farmers can have some little chance of success on their farm, of surviving.

But he says, no, I didn't get many votes from the farmers so I will have to tell you, that poor Mr. Minister of Agriculture, kick those farmers off that land. And that's exactly what you're doing.

We had an election in October and what happened? We had promises of moratoriums . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker, he said we lost. And yes we did lose. But why did we lose? Why? Because of your promises you made. You made promises and you broke them all. You broke almost every promise. The only group of people in this province that you haven't hurt are the groups you haven't met yet. You've got them all.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muirhead: — And before four years are up, you won't have anybody that has any respect left for the good old CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) of this province. The good CCF. What happened to the good CCFers under Tommy Douglas? I'd be looking at myself in the mirror tonight and say, I hope Tommy isn't knowing what's going on.

Yes sir, Mr. Speaker — and I mean my good friend, Tommy Douglas. I knew him, Mr. Speaker. I knew Tommy Douglas a lot better than most individuals over here. My mother went to school with him, so if you think I don't know him personally, I do. I know him very personally. He was a gentleman.

But even if I didn't believe in his philosophy, Tommy Douglas believed in Canada like John Diefenbaker. I always figure they're two of the best statesmen we ever had. They at least believed in what they said. They at least believed.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not these people. They don't believe. They believe in power . . . Any time that you're doing what you're doing here and taking the heart right out of agricultural Saskatchewan.

(1645)

I challenge the Minister of Agriculture to come out to my riding, come out there tomorrow and I'll take you to Aylesbury, Craik, Davidson, Dundurn, Outlook. And if you can find one out of five farmers who will even talk to you, then I've missed my political guess. But, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, I ask him not to do like the member from Canora. Don't fly over — drive there. Sit down and talk to them. But as I said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do feel sorry for him because he knows better than this. He knows better than what he's doing. He's dictated to by the rest of the people.

An Hon. Member: — At least he's entertaining.

Mr. Muirhead: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, all we get from these people is just snickers and somebody said, at least he's entertaining. Well why don't you get serious? Because I've got some faith yet that maybe this is — I'm going to let my other members speak — but I have faith yet that . . . today we're going to see this Bill, we're probably going to see it sometime later this day, and I still have faith that that Bill has been changed from the day that the House Leader said publicly in this province, publicly, that this Bill is going to deem that there was a letter sent out to farmers prior to the 15th of March.

I'm hoping and I'm praying that this government has changed their mind and this Bill won't be as bad as what it was deemed to have been a month ago or more. I hope that they have changed it. I hope that they will, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they will give the farmers a chance in the court room. The farmers are in a court room in Melville. There's many hundreds to follow. And they know they're right. The judges know they're right. And, as my colleague from Morse said earlier, they don't want a court case because there is too many people that will not want to be on that stand under oath. They have trouble in this place here being under oath because every individual that stands in this room is under oath when they get up to speak, especially the cabinet ministers. They are under oath of everything they say about their department. And you, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you, Mr. Minister of Agriculture, will have to stand on your feet and defend this letter that the farmers did not get. Because if that hadn't have happened, the farmers would be winning their day in court.

Now in closing, I want to say to you that I've had it on some of the best source in Canada that this is an unconstitutional Bill, it is absolutely unconstitutional and the Queen's Bench judges, you may get by, because if this GRIP Bill goes through and you're forcing it upon us, goodness only knows, you're whitewashing the whole Assembly here, making a sham of it, and you'll probably get your GRIP Bill through.

The Queen's Bench judges, Mr. Speaker, will probably have to rule against the farmers. But what they haven't forgot . . . what they forgotten, the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, what they've forgotten that there's the Supreme Court in Canada where there, then, this Bill will be ruled unconstitutional.

Now in closing, Mr. Speaker, I'm still hoping that there'd be some leniency and some good thinking on behalf of the members in the front row with pressure from the back-benchers. And I just hope, for goodness sakes, that the Bill is changed. And if it hasn't, that you'll accept some of the amendments because this is the party that's speaking on behalf of the farmers of Saskatchewan.

And if somebody can laugh . . . the member from Swift Current, Mr. Speaker, laughs, snickers. All right, there was 150,000 votes went to the Progressive Conservative Party in Saskatchewan and there's approximately 150,000 voters vote in rural Saskatchewan. And where did they come from? They came from farmers. Because in my riding, Mr. Speaker, I won absolutely every rural poll in my riding — every one. And with this kind of a Bill that you've brought toward this legislature, I will guarantee that you back-benchers and you people that sit in rural Saskatchewan better take a good look at yourself in the mirror and realize what you've done. Because it is serious.

And in closing, I want to say, like I said the other day, when I sit down I am ashamed. I am ashamed. I'm one of the . . . I've been here 15 years in this Assembly, and I'm ashamed of the front benches. I'm ashamed of this type of government they have ran. I am absolutely ashamed of you.

You have hurt people. You affected your lives. Now let's hope, before this GRIP Bill is passed and become law, that you come to your senses. Listen to some of the things we've got to say. Don't stand there and snicker. Accept some of our amendments. And let's get the politics out of our lives — because that's exactly what you've been playing — and let's think of the farmers and the people in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be very difficult to in a very short period of time do as good as job as my colleagues ahead of me of describing the issue that is at stake, because it is of such tremendous importance, not only to this Assembly but to all of the people of Saskatchewan.

We truly have, Mr. Speaker, here a Draconian measure by a Draconian government. We have a situation where, as my colleagues have pointed out, this very Assembly will result in effectively tampering with the evidence in a trial. And that is not only a shame for the farm families involved, but it certainly has to be a shame for all of the people who depend on the judicial system to work and to be just. We have seen a government so intent here to have its way that it has been willing to end the very rules of this very Assembly, setting one precedence after another in the way that they do it.

They stopped the bell-ringing to begin with, to make sure that they could ram this legislation through in short order. They've used closure after closure after closure after closure — more times in nine months than ever before recorded in the history of this province. More times to get their way and their will in a dictatorship that has truly, truly formed.

This government threw away 200 millions of dollars at the beginning of this whole exercise — 200 of millions of federal dollars that farmers and farm families could have had in their cash flow. They would refuse to negotiate any kind of a deal to get those dollars just because they want to retain their principles and their ideas.

Then they were offered \$40 million a couple of weeks ago, on top of everything that's happened, and they kicked that in the face, Mr. Speaker. And why? All to save face. All to save face for one provincial Minister of Agriculture who got caught with his foot in his mouth.

And they're willing, Mr. Speaker, to screw 50,000 farm families out of their cash flow to save face for one Minister of Agriculture. The federal Minister of Agriculture put it very squarely when he said, and I repeat as I read from the newspapers his thoughts, he says it's akin to, and like a young person going out and shooting his parents and then asking for welfare because now he's an orphan.

What a sad thing to have to use such a cruel analogy to make a point. But it's a point that has to be made. There is no alternative.

Mr. Minister of Agriculture, there is an old saying that you should take heed to. It goes very simply: eat crow when you are wrong. And the quicker you eat it and the quicker you start to eat it, the less of it you will have to eat. I'm afraid, Mr. Minister, that your plate is getting too full. You'll never be able to eat it all.

If justice is to prevail in this province, Mr. Speaker, if these changes to the evidence, if this tampering is to be stopped, it will probably have to happen outside of this Assembly now. And perhaps the judge will see that light and do those things. I'm not sure how the system will work, but I fear that his hands will be tied as well.

It's a shame that this government, having been offered a compromise that in the last few days would have taken everybody off of the hook and at the same time would have given a compromise where people with the '91 GRIP needs would have had their needs addressed as well as the people who are in the situation where the '92 system would be the best would now have had their needs addressed . . . What a tremendous compromise that could have been. And yet this government is intent upon kicking that in the face — kicking it away with both feet to save face for one socialist. Mr. Speaker, the price is too high.

I want to draw just one comparison, and I hope that the member from Cumberland will take particular note of this. What if tomorrow the government of this province decided to deem through legislation that there never were any Indian treaties in this province, that there were never any reserves? Wouldn't that be a constitutional commotion! Think about it. If they can do it to the farmers of this province, Mr. Speaker, why can't they do it to the rest of the people in whatever area they choose?

There is an irony, Mr. Speaker, in all of this for me as an individual. Because as a result of heavy rainfall and my good fortune as a farmer, I find myself this year in a situation where if we don't have a hailstorm or a serious frost in the next couple of weeks, I personally will probably benefit by the 1992 program. And yet my friends and neighbours all through my constituency are not so fortunate. That's the kind of a year it is this year. There are extremes of both cases throughout the entire province. Some will prosper by one, and others will lose bitterly.

I plead with you, Minister of Agriculture, take that option, take that package, that deal that will give all farmers the best of the cash flow that they so desperately need. Eat some crow. The quicker you do that, the less of it you will have to eat.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 13, the Minister of Agriculture, the member for Rosetown-Elrose, announced changes in the gross revenue insurance program. He was advised by the advisory committee that March 15, two days later, farmers were to receive written notice of contract changes. That never happened, Mr. Speaker. That notice never went out. And yet the Minister of Agriculture who has the authority and all of the resources of government at his disposal, easily — very, very easily could have made and called for that notice to go out. But he didn't do it, Mr. Speaker.

His advisory committee, the committee he holds up as the example of why the gross revenue insurance program had to be changed, advised to him that the March 15 deadline had to be met time after time after time in their meetings. And yet the minister said to them, don't worry about that; we will get around it somehow . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . That's exactly true. We're into the getting around it right now, Mr. Minister.

In rural Saskatchewan, as many of the folks here today will know, often deals are put together on a simple handshake. Mr. Minister, I'm sure you've maybe even done that, a simple handshake. But then as we see more and more un reputable people coming into rural Saskatchewan, people felt that the next step of evolution had to be that they needed a contract — a contract to hold themselves and hold whoever they're doing a deal with, bind them together so that it could not be broken.

(1700)

The farmers of Saskatchewan had a contract, Mr. Speaker. I had a contract as a farmer, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture had a contract with the government, Mr. Speaker. And that contract has been violated. That contract, Mr. Speaker, has been violated by the Minister of Agriculture in his actions.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Minister, governments should set examples. Governments should set good examples. Governments should set the kind of examples that people can hold up and say, here is a government that we can trust. Here is a government that will do the right thing. Here is the government that will always do the right thing, Mr. Speaker.

But what has happened here? They have set another kind of an example, Mr. Speaker. They have set an example that clearly says to the farm families of this province that the Minister of Agriculture cannot be trusted. He simply cannot be trusted with a contract that they had with this government.

Mr. Minister, you were wrong. You are wrong in what you are doing, and now you're trying to correct the mistake

that you made, and you know you've made it. And I think it's abundantly clear to every person in this province. There is no question in the people's minds of this province. You made a mistake, sir. You should not have disrespected that contract.

And now, Mr. Minister, you find yourself in a position where you're going to have to defend your actions. And the defence, Mr. Speaker, the defence is to bring in legislation into this legislature and cancel, strip the rights of farm families away from them. That's what the Bill that you're bringing forward later this afternoon will do, Mr. Minister. You are going to strip the rights of the farm families away. You're going to take their contract away from them. You're going to take my contract away from it. You're going to take your own contract away from yourself, sir. That's what you're going to do.

This is not a question of '91 GRIP or '92 GRIP. It's not a question of the merits of '91 or '92. It's a question of contract breaking, Mr. Minister. And, Mr. Minister, you are wrong, and you know it.

Eighty votes — 80-some votes put you here, sir. Eighty-some votes put you here, sir. And the people of Rosetown-Elrose, they know now they have made a mistake, just as you are making this mistake today, sir.

Mr. Minister, farmers can't trust you. Farmers don't trust you. Mr. Minister, you took an oath. You took an oath to uphold the law, and now you're going to break it. Now you're going to bring in legislation that tampers — tampers with the evidence before a court in order to protect yourself. In order to protect yourself, you're bringing in legislation that tampers with the law. And the farm families of Saskatchewan will not put up with it, sir.

The people of Rosetown-Elrose will not accept it, sir. They will correct their mistake next time. They will correct the mistake that has sent you to this legislature, sir. And I firmly believe that the farm families of this province will not forget this for ever, sir. They will not forget the actions you are taking that break their contract. You have broken their contract and you are breaking the handshake with rural Saskatchewan, sir. Mr. Minister, you will go down in history as the Minister of Agriculture that could not be trusted by farm families.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Britton: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a few words I'd like to say about this Bill. Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to remind the public, if they're listening, what this is all about.

This Bill is not about the GRIP '91 or '92. This Bill is about the breaking of a contract — contract signed by farmers in good faith and broken by a minister who, if he had in the first place said to the farm community, I made a mistake, he could have done two things, Mr. Speaker. He could have said, I will for one year only give you a choice. Because for whatever reason that he may want to suggest caused the mix-up in whether the farmers got a letter or not, he could have said, because you did not get the letter, for one year only I will give you a choice. The farmers would not have held that against him.

I said before in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, and I've lived by this philosophy, it's not the mistake you make that you're going to be judged by, it's by how you fix up the mistake you made. And as my colleague from Kindersley said, maybe you should eat a little crow now because you may have to eat more later.

The day that you ask all those back-benchers to stand up in this House, if that legislation that you bring in has not been changed from what the minister . . . the House Leader led the public to believe, you are going to be asking all of your colleagues to join you in perjury. I say that. I say that.

And he — that minister — is going to be asked to stand in a court of law, he's going to be asked to stand in a court of law and defend that. He is going to have to say yea or nay — I did or did not send the letter. He's going to have to do that.

Those people on the committee that work with him are going to have to stand in front of a judge and say, we warned this man, this Minister of Agriculture, that he was making a mistake, but he said, I'll get around it somehow — I'll get around it. And today we see how they're getting around it.

For the last two years the people of Canada have been arguing over Triple E. What did we get in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? We got triple C — closure, closure, closure — the indiscriminate use of closure, and we expect it'll be used again and again. And it's like any other unsavoury trick that's done — the more you do it, the easier it gets.

Mr. Speaker, I am like my colleagues. I never thought I'd have to stand in this place . . . now I haven't stood here for 15 years like the member from Arm River, but I came down here the same as all the rest of you, with stars in my eyes, thinking that I was going to be in a place where honour and integrity was there. Mr. Speaker, there is no honour and there is no integrity in this kind of a Bill.

This Bill breaks the law. This Bill asks other people to break the law. And if you want to read — you may think I was a little harsh — read what perjury says. Read what perjury says — the definition of perjury, read it — and then stand in your place and vote for this GRIP Bill. Stand in your place and vote for this Bill after reading what the Criminal Code says about perjury.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance sits there in his smug, arrogant manner, and he smiles away and he says, it's not right, John. Well we'll see.

I can only hope, like the member from Arm River, that between the time you led the public to believe that you were going to retroactively change the law, that you have seen the light and when that Bill comes in tonight, then it will have been changed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read you some quotes. And I will quote from the members opposite — maybe not in the order of their importance, Mr. Speaker, but here's what the member who is now the Finance minister said about closure.

An Hon. Member: — Sounds good.

Mr. Britton: — From Regina Dewdney. Yes, sounds good. Well I'll read it to you, sir. He said:

But I want to say, as other colleagues have said, that even though the government may muzzle us in this legislature, we will not be muzzled in saying the things that need to be said, because if we can't say them in here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will say them from one end of the province (to the other) wherever we go, because those are the kinds of things that (is) important to the people of Saskatchewan. Democracy (must) . . . be protected by this opposition to the largest extent that we can, at every opportunity we can.

He said that. Now where is he today? Brought in closure, closure on a Bill for farmers. Now he went on to say, Mr. Speaker,

. . . when the people cannot be heard, freedom, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is destroyed.

What does he do today, that member? Now I'll tell you what your leader said. I'll tell you what the now Premier said about closures:

. . . a government coming in and using the heavy hand of its majority and arbitrarily deciding in its (own) 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.

That's what the Premier said, the now Premier, when he was opposition standing on this side. He goes on to say:

They come here to define the rules of this legislature, to do this arbitrarily by simple majority, and to equate this kind of heavy-handed, undemocratic, unprecedented, and unwarranted attack to the rules where all the members agree . . .

That's what he said. Now you square that, Mr. Speaker, square that with me, with what you're doing today. He went on to say:

But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, what does this show. This motion today shows (that) this black Friday for democracy, this unprecedented attack on freedom in this province of Saskatchewan, maybe an attack on 26 lonely members in the opposition.

Only 26 lonely members — we've got 10 over here. And what are they doing over there now, Mr. Speaker?

Let me also . . . let me quote from another of the prominent members, the House Leader. What did he say? What did he say? As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the now Premier went on to say, and I'll just read that too.

. . . discredited and desperate (discredited and desperate) this government has no other choice. It resorts to

the actions of a bully. (and) . . . resorts to the actions of coming down and guillotining the opposition here.

Talk about guillotining the opposition.

And then the now House Leader said: And then after the rule has been changed, they keep up the debate for a couple of weeks and find they're still losing in the opinion polls and in the minds of the people of the province.

And so what do they do? Well then they say to the people of the province, we're not playing the game any more. We're not going to play any more. We've got the most players; we choose the game; and we're going to play. We picked the referee — let that sink in for a minute. We changed the rules to our best advantage and we still can't win, so we're going to quit playing. So we're going to quit playing. That's what he said.

Well he goes on to say: Well I say that closure is the most despicable rule that this government could invoke.

Yes he said that. And what have we got here? Well we got the triple C, triple C all in one day. Mr. Speaker, I, like most of my colleagues, could go on for quite a while.

(1715)

But I say to the Minister of Agriculture, I say to the Minister of Agriculture, what's wrong, what's wrong with you telling those farmers out there that you will pull out the retroactivity of your Bill, or you will, as the member from Kindersley said, give us your hand and say anything in this Bill will not impact on that case before the courts. Do that. Why don't you do that? We would gladly see that happen.

Mr. Minister, what would be wrong with that? That's what I want the people of Saskatchewan to know. We're not arguing, Mr. Speaker. We're not arguing, even though some of the members on this side of the House do not like '92 GRIP Bill, that's not the case here. The thing we're arguing about is the process.

And all of this could have been done . . . all of this confrontation didn't have to happen. All he had to do was withdraw that retroactivity and say to the farmers, this will not impact on your court case, and you would not be in the mess that you're in, sir. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I have heard enough discussions of the issue about which the . . . that our Bill addresses that I think it is appropriate for the public record to state a few facts clearly to cut through some of the carelessness and misstatements that have been made about what has happened.

The member who spoke previously had talked about process. And I think it's worth spending a moment talking about the process by which GRIP came to be.

It's been identified by others that GRIP was a program that was hurriedly implemented for an election campaign — hurriedly implemented and then carried forward with

changes. The meeting I went to, the staff of the department that were out there said that it was change number 95, and the next day was change number 96.

All changes made after March 15 — the deadline which they now attach so much importance to — in the Bill they then created. The program they created and a contract that they describe that they would have trouble putting together for anybody of reasonable mind.

There was a pamphlet in which a March 15th number was discussed. And the members opposite are aware that that . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I just want to clarify something here. And it's just been brought to my attention. I was right in the first place. The minister is closing debate. If you look at item 12, on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Wiens, the Minister of Agriculture . . . the Minister of Finance moved a closure motion today, not this motion.

So the member is closing debate. But because . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No. Because of the confusion that existed, I will allow any member now the opportunity to speak in this debate who has not spoken before the member closes debate.

Are there any other members who wish to speak at this time? If not, the Minister of Agriculture continues.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To continue with the process that was engaged in last year, the farmers' decision-making time was extended to May 15 in order to accommodate the many changes that the members opposite were making as they were developing the program.

The contract with the federal government, which was a real contract, a federal-provincial agreement, was signed I believe on September 18 or 19 after most of our crops were in the bin. These are the processes that were followed last year in the construction of the GRIP program.

It is a matter of record in history that farmers were upset about the program from the day it was first described, through the multitude of changes that went on on the run, through the way in which the payments were being made from the program. And it's a matter of record that farmers demonstrated by the thousands last fall, to have some reason brought to farm programming.

The fact that we were not in control of was when the members opposite would call an election. And in late October when at the absolute latest time that the government could call an election, one was called. And the members opposite assumed a new role, and our government took over the issue of managing the affairs of a province devastated by the circumstances that have also been a matter of public record relative to the finances of the province.

And our . . . because we did not have a large amount of

time to reconstruct the process for review, we took the review process described in the Act, passed by the members opposite in their time in designing the Act, and carried it forward in order to have a public review of the GRIP program.

The members who were appointed to that GRIP program have been described . . . to the GRIP review have been described by members opposite as reasonable people. And they are and they were and they are reasonable people, representing a number of farm organizations and professional people in Saskatchewan.

The chairman — Barry Senft from the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, a person I hope the members opposite continue to respect for the contribution he's made to the exercise; Brian Perkins, who was the president of the cattle feeders association; Roy Piper, from the united grain growers; Lloyd Johns, an independent member appointed by myself; Brett Meinert, named by the soil conservation association; Gordon Cresswell, Hartley Furtan, named by the university; Keith Hayward, named by the Crop Insurance Corporation; Leonard Kehrig, I believe named by the canola growers; and Sinc Harrison, named by SARM (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities). Members who signed this report, members who had submissions from in excess of 300 people and organizations and listened to what they had to say and observed the facts of farm programs in Canada and in Saskatchewan and recommended some changes.

These changes were not brought forward in any hurry at all. These changes were brought forward in the time allotted by the members opposite in a Bill that described the original program. The legislation describing the program said by February 15 changes should be recommended. By February 15, Mr. Speaker, the members on the committee recommended the following, and I read directly from the report of the committee:

The Advisory Committee strongly supports some general principles on how GRIP should operate. These general principles included:

GRIP should be provided as separate crop insurance and revenue insurance programs . . .

I remind the members opposite, who have said some organizations disagreed with this report — the members of the organizations signed this report with these recommendations that I carry in my hand here, these, specifically all of them:

GRIP should be provided as separate crop insurance and revenue insurance programs . . .

That defines that there will be a crop insurance portion subject to the kind of deductibility that is there when you have 80 per cent coverage. And there will be a revenue insurance portion calculated by another mechanism. That's definitive in the recommendations of all of the members who were on the committee . . . or all the members who signed the report. I remind the members, as I remind myself, that two members did not, and they are, as admitted, a minority report, which in principle also supported that.

the crop insurance program should operate as it was prior to 1991, and . . . the crop insurance price be set at the same level as the market price used in the revenue insurance program;

And how much noise have the members opposite made about that issue? Those were the recommendations of this broad industry committee.

the revenue insurance program should operate more as a deficiency payment type program;

A distinct definition and distinctly carried forward in the Bill that's being introduced today.

that no offsets between price and yield should be included in the revenue insurance program;

A point the members opposite have disputed repeatedly while they claim to support the integrity of the members of the committee and the good judgement of the members of the committee.

that both crop insurance and revenue insurance should reflect the management abilities of individual farmers in determining coverage and payments;

The members opposite are aware that while they have sometimes tried to construct the new program as one that does not respect individual production, this program very much respects individual production. It groups crops so one cannot select an individual crop and select one's own target program payment.

It was one of the chief problems identified by this broad industry committee that when farmers needed to go to the program to select their coverage level, it created a problem in the industry. It said "that both crop insurance and revenue insurance should reflect the management abilities of individual farmers in determining coverage and payments."

And the members opposite are aware that when the program payment is calculated for an area, that your individual production index is multiplied by the area program payment to reflect your production above or below on the long-term area average. So your investment in your production practices is reflected. And I do not see why anybody would quarrel with that principle.

And in response to the point that members opposite and the member from the Liberal Party have made often about offering a '91 and a '92 program, I tell the members opposite that that question was put to the committee. And the committee made in its recommendation (f) on page 12 of their report:

that only the revised program be offered to farmers in 1992 (i.e., current GRIP should not be continued as an option to farmers).

That's the recommendation of the committee. Long before you got into the dispute about what programs should be out there, they assessed the ability to deliver

two programs concurrently, and it was concluded that it could not be done. So the empty politics that's been . . . It has nothing to do with money, Mr. Goohsen. It has nothing to do with money. It has everything to do with the practical ability . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I ask the member to be reminded to refer to members by their constituencies and not by their proper names.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — I apologize to the member opposite for that error.

It has to do with the ability to keep two separate pools in a similar program and to try to create some day some sanity out of this, and to try to create a premium methodology that is somehow workable with the federal government. Those were the recommendations of the committee.

The process that was then followed . . . and I reiterate that that was as the result of the consultation with over 300 individuals and groups in Saskatchewan. Those of you who would then say that something was erring in the process thereafter, if we believe in consultation and we take the work of a committee seriously, it seems to me that it is then the responsibility of the person receiving the report to take forward those recommendations — a novel idea for the members opposite. But I think it's reasonable to think that if you put some people to work and give them a task and you ask them for some recommendations, that they might expect that you might implement them.

So we began discussions with the federal government. And members of the committee, a number of members of the committee were on the national GRIP committee and they brought their recommendations forward in the belief that it was within the federal-provincial agreement that these recommendations could be implemented without change.

These are members of the committee, the hon. members that you described the other day. These people believe that the federal-provincial agreement did not need to be altered. However, when we began the discussions with the federal government, then the members opposite have talked about game playing and politics in this business.

Then the games started to be played. Then the federal minister said no, no, this does not fit in within the federal-provincial agreement, much to the surprise of the members of our committee. So then we began to say, well all right, then let's alter the federal-provincial agreement as others have, if you insist on interpreting that way. And then the federal minister said no, we will not alter the federal-provincial agreement in the way we would do for any other province; we won't alter the agreement.

For what reason? I suspect . . . Well you can draw your own conclusions about what reasons there would be for that. So then they said, you have to go through a different process. Then the officials that the members opposite have all so rightly described as honourable in our department were astounded when I presented them with the conclusion of the federal minister that they would have to go and meet with officials of other provincial governments and get the approval of the majority of

provinces required to amend the agreement in order to put this agreement forward differently from any other agreement that had ever had to be changed.

(1730)

Talk about process. And who played games and who was playing politics? And not until we had that confirmed on March 12 or thereabouts did the federal government say, we will now approve your changes. And it was not until that time that we could then say with certainty that Saskatchewan knew what the program was that it could offer — the old program, much maligned by farmers, or the new program constructed by this committee.

So at that point we made the announcement, and the members opposite correctly observed that we had a press conference on March 13 and unveiled the program and announced the changes that would be coming forward.

And it was at that time that the decision-making time for farmers was extended from March 30, which is the date that is concurrent with the March 15 description that the members opposite have mentioned. A 15-day time lag is what's given for farmers to make the decision in the pamphlet mentioned by the members.

The government said no, we're going to give farmers till April 30 to make the decision. A decision extended to May 15 later on, and then by the court case that ensued, till July 20. So farmers had a number of months to make these decisions, and farmers had a more extensive process for understanding these changes than had ever before been engaged in by the members opposite.

The members talk about farm income adequacy and concern for farmers, and the member from the Liberal Party self-righteously talks about what this means and what this program does. And the members opposite also talk about the letter to producers. And they say Saskatchewan, in its fragile state, did not increase its contributions to program payments.

Well I tell the members opposite that it was because the members, when they were in government, did not recognize the fragile nature of the Saskatchewan economy that they did take on substantially increased responsibility for paying for farm programs beginning in 1988 and continuing through to 1991, where Saskatchewan's contribution to farm programs, off-loading from the federal government, increased from no contribution to direct program payment to in excess of 200 million. In the 1991 year, there was \$260 million paid by the province of Saskatchewan to farm support programs. The Saskatchewan taxpayers are now paying for programs that were the responsibility of the federal government.

We know what the income situation is in Saskatchewan. We know the ability of Saskatchewan farmers to pay those kinds of costs, and we know the ability of Saskatchewan taxpayers to pay those kinds of costs. And we will support Saskatchewan people in saying it is the federal government who needs to maintain the responsibility for those kinds of programs.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Now for the life of me I do not understand why the members opposite first got into these agreements; but secondly, continued to make comments about how Saskatchewan taxpayers should continue to be the victims of this off-loading when Saskatchewan farmers are suffering from a farm income crisis and a farm debt crisis that they fell into during the time of the members opposite and that they have no responsibility to bear. And that we will fight for them with the federal government in order to get fair incomes, to restore the \$900 million of income shortfall that they've incurred in the last number of years; and to put farming back on a sound track by demanding that the federal government do what's just for Saskatchewan farmers, and recognizing the problems Saskatchewan taxpayers have in this.

So with that, I want to conclude the debate on this Bill, and remind the members opposite that the process that was followed was as full as the time permitted by the call of the election by the members opposite, as broad as was possible within the construction of farm organizations in Saskatchewan, and implemented with as much integrity and as much attention to the detail of the report brought forward to the ministers, to the department, and to myself in the recommendations by the farm organizations.

And if those actions are in error, then I am in error. If not, they represent the kind of approach I would hope that I could use in future programs as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The division bells rang from 5:35 p.m. until 5:49 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 31

Van Mulligen	Trew
Thompson	Sonntag
Wiens	Roy
Simard	Cline
Tchorzewski	Scott
Koskie	McPherson
Anguish	Wormsbecker
Goulet	Crofford
Kowalsky	Stanger
MacKinnon	Harper
Penner	Kluz
Cunningham	Carlson
Upshall	Renaud
Lautermilch	Langford
Hamilton	Jess
Johnson	

Nays — 10

Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	Toth
Swenson	Goohsen
Boyd	D'Autremont
Martens	Haverstock

The Speaker: — Pursuant now to the order of the Assembly that we have just voted on in the affirmative, I will now call the vote on the first reading of a Bill respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation.

The division bells rang from 5:52 p.m. until 6:02 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 34

Van Mulligen	Hamilton
Thompson	Johnson
Wiens	Trew
Simard	Sonntag
Tchorzewski	Roy
Teichrob	Cline
Shillington	Scott
Koskie	McPherson
Anguish	Wormsbecker
Goulet	Crofford
Kowalsky	Stanger
Mitchell	Harper
MacKinnon	Kluz
Penner	Carlson
Cunningham	Renaud
Upshall	Langford
Lautermilch	Jess

Nays — 10

Muirhead	Britton
Neudorf	Toth
Swenson	Goohsen
Boyd	D'Autremont
Martens	Haverstock

The Bill read a first time and ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

The Assembly adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

On page 1937 of *Hansard* No. 57B Monday, August 3, 1992, 7 p.m., in the second recorded division in the left-hand column substitute the name Hagel for Bradley.

We apologize for this error.

[NOTE: The online version has been corrected.]