

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of pages of petitions dealing with the chiropractic concerns of the citizens of Saskatchewan. And I would like to read the prayer for the members assembled 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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these are from . . . again, from all over the province, from Saskatoon, mostly from Saskatoon; from North Battleford, Edenwold, Regina, Regina, lots of Regina's here; Balgonie, Grenfell, Lumsden, Craven, Regina. The rest of them, Ruddell; I notice some Saskatoon, a whole bunch again, and from La Ronge. Virtually from every part of the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have petitions today dealing with the issue of chiropractic care in the province of Saskatchewan. I'll only read the last sentence:

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.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I have petitioners from the city of Saskatoon, Regina, Blaine Lake, Saskatoon, Fort Qu'Appelle, Qu'Appelle. Basically people, Mr. Speaker, from all over the province of Saskatchewan, I do present.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions from people from across the province. I'll just read the last sentence:

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.

These petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are from places like Estevan, Carnduff, Alida, Benson, Bienfait, Midale, North Portal. Several here from Edenwold. A large number from Regina. And we see several here from places like Pilot Butte as well. I table these now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I as well have petitions dealing with chiropractic care in the province. Mr. Speaker, these petitions are from Regina primarily, and the last two are from the Weyburn area. Mr. Speaker, I present these now.

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Speaker, I too have petitions regarding chiropractic care from across the province: Weyburn, Radville . . . (inaudible) . . . Yellow Grass, different places from across the province. And I want to present them as a part of the petition to the Assembly today.

Mr. Toth: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure as well to present petitions to the Assembly signed by people from Swift Current, Estevan, Cadillac, Ponteix, Morse, Kyle, Glen Ewen, Carnduff, Regina, and many other points in the province.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have petitions today that concern the chiropractic problem that other petitions have been presented on here this morning. I believe there's over a hundred names on these eight sheets of paper coming from such places as P.A. (Prince Albert), Big River, Shellbrook. We have Unity, Saskatoon, Wilkie, Scott, and Moose Jaw is in here, quite a few now from Meath Park in Moose Jaw and Birch Hills and all of those places up along that northern area.

The list goes on and on here, and we have many, many from Saskatoon as well in there, some more from Moose Jaw in the middle. And even Regina again, we find some here from Regina as well. And I'll just present these at this time.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too have some petitions to present from the citizens of the province concerned about chiropractic fees that may be charged to them. These people come from Langham, Dalmeny, Saskatoon, and Swift Current areas.

I hereby present these petitions.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

Of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly praying that your Honourable Assembly

may be pleased to cause the government to restore the livestock cash advance program.

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. Rolfes: — I have the distinct pleasure of introducing four young lads from the . . . three young lads from the province of Saskatchewan and one from the country of Ireland. I met three of these people only today and one I have known for approximately 28 years.

But the two people from Regina that I do want to introduce are Roger and Robert Petry. I wish they would stand. These two gentlemen are Rhodes scholars from the city of Regina and who've spent one year . . . or two years at Oxford.

And the third person, sitting in the middle, is from Ireland, Joe McCarney. He is at Oxford and he's visiting here — got here yesterday — and he's visiting in Saskatchewan and he's going out to B.C. (British Columbia), Alberta and B.C., and then he's heading back to Oxford again.

And the last person that is seated is also an Oxford graduate, my son Brian, who arrived last night from Ottawa. And he is going to be working at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal, doing his articling there for the next eight months.

I ask all members to give a warm welcome to these four young gentlemen in the Speaker's gallery.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: — How did you get such a good-looking kid?

Hon. Mr. Rolfes: — Married to a good-looking wife.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Funding for Rural Development

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the NDP government opposite in these few short months has brought havoc and despair to the residents of rural Saskatchewan. They have threatened to close rural hospitals and they've threatened to tear up highways and they've ruined the programs of farm support, and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Rural Development today. Mr. Minister, can you tell this Assembly if you have any further plans to reduce the level of funding for your department? Can you tell us if RMs (rural municipality) have anything further to fear from your government?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite should be aware that in standard governmental processes budgets are struck and plans are made and then followed.

I know that's a very rare process for the members opposite, but it is the process this government intends to follow.

The budget has been struck for the year and there are no other plans other than the budget plan which is hopefully going to be passed by this Assembly soon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, your ship is sinking faster and faster today because there is one more leak in your ship of state.

We have been contacted by a reliable source through your government who has disclosed the fact that your government has ordered — ordered, mind you — the Department of Rural Development to find an additional 30 per cent cut in funding for either a minibudget to be presented this fall or to be brought in in next spring's budget.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this. This would be absolutely devastating, Mr. Minister. Will you now confirm that this information is correct, and will you confirm that to this Assembly?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the budgeting processes of government are established. And there are, as I said previously, no immediate plans in this budget to have a different budget plan than the one that's before the Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Well, Mr. Minister, that is truly a strange answer coming from a government who has now ordered further reductions to be taking place in future budgets. How can you sit there and tell us those kinds of facts when you know full well what is going on?

The same source tells us that \$6 million of those cuts are to come out of revenue sharing to rural municipalities; \$6 million in addition to the millions that you've already milked from rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister: Mr. Minister, can you confirm that this piece of disastrous information is in fact true?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the alleged leak that the member opposite is talking about is the two-year budget plan we announced when we announced the budget that all the municipalities know about. That may be the leak about which the member speaks. Maybe he could clarify himself.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Mr. Minister, it's truly amazing how you can feign being confused when you know full well that this was a secret plan that you had no intentions of

springing on anyone until later this fall.

Mr. Minister, will you also confirm for this Assembly, and the thousands of rural residents that are so adversely affected by your government's bungling policies, can you confirm that you have issued a memo to the employees of Rural Development, instructing them to feel out the reeves and employees of rural municipalities to uncover the easiest way to facilitate the amalgamation of rural municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is simply this: will you confirm this, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, in the dream world of the members opposite, there are secret plans popping out all over. It's absolutely a delightful life they must lead. Yesterday it was a secret plan in Crop Insurance which I hope to be able to enlighten the members about soon, as soon as I have a chance to answer the question I took notice on yesterday. Now there are secret plans here.

The fact is this government engages in regular, legitimate budget planning exercises. As the members opposite know, even though they were very unconscious of the state of the finances of their own government when they ran it, we found ourselves facing a \$1.3 billion current deficit this year. We have dealt with about 800 million of that in the first year, and we have \$517 million left to go.

Now the people in Saskatchewan know this is tough to deal with. I feel very much for all the people across Saskatchewan who are very courageously facing the difficulties that that kind of exercise requires. But at the same time I feel sympathy for the people of Saskatchewan, I can only feel anger and disgust for the mess the members opposite have created.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Minister, you seem surprised that there would be yet some more leaks in your government and that these kind of things are happening. And you suggest that they couldn't possibly happen. I suggest you talk to the Minister of Labour, who also had his Bill presented in this very Assembly and tabled for him by this opposition.

Mr. Minister, your revenge on rural Saskatchewan seems to have no end. This information clearly points to the fact that you are planning to eliminate all funding to Rural Development such that you can close the department down and absorb it somewhere else.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this: can you tell us, Mr. Minister, in your usual articulate manner, how these further cut-backs will affect rural residents, the very people that you have promised to protect.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, our government has a commitment to work with communities to design their own futures in a positive way. I am appalled by the

negative fearmongering that emerges from the members opposite, whether it's about plans to improve the health care system or plans to work co-operatively with municipalities to plan for a future; whether it's for plans to work with economic development groups to look for a more positive future, whether it's for plans to work with individual businesses to plan their own future, whether it's with consultations with the livestock industry or farmers. The members opposite can simply find a whole array of strange plots and secret plans in their strange and distorted minds. And I can't help you in that matter, I'm sorry.

Ties Between Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Government

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the same member in his capacity as Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, many Wheat Pool delegates in my area that I've talked to over the last number of months have expressed some concern about the political agenda of this Minister of Agriculture. Many people in Saskatchewan Wheat Pool are quite disturbed at the partisan support also shown by their president, Mr. Garf Stevenson, at times for this government.

Mr. Speaker, given the real concern out there from past experiences of some people in the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool that their elected representative and your government are tied a little too closely, would you tell the Assembly today if there are any direct links between Sask Pool and your government.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely appalling that a member of a once-upon-a-time government and a member of a supposedly loyal opposition in a respectable legislature would attack one of the most significant economic and social institutions in the province and would make disparaging remarks about leadership of that organization — elected leadership — which has shown exemplary leadership in providing stability for Saskatchewan communities, in providing leadership in economic development, in providing leadership in business and business measures. I do not understand the will of the members opposite other than to create more division. The future of Saskatchewan is not in that kind of division. It is in the co-operation which Sask Wheat Pool itself exemplifies.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, no one in the opposition made Garf Stevenson contribute money to the NDP (New Democratic Party) Party. No one in the opposition made Garf Stevenson sit on the Gass Commission as one of your hand-picked people along with other NDP partisans. No one over here forced him to do that, Mr. Minister.

Now, Mr. Minister, many Saskatchewan Wheat Pool delegates have been concerned with the taking away of farmers' rights which you are doing with the GRIP (gross revenue insurance program) Bill. They've done it in writing by the hundreds. Mr. Minister, you also know full well that these close ties cause concern. Would you today, Mr. Minister, confirm that Mr. Stevenson's

personal assistant, a Mr. Nial Kuyek, has been seconded into your department as your senior planning advisor. Would you confirm that, Mr. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. Please let the minister answer.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, it continues to astound me that the members opposite would take a run at a venerable institution and a respected Saskatchewan and Canadian citizen, a person who has served the farm community well, who has been elected to his office, and whose political contributions have never been an interest of mine. But surely in a democracy people have the right to make a political contribution to those to whom they please. That's hopefully the basic understanding. I suspect there are people who work for our government who made political contributions to your party, and that's fine with me.

The fact is that Mr. Nial Kuyek is becoming a member of our senior staff in the Department of Agriculture. But you should be aware of the fact that Mr. Kuyek has not only worked for the Sask Wheat Pool, he has also worked for the federal government. He is an honourable professional who will be helping work in our Department of Agriculture. And I would hope the members opposite would see that as a positive thing and not a negative thing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Mr. Minister, you're absolutely right that Mr. Stevenson has the right to make political contributions to whoever he feels like. But in the case of Saskatchewan, he makes them to the NDP.

Now, Mr. Minister, don't you think in your duty as Agriculture minister, that there would not be literally dozens of farm organizations in this province that are wondering why Mr. Stevenson's personal aide gets to help you run your department?

I mean, Mr. Minister, you can ignore the stock growers. You can hold a briefing here in this building and say that there isn't room in 218 for the western wheat growers. I mean, what a joke, Mr. Minister. Can you tell us today why Garf Stevenson has direct access to the decision-making process of the Department of Agriculture when no other agricultural group in this province has that access? Can you tell us that?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — The questions and the factual base of the comments of the members opposite have reached an all-time low. The fact is that if you want to refer to the western wheat growers, we have had an excellent relationship with the western wheat growers since we came to office. They've accompanied us to Ottawa when you would not. They have participated in every consultative exercise that we have engaged in on agricultural discussions since we formed government.

The member opposite obviously has only partial information. When we met with farm organizations to report back from the Agriculture ministers' meeting in Halifax, we met with 15 to 20 farm leaders on one day and we met with the other 15 or 20 farm leaders that have a critical interest in Saskatchewan agriculture on another day, several days hence. And the western wheat growers were very pleased to be there, as were many other farm organizations.

With respect to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, if the members opposite are accusing the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool structure of being driven by only a president . . . they are a democratic organization. And I'm sure that the secondment of Mr. Kuyek to our department was approved by the organization, as I'm sure was his secondment to the federal Conservative government for two years before he returned to Sask Wheat Pool.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. It's obvious that the members of the . . .

The Speaker: — Order. There is so much noise that I can't hear the member asking his question. I ask the members, please give the member his right to ask his question.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very difficult some days to ask tough questions in here. Mr. Minister, there are dozens of organizations in this province that would like the same invitation, the same courtesy. Now, Mr. Minister, how was Mr. Kuyek's employment arranged? Is it a secondment? Is it a contract?

And I wonder if you could tell me who is paying his salary. Is it Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, or is it the government? Or is it both? I want to know what his job description is. And will you table his contract or his OC (order in council)? Will you do that, Mr. Minister?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the insinuation that there is something strange about the Government of Saskatchewan seconding a very professional civil servant — a professional civil servant who first served the federal Conservative government for two years before returning to the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool — that there is something strange about that, that we should go find a professional civil servant and bring him in to serve Saskatchewan through the Department of Agriculture is a strange inference.

I do not have the detail on the exact arrangements, but Saskatchewan Agriculture is obviously paying him because he's going to be working for Saskatchewan Agriculture and he is seconded.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Well, Mr. Minister, that information is very interesting to a lot of people in this province because as recently as two weeks ago the Minister of Economic Development flew off to the Democratic convention in New York and took along some cover people with him,

one of whom was a representative of Sask Pool supposedly looking at the pasta business.

Now your government has done everything in its power to sink Saska Pasta in Swift Current. And no one can really figure out why you're doing this. Now, Mr. Minister, the fact that Mr. Stevenson's top EA (executive assistant) is now your employee, has direct access to the information of government, does that mean that for the support that Mr. Stevenson has shown you in the past, that you're now somehow bungling up the pasta business to give Sask Pool an opening?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the only bungling that's going on is the members opposite trying to ask a question about professional civil servants who ought to have some respect by the people of Saskatchewan.

We make a perfectly legitimate contract with a very professional servant of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool who has been previously a very professional civil servant of the federal government, of the same political stripe as the members opposite, and the members opposite challenge it.

Imagine it. Imagine challenging that kind of a legitimate contract with a good civil servant, when the members opposite hired 130 people who worked not at all in their government and paid them salaries. I do not understand the logic of the members opposite.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question to the same minister. Obviously, Mr. Minister, you don't see the potential for conflict of interest that many people in the agriculture sector in this province are going to see. And I guess, Mr. Minister, it's too bad that your government is so blind that you can't see how sensitive this could be with other farm organizations.

Now, Mr. Minister, I think given the light that this has been handled secretly, behind closed doors, don't you think it would be appropriate that perhaps some of the other farm organizations in Saskatchewan should have the ability to give some input into the fact that when you are hiring people on your senior executive positions, that they also be given the same opportunities as Sask Pool? Don't you think so?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, the exercise of creating a strong civil service in the province is one of getting the best advice from everyone and getting the best people from everywhere. Within the departments within which I function, we look broadly for qualified civil servants, and we will continue to do that.

The question of whether it's sensitive to other farm organizations when someone is hired from one farm organization ought to have no more significance than is it sensitive to the federal government or to other provincial governments if we were to hire somebody from the

federal government. I don't understand the dilemma of the members opposite in this regard.

We followed perfectly legitimate hiring practices to hire very professional civil servants from an organization that is broadly representative of Saskatchewan people, whose board of directors I'm sure includes people of all political stripes. And the members opposite try to create the public vision of attacking one of Saskatchewan's most venerable businesses and one of Canada's major businesses. I don't . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Next question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Crop Insurance Yield Adjustment Deadline

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture a question, as I started yesterday. I want to ask you, sir, whether you have any more information as regards to the July 31 deadline. And my question to you, sir, is this: why didn't you notify the farmers of this deadline that was secretly imposed on them on July 31?

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, this is a marvellous example of co-operation and clear joint-thinking here. That was just exactly what I was intending to rise and explain, since I took notice yesterday of that question.

I want to read to you the explanation of where things are at now in the light of the over-dramatic, inaccurate kind of description . . .

The Speaker: — Order. I just ask the minister to answer the question.

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — The members opposite have yesterday described as a secret plan the question of the deadline for corrections. The deadline for customers to request an amendment to their 1991 production was July 31, 1992. This deadline was established to coincide with the final delivery date for the 1991-92 crop year.

However, deliveries on the '91-92 permit book were extended in some areas up to August 10, 1992. As well there was concern that customers may not be aware of the July 31 deadline for requesting amendments. Therefore, as I said yesterday, the minister in charge, who has made a host of very sensitive and good decisions in the past and will continue to, much different than the previous administration did . . . therefore this deadline has been extended to the time when the customer begins harvest. That is, there is no fixed deadline date.

A deadline is required for requesting amendments to 1991 production. Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation cannot discern between old and new grain. Therefore, once new grain is in the bin, we are unable to determine 1991 production; hence the harvest deadline. It is felt that this deadline will give customers ample opportunity to determine if their 1991 production has been determined to their satisfaction. The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation will deal with each customer's concerns on an individual basis.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Minister. I want to ask you to table that document as well. And I want to ask you this question. Why does it take us bringing these issues before you before you legitimize the actions that you take so that the people in the province of Saskatchewan who are farmers can decide and determine what you're going to do? Nobody knew about it until we told you. You didn't know about it until we told you. And now, would you provide an opportunity for each of the farmers in the province of Saskatchewan to know for sure that they have this option available to them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Wiens: — Mr. Speaker, I presume that farmers who have concerns about their production records from last year would have contacted the Crop Insurance Corporation. All the farmers I know are extremely competent business managers and would make those kinds of decisions if they thought there was a misrepresentation on their crop records. The fact is, as I said yesterday, it did not require a question of the members opposite. The minister in charge of Crop Insurance along with the competent administration of the Crop Insurance Corporation had already sensed the dilemma that had arisen because of the extension to August 10, and they have made provision for extensions for farmers to receive that kind of clarification. And I'm sure that the Crop Insurance Corporation will do the necessary job in making sure farmers' records are accurate to their satisfaction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Changes to GRIP

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Attorney General. Yesterday, Mr. Attorney General, the Minister of Agriculture said twice the following:

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite ought to be aware that the courts will continue to deal with these matters.

And he's referring to the GRIP Bill. And then he went on to say later in a question I asked him:

Mr. Speaker, as I've already once indicated to the member opposite, this matter will continue to be dealt with by the courts.

My question to the Attorney General is this: do you agree, Mr. Attorney General, with the Minister of Agriculture here in this Assembly that the GRIP Bill will continue to be dealt with by the courts?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Mitchell: — I have no idea, Mr. Speaker, what disposition the courts will make of those actions as time goes on and as events occur. And I wouldn't attempt to second-guess that. So my answer to the Leader of the Opposition is simply, I don't know what will happen to those actions.

The Speaker: — Order.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear ministerial statements called.

The Speaker: — I didn't . . . Would the member say that again? I couldn't hear you.

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — I didn't hear ministerial statements called.

The Speaker: — I definitely called ministerial statements, but the noise level was rather high. But we have done this before. By leave of the Assembly, we can certainly go back to ministerial statements, and I ask that the member have leave.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Economic Development Initiatives

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the offer of the members of the opposition to allow for a ministerial statement. I will just send this copy across.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to rise today to inform the Assembly of two important economic development initiatives taking place and announced in the province today. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I was accompanied by the Premier and Minister of Finance to a sod-turning ceremony for a new pipe mill at IPSCO plant here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, this will mean jobs for Regina and Saskatchewan people — good, stable, well-paying jobs, the kind we need in the province of Saskatchewan.

And what is very important about this announcement, Mr. Speaker, is this expansion is being done without the aid of taxpayers' money. We did not have to invest any taxpayers' money in order to get this expansion at IPSCO. All we had to do, Mr. Speaker, was to listen and to co-operate. We were able to assist the corporation by some degree by tax changes they required to make this venture work. That, Mr. Speaker, is the attitude we have to return to in this province, with the government and business community working together to create wealth.

Mr. Speaker, I would also draw the House's attention to an event this day, that is, the official opening of the Norquay Alfalfa plant. This plant will create 10 permanent and 35 part-time jobs in the Norquay area and will have spin-off benefits for local farmers, giving them a stable market for alfalfa in the province. Like the IPSCO expansion, this is new, advanced technology which will assure the plant a long life.

Again the government was able to work in co-operation with local business people to ensure that this operation would come about. In this case, a loan of \$1.5 million was made by SEDCO (Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation).

Mr. Speaker, slowly but surely the Saskatchewan economy is regaining its strength and confidence it once

had. It is doing so not because of massive injections of capital from government or from taxpayers, as everyone knows we just don't have that kind of money in the province as a result of 10 years of mismanagement. It is doing so because of renewed confidence in our province and our people in a renewed sense of co-operation between government and business.

Mr. Speaker, the creation of new jobs is the number one priority of this government and of the people of the province. On behalf of the Saskatchewan people, I ask the Assembly to join with me in extending congratulations to IPSCO and to the Norquay Alfalfa plant on the good news they bring to our province today. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, well, well, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade standing up in the House and taking credit, taking credit once again, for two more Conservative initiatives, Mr. Speaker — two more initiatives that were started by this, the previous administration. Two more initiatives.

Pretty soon, pretty soon, Mr. Speaker, we'll witness a few more. They'll be standing . . . they'll be having a big grand opening downtown here before very long for Crown Life, and I can see the minister standing in front of the cameras and saying, we're very pleased to have this initiative coming . . . started by the new government, the NDP government that brought this thing into Saskatchewan.

That's what will happen. The minister will be standing up and speaking in all of the glowing tones that he's always capable of giving; wax eloquently about the great initiatives that his government is putting forward.

And we'll see the same thing, I predict, Mr. Speaker, at the FCC (Farm Credit Corporation) relocation once they arrive here in Saskatchewan. Same thing, Mr. Speaker, stand up and the minister will say, we take full credit, we take full credit for the relocation of FCC.

Pretty soon, Mr. Speaker, the people of the province are going to wonder about, where are your 700 job-creating companies that are coming into Saskatchewan? In the throne speech, 700 — 700, he said, with a straight face, the Minister of Finance — 700 companies are going to be relocating to Saskatchewan.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, not a single one, not a single one have you been able to bring into this province that is new, that wasn't started by the previous administration. Not a single one. Piper Aircraft back in the spring, Mr. Speaker, the minister stood up and said, they'll be building planes in Saskatchewan before very long. And what did we see? Absolutely nothing.

The jobs are important in this province, and we're happy to see that they're proceeding — happy to see that they're proceeding with Tory initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 87

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wiens that **Bill No. 87 — An Act respecting amendments to Certain Farm Income Insurance Legislation** be now read a second time and the proposed amendment thereto moved by Mr. Devine and the proposed subamendment moved by Mr. Muirhead.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addressing this question this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I guess having examined why we're doing it, I have to admit that it appears that we are into this part of the debate as a result of a bit of a slip-up in our original amendment. Consequently we had to come up with a subamendment to the amendment in order to get the thing straightened out so that in fact it could work the way it should.

Now you would think, Mr. Speaker, that that should be a simple enough process, to change a little bit of an amendment with a subamendment so that in fact you could get the whole intention of the opposition properly into perspective. Unfortunately we had some indications that government members won't assist us by helping to vote this subamendment into the amendment so that we can have it clarified.

With view to that, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon us to take some time to explain to the government members why in fact we want to have this change made in an attempt to gain their support. Because obviously they do outnumber us, and without their support we won't be able to get this amendment into the record as we would like to have had it to begin with.

So we're asking for their support on the subamendment. It's not committing the government to supporting the entire notion that we have about the GRIP Bill at all. It's helping us to improve the approach that we take in making sure that the amendment is worded the way we wanted it.

Quite simply stated, Mr. Speaker — for those who may not have been listening earlier — we want different people to do the negotiating and the consultation between our two groups than the ones that we'd originally set out to imply should do that.

We're not saying that our House leaders are not capable. In fact, they are so very capable that that was our first intention, was to pick the best negotiators that we had. These are gentlemen who negotiate on a daily basis on all of the issues that concern this very Assembly and the ability of the Assembly to work in any fashion whatsoever. There has to be some spirit of co-operation between these gentlemen. And if there weren't that, this Assembly would accomplish nothing ever.

So the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that we naturally presumed that these would be the two gentlemen that would best negotiate. We discovered, after reflection though, that these two gentlemen are not necessarily the two people that have the best insight into the particular problem, that being a discussion on the GRIP Bill.

For example, our House Leader is not, admittedly, into pulse crop growing, and he's not into the kind of farming that is most affected by the GRIP Bill. He certainly has an interest in agriculture with his very successful hog operation, but he's not as close to it as our other agricultural experts are.

(1445)

I think the same, probably in reflection, holds true for the Government House Leader. Although he's had a background in farming, his extensive work in government circles in the past few years has probably lent to keep him away from the actual hands-on effect of farming that the Minister of Agriculture must certainly have.

And so we have suggested in our discussions, Mr. Speaker, that instead of the House leaders carrying on meaningful negotiations in this area, that perhaps we ought to change horses in mid-stream in this case, and ask our ministers of Agriculture and our past minister of Agriculture to . . . and the associate ministers of Agriculture to be the ones that will discuss this very important Bill and the kinds of amendments that should go into it.

It's unfortunate that we can't include all of the speakers in the House at one time, Mr. Speaker, because I know that they have a lot to contribute, and I'm sure that they will be anxious to get up after I've finished speaking to let us know just exactly what they feel about this particular subject.

Now we've talked for a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, about why we should change the people that would be directly involved in the negotiating process. And I think it's proper if I use a couple of examples of why these people would be more qualified so that the government members will understand our requirement to have this subamendment passed.

In the area of crop-specific natures within the GRIP Bill, I personally am a farmer and I didn't know for sure what that meant last year when we first started out with this GRIP program. So if I didn't understand it, being a farmer, I'm sure that a lot of the government members who have no farm background might not understand that.

And it would be important for us to have an individual like the past associate minister of Agriculture or the past minister of Agriculture, explain that to the government caucus members who might not have a clear understanding of it. Crop specific, of course, being the opposite to the basket approach, is very important to many people in the province and it makes a big difference on how their financing would result from any kind of a GRIP program — whether it be the '92 program or the '91 program.

This is a specific situation within either one of these two structures that will seriously affect the incomes of a lot of people. For example — and I'll just give a quick example of how this can work — if I were to grow canola on my farm and we had a basket approach . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. The member is allowed to indicate as to why he thinks the two members are more qualified to do some of the consultation negotiations, but then he can't go into detail into farm programs. That's not pertinent and germane to this subamendment.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was going to try to bring about a conclusion to the fact that these two individuals would be a lot better ones to understand how these programs would work because of their background in agriculture, as different from the House leaders, for example.

We thought that it was more important to begin with that we have the House leaders doing these negotiations because of their powerful personalities in the area of negotiation. However we've come to the conclusion that simply the ability to negotiate is not what we're really after. What we're really after was the expertise of the individuals with regard to these specific programs that we are discussing.

And I wanted the folks over there to understand that these kinds of differences within the programs affect people's livelihood and income so much that we have to have that expert input.

I would go on to mention that probably the House leaders might not know what farm specifics in the program would be. And I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that a lot of people out in our province who aren't directly connected with these programs, might not understand what the term "farm specific" would mean.

And I think that it's important, when we get into an area as complex as this, that we have people doing the negotiating who have not only personal background in agriculture but also personal background in the developments of the programs.

It's rather unique that we have two programs in this province in the past year that are so diversely different and yet they were designed by the very people who sit in this House, one on one side of the House, and the other on the other side of the House. Now granted they've had committees that have advised them and have had a lot of folks help them, but the real decision making, final decision-making process obviously for the new program had to lie in the hands of the Minister of Agriculture.

And of course the past program was definitely approved in final context by the minister of Agriculture in the past administration, and his associate minister having done a lot of the work in the consultation and travelling around the province. I believe, and I hope I'm not wrong here, but I believe the figure was used that he consulted directly with 40,000 individual farmers, and that was at public meetings where those people were actually there, actually had an opportunity to ask questions of the minister. He had to know his program thoroughly and

completely.

Now the Minister of Agriculture has been to some public meetings. We know he was in Shaunavon to discuss the new program and he certainly seems to have developed some expertise in that area.

The two programs have got diametrically opposing forces for some reason that we don't seem to be able to meld together. And it is important that we have those individuals who have drawn up those two programs become the individuals who will work on this plan to try to come up with some kind of a melding of the programs and forging them together to become the best of all worlds.

I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that both programs are and were flawed. I'm suggesting that the best program for farmers would be a program that would have these two GRIP programs put into one. Take the best out of each and put them together.

Now in order for that to happen the only way it could happen would be if the people that were directly involved were those people who were in fact on the negotiating team for both sides. And that's what we're asking for in this subamendment.

We're asking that these be the two people that will do the consultation, that we would somehow get away from the partisan politics of this thing for a little while — maybe lock them in a room until they both come out hungry and dry and starved and that sort of thing. And if they don't have an answer with a workable plan we just don't let them out of the room until they come up with that. Now that might be a little cruel, but it might be a way of doing it. And if we were going to take that approach it would certainly have to be with the individuals that know how the programs work and what's involved.

And that could only be those people that designed the two programs, seeing as how we have that good fortune of having both of those in this very House at this particular time. So not speaking physically of course, but in terms of their being members and having worked on the programs.

Now we've had all kinds of debates about the complications of the programs and the guidelines to the programs and we've talked about things like random auditing. And again I suggest that a lot of folks, Mr. Speaker, might not understand what was meant by random auditing and how it affected the programs. The one program has that in it. The other program doesn't.

And the two people that designed these programs could sit down, and perhaps if they talked for a while they'd be able to figure out, you know, why you couldn't maybe have the best of each of those philosophies put into one program to better serve all of the farmers in Saskatchewan.

I think in reality, Mr. Speaker, that most folks in this Assembly would like this program to work. It's complicated. There's no question about that fact. It's very complicated, and it won't be easy to make it work. And it

won't be easy to ever design a program that won't have somebody finding some flaw with it or some fault with it. But certainly both programs have been heavily criticized.

And when you have two programs that are heavily criticized but both have good points and good merits in them, then the thing to do would be to try to meld them together to make one good, workable idea out of all of the ideas that have come together.

Now it's unfortunate, I guess, that we didn't think of the fact that we should have the ministers of Agriculture and the past ministers of Agriculture involved in these negotiations at the start because that would have lessened the need for our debate here today.

But it does seem that the government is not listening to what our intent is in this particular move. It appears that they will vote against our subamendment strictly because they feel that as government they must defeat any idea that we must have.

And I would suggest again to them that this is not supporting our concept of the GRIP Bill. This is supporting only the subamendment that would allow us to change the people that would represent us in our concept of how we should go about solving the problems of this terrible mess that we have gotten into with these two GRIP programs.

Having these individuals set down and draw up a new program with the good ideas from both programs and throwing away the bad aspects of them seems to me to be eminently the best solution in the long run. Otherwise it simply has to end up going to the courts, and it's going to cost some folks just a lot of money, a lot of time, a lot of grief, a lot of anger. And I don't really think that that is in the best interests of the province or certainly the best interests of the farming community.

We've talked about things like buy-back options in these two programs. And there's some serious need to have people that understand what that means working in the consultation, if our plan is going to work where we would try to get one good plan out of all the mess we're in.

I think that our associate minister of Agriculture from the past administration has an extremely good idea of what's going on in this buy-back option because he was involved first of all with not providing it in the old program and then coming to realize that there were people out there that had specific, individual kinds of problems that needed to be addressed.

I believe also that the new Minister of Agriculture in this administration may very well have not had an opportunity to talk to the same 40,000 farmers, that he might in fact learn something if he were to take some time to talk to this past associate minister of Agriculture about that very problem. I think there's a lot of knowledge here that could be and should be shared.

The buy-back option, of course, apparently runs into the area of irrigation which I have no personal expertise on. We don't do any irrigating on our farm. But those people that do certainly have larger input costs, they certainly

have a lot larger yields to deal with, and all kinds of things that are different. And so the expertise that the minister of Agriculture of the past administration would have in those areas could be eminently important for the Minister of Agriculture in this administration to have access to.

And it would just do my heart really good to see these individuals be able to sit down some place and to discuss these two programs at very great length, and perhaps get to know and understand one another as individuals as well as experts in the field of agriculture, with one absolute design in focus for their minds and that being to come up with a program of these two GRIP policies that in fact would make more people happy in our province and bring some much-needed cash flow to our rural communities.

We've talked about moral hazards until it's almost a hazard to talk about moral hazards. And it's . . . because really we offend farmers by saying that. And they should be offended because what it's really saying is that we're calling them crooks. And the farmers are not crooks out there. It's almost unheard of for that to happen. And I think it's really important that we get the air cleared on those kind of subjects, Mr. Speaker.

And if our associate minister of Agriculture from the past administration and the minister of Agriculture were to have some input to the new Minister of Agriculture on that issue, I'm quite sure that they would come up with the realization that it is demeaning for farmers to be pointed at through various forms of the news media, through coffee shop conversations, to be somewhat accused — even if it's indirectly — of not playing by fair rules when they use the system that is provided for them to operate under these present recessionary conditions.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that if these two fellows were the ones that would get together, because they have good backgrounds in agriculture, they would also have an understanding of how sensitive people are becoming to the slightest bit of slander that is thrown at them. And this is somewhat of a slanderous situation when you sort of take a basket approach to all of people in agriculture and suggest that they are moral hazards. The term itself is demeaning, not only to all farmers but even to myself. It makes me feel as though I've done something wrong, when in fact all I've tried to do is make a decent living off the land that the good Lord provided us with in this province of Saskatchewan.

(1500)

We've talked about some people using fertilizer and not using fertilizer. And these fellows know something about that. The associate minister of Agriculture, I know personally, has used a lot of fertilizer on his grasses and different crops at different times. And the things that he hasn't done, his family members have done. And so they have an understanding of that.

And I know that the Minister of Agriculture himself in this administration has farmed in an area where fertilizer probably is a great advantage. But the reality is that if you don't use fertilizer, some people say that you are a moral hazard; that you are being a crook; that you're taking

advantage of the system because you're deliberately trying not to grow a better crop.

Well the reality of life is, Mr. Speaker — and some people are going to find this as a shock — but if you don't get much rainfall, fertilizer can in fact cause your yields to go down. I happen to farm in an area of the province where that is a fact and up until a few years ago, our agricultural representatives, as they were called when I was younger, used to advocate — and this used to be an extension policy — that they advocated that you do not use fertilizer in south-west Saskatchewan because in fact it . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I may be very interested in when you should use fertilizer or when you shouldn't use fertilizer and in what areas you should use them and in what crops. That may be pertinent and germane to another debate but it really has nothing to do with the subvote that is before us, and I ask the member to return back to the subvote.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just leading back to that connection unlike the other day when I had lost myself in a maze of confusion. I did have my mind on the final conclusion that the reason that I was making that comparison is that we have to get back to this idea that we have people represent us in these negotiations who have that understanding of that particular type of farm circumstance.

You see, the Minister of Agriculture, farming in an area where fertilizer always works, and the associate minister of Agriculture from the past administration, farming in an area where it was advocated by the department that it didn't always work, has that knowledge. And they together can then get those ideas together and have an understanding for all of the different practices that are used and then you can take out this idea of this moral hazard that people are feeling is going on because in reality it may not necessarily be there. And these are the people that we have to have in these negotiations to describe and explain that to one another.

For example, I will go back to our original concept that the House leaders would be in charge of doing these negotiations. Our House Leader farms north of Saskatoon where rainfall is eminently higher than in the southern part of the province. His contribution to this debate about moral hazard couldn't possibly be as accurate in terms of reality for the farmers in southern Saskatchewan as the input would be from the past associate minister of Agriculture who happened to have lived and farmed in south-west Saskatchewan where these common practices used to be in effect.

So I hope that I have shown you how this thing ties together in terms of the necessity for these individuals to be the ones that would do our negotiating if our proposal in the amendment were accepted. And so we need to have this subamendment supported by the government in order to ensure that we have the right people involved in these negotiations, Mr. Speaker.

We had talked quite a bit about the needs of these individuals to be in place as our negotiating team, Mr. Speaker, and I think if the government members seriously

consider this they will realize that their Minister of Agriculture would certainly be the better person to be involved in this type of discussion rather than their House Leader as well.

We've talked about the need for the program to be expanded, and I think that if we're going to be looking at expanding the program or designing it for 1993 . . . And I've already read in the newspaper, Mr. Speaker, that there are some plans and some workings being done in that direction.

Now we as an opposition would feel that this particular amendment that we have might be carried even a step further into those negotiations in the future. And they might talk about such things as deducting payments for your premiums from the sales of your product. Now who would know better about that than people who are directly involved in agriculture and who have had some experience?

The Minister of Agriculture is a farmer and the past minister of Agriculture, from the past administration, is also an active farmer. These two individuals, Mr. Speaker, both know how hard it can be to come up with cash, especially in a year when you've got heavy expenses in the fall for harvesting and those kinds of things. And then you have short quotas. I'm not sure that the House leaders would really understand about quota systems in grain sales.

For example again, my colleague, the House Leader, who is a dynamic individual in negotiating all kinds of affairs in this House, doesn't farm his land in a way that needs to have the grain sold into the grain system where you use quotas. He's a hog producer and his hogs become his quota system — they simply eat the grain.

The member across is indicating that their House Leader used to be a grain farmer, and I'm sure he is. However, I suggest that with the work he's got and the heavy load in government that he doesn't have very much time to pay a whole lot of attention to the matters of agriculture. Being the Minister of Economic Diversification and all those other things, he should probably have his plate pretty well full with those kinds of things, trying to get some jobs and economic spin-off into this province.

So understanding how busy that member is, it would make him, in a sense to me . . . that we would pass this subamendment and allow him to be off the hook in this negotiating process and allow for the Minister of Agriculture, who's portfolio this is, to do that particular work. It just seems natural that the Minister of Agriculture, upon reflection, should be the one to step into that role.

And I think that in all fairness, those people that have had to deal with the quota systems, as grain farmers, will understand things like the need to have your payments attached as you sell your product rather than in a lump sum, and then you have to borrow the money from a bank and pay these high interest rates even though they are lower than they used to be. It's still an adverse effect on cash flow.

And with those people being the ones that understand it,

we're suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that in reality, those should be the ones that would go on to this negotiating team and do our discussing for us, and the Minister of Agriculture would do those things for the government interests.

Now we've had a fair bit of discussion about this. And I wanted to have the folks know that we had to do some checking to find out how we could get this process to work and to try to explain a little bit about what's happening here. I know that I have some constituents that were wondering why we were doing a subamendment. And I'll just slip my glasses on here and read a little bit of this fine print because I think it's important that folks understand what a subamendment really is planning to do.

And it's described here in these papers that we have from our researchers that came through the Clerk's department, I guess. And it says here:

that a subamendment must attempt to explain the substance of the amendment and not substitute the entire proposal.

And I hope that the government members realize that we're not trying to change the proposal. We're only trying to correct what we see as a need to change the individuals that would be concerned if the entire package were accepted at a later time in this debate.

It says:

but only two amendments can be proposed at the same time to a question, but some limit is necessary. The usage has grown into law that an amendment to an amendment is allowable, but that no motion to amend further can be entertained until one of the two amendments is disposed of. Now there is no limit, however, to the number of amendments to a question, provided they come within the principle.

Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe that will help to enlighten members of the government to know that we are not attempting to change the amendment that we put in, just that part that pertains to the individuals that would represent our side and the government side in the negotiations.

It also goes on to say:

that the original motion is accordingly laid aside and the amendment becomes, for the time, a separate question to be dealt with until its terms are settled.

You see we're not dealing with the original motion; we're just dealing with the subamendment. And that means that the government could, in all good conscience, support the change to the amendment by voting for the subamendment without committing themselves to anything that we or they believe in in terms of the original motion on the GRIP program.

And the subamendment which proposes an alternative to

the original amendment is in order provided it is relevant to the question. And of course, this goes on to state that you can check this out in *Journals*, June 24 and 23 in 1926 on page 465, and all that sort of thing. And I'd be glad to offer this if the members opposite would like to do some checking on it.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've got the . . . (inaudible) . . . general principles involved in this question, as I see it, with this amendment. We've got the principle of changing the two individuals that in fact would be involved in the negotiations, and we have also got the other principle, which of course is that we have to do this because of the fact that closure was invoked and how that affects us here today.

Now because I think some of my constituents were wondering just why we were changing this, I should probably just read the amendment so that . . . or the subamendment, rather, so that they will understand what we are doing. Now then, proposed amendment moved by . . . and okay:

That all the words after the word "That" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

this Bill not be read a second time because the House leaders have not reached agreement on the principles involved and the process in which it has been brought forward;

And the proposed subamendment was moved then:

That the words "House leaders" be substituted for the words "the ministers of Agriculture and opposition member responsible for Agriculture" . . .

Now I've discussed in some length, Mr. Speaker, why those two individuals should be switched, and I'm hoping that the government members will support us on that concept. And it goes on then to say:

and by deleting all of the words after the words "principles involved" and the following substituted therefor:

(And it says) because closure was used to unilaterally force introduction of this Bill in the Assembly.

Now of course, I guess what we're saying is that because closure was used, Mr. Speaker, it limited the amount of debate that we were allowed to put into this program and this Bill. And by so doing we have to, as an official opposition trying to do the best job that it can, we have to try to find a way to deliver our message to the government. And the way that we could deliver that message, if closure is invoked and we can't make speeches in this Assembly on the matter, the other option we have would be to get the process together where our side and their side would designate a couple of people or one individual each to sit down and talk about the changes that need to be done. Because closure was invoked we can't do it in the Assembly through the debate at these microphones, and so we've suggested that

because the closure happened we now should go on and use the other process which would be to get the folks to work in a one-on-one situation.

Closure of course, as you're well aware, has only been used twice before in the history of the province. And somebody suggested to me — I'm not sure if this is exactly accurate — but they suggested that in 85 years closure was used twice until this sitting of the Assembly.

And now of course we've had four or six, whatever it's going to be after today or however it adds up, but anyway it's gotten to the point where we're starting to feel that closure is being used to the point where we can't get our points across the way that we want to.

So we are attempting with this amendment and now this subamendment to impress upon the minds of the members in the government that we have to do some changing to this whole GRIP package; that we have to trade ideas; that we've got to get the ministers of Agriculture from the past administration and the ministers of this administration together; and we've got to share some information, share some ideas, and be willing to accept some of the ideas of each back and forth.

And if we can get that done, then we have gotten our points across for the farmers of Saskatchewan and for the farm families, even though closure has been invoked. Now we would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that there are many people that have explained in long, long debates in this Assembly over the years — not that I was here to hear them, but folks have shown me the *Hansards* — and they've shown us where many people have debated long and carefully the concepts of why closure should be used not only carefully, but very seldom.

(1515)

And I think likely because of the fact that you haven't got two factors involved, you lose the ability of an opposition to use time as a factor to allow a government to have people approach it to make idealistic changes that could in fact result in amendments being made to the original draft Bills.

Now that's one thing that's important in debate in the democratic process. Closure eliminates that time factor, that melting-point approach, or melting-pot approach I think would probably be the better way to term that, the melting-pot approach of allowing the government time to listen to the people and to reconsider their actions. Now closure eliminates that. And in fairness I guess, after a certain period of time, the government has thought that all of this process has taken place.

So if it has taken place, then closure would be justifiable in their opinion. But in the opinions of other people, the original problems with the Bill haven't really been addressed, so they haven't had their problems taken care of. If they haven't had their problems taken care of, then the opposition has to try to find another vehicle to impress upon the government the need for amendments to the Bill or changes to the programs that would in effect bring about the changes that the general public in the country are asking for.

Now, they're asking for a lot of changes in this particular Bill. And the only way, with closure having been invoked, for the opposition to impress upon the government these points at this time would be to have an amendment passed by this very government that would allow . . . and if we passed the subamendment as well, allowing the Minister of Agriculture and the past ministers of Agriculture to get together and discuss this thing, then we would be doing our job even though closure has been invoked. We would be doing our job as an opposition to get the points traded back and forth, to get that communications going that would allow these folks to consider some amendments to the program and bring about the better program that farmers all through the province have been asking for, pleading for, and begging for.

And I say that in sincerity, through the performance of the things that they've done — the assembly on this very lawn out in front of this building by all kinds of farmers through the spring period. They didn't drive for 5 and 600 miles some of them, 200 miles other, and whatever distances they all came from — some of them flew and some of them drove and all of them got here — and they didn't go to that much trouble because they weren't concerned. They were genuinely concerned, and they wanted some changes to this Bill. They want some changes to the program. Basically what they need is cash flow. It's not seen to be here.

And then we saw the huge rally down in Shaunavon where the skating-rink was almost packed. After 400 people had walked out of that very assembly in protest to the Minister of Rural Development getting up and making a statement, there was still a massive crowd that you could hardly see that 400 had left. That tells you something about the numbers of people that were there expressing their concern to the member from Shaunavon who incidentally hasn't been found lately in the constituency.

But the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that after that you also had the folks gathering in the Agridome. You had a massive crowd of people gathering in the Agridome. And here, Mr. Speaker, it was another demonstration of the people of Saskatchewan showing this government that they really cared, that they really took an interest. Twice these farmers came from hundreds of miles all around the province to this very city, a city that has very little to offer in the springtime for a farmer other than a protest against something that's going on in this Assembly.

So they made that trip at their own expense, cash out of pocket. Took time out of their important farming operations to come here to express their needs and their concerns. And the government to date hasn't taken them seriously. That's why as an opposition, Mr. Speaker, we have to do something to attract the attention of this government to try to get them to listen to the people.

It's obvious that they haven't been listening to the people. And I will go back to the idea of how closure has been viewed by some of the members of this very Assembly. One member said that:

Here we are, (in) Saskatchewan Day, 1989, and

I'm wondering when the Conservative Party will start to issue as a matter of course to their candidates flame-throwers so that they can better follow the scorched-earth policy that this government is so hell-bent on carrying out.

August 7, 1989 *Hansard*. And:

The government might ask somewhat of a different question. And they would say, well why let democracy interfere with the goings on in the legislature? And that's I think the nub of this whole question. Why let democracy interfere with our agenda, the government says.

Now isn't it ironic how those statements come full circle and apply today in 1992 in this very same Assembly where those words were echoed once before on a different matter.

But in all fairness, closure has been invoked on this issue. We will only have a certain length of time to deliberate the questions at hand. And we need now to have a way of getting to the government. And this is, I think, the only alternative that we as the opposition will have is to convince the government to now sit down and discuss this matter in a one on one between our agricultural experts.

One of the other members went on also in *Hansard* to talk about closure and its effects. And I will quote, and it says:

But I want to say, as other colleagues of mine 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 this province wherever we go, because those are the kinds of things that are important to the people of Saskatchewan. Democracy will be protected by this opposition to the largest extent that we can, at every opportunity that we can.

And I couldn't have put those words any better myself, and yet they were quoted from August 7, 1989 from *Hansard*, coming from a member of the now sitting government.

Mr. Speaker it's important to note how the full circle of life comes around when you are considering actions that take away the rights of some individuals in the guise of trying to help the majority. And then you have to wonder, is the majority really being helped or are they actually being hurt?

For example, the government says it's going to save \$23 million in this program, and that's not a whole bunch of money in terms of the \$5 billion that we have in the budget. At the same time, they say we have to control our deficit so we can't spend that money. But when you think about it, \$23 million in order to attract 240 millions of federal money, then gives you \$263 million that could have gone to the farmers of Saskatchewan. And wouldn't have that ever increased all of the cash flow throughout our entire economy?

The entire cash flow of Saskatchewan could have been improved by \$263 million by that small expenditure. I believe that the income tax that some people would have had to pay on their shares of those monies would have in fact ended up giving the government more than that \$23 million back. Just that alone, not to mention all of the spin-off taxes that would have come from people going out to maybe buying a new grain auger or a new grain truck or some other harvesting equipment that is so desperately needed in this province today.

We've got farmers, Mr. Speaker, right today that have large lines of equipment that are just about like the old one-horse chaise. As you will recall in the poetry of that descriptive analogy of the one-horse chaise, it lasted for 100 years and a day and then it totally fell apart. Well half of the machinery in Saskatchewan is at 99 years and is just about ready to fall apart, and the rest of it is at a hundred and has one day to go. And if we don't see some cash flow in our province, it's going to come to that point where all of a sudden one day the people are going to go out to harvest crops, and all the machinery is simply going to fall apart, and there won't be a harvest because there won't be any equipment left for people to work with.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's eminently important that this government reconsider its position, that it reconsider its approach to cash flow for farm families because they desperately have to have that money if their industry is to continue to operate at all.

Now you might say, well it isn't going to hurt us much because we'll export most of it anyway. But the reality is, Mr. Speaker, that we do eat a lot of the food that we produce in this province, and the people have to have the international trade in order for our families to be able to enjoy those things that they enjoy from outside of the rest of our country.

For example, how many television sets are manufactured in Saskatchewan? I dare say probably none. There may be one or two that's built by a few experimentalists, but the reality is that we import them from other countries. That means we have to export something in order to pay for them. The things that we export are largely food products. And if we don't keep our agricultural machine running, then we're not going to have that ability for international trade that will keep our province going and keep the people of this province in business. We've got to have that revolving kind of a system or we're in serious, serious trouble.

And because of this closure being placed on us so that we're limited in the debate, Mr. Speaker, we are unable at this particular time to convince the government through the normal process of debate in the House. We will have that closure invoked so that we will be muzzled, we will be silenced, as the member so adequately put it, the member from Regina Dewdney, back in 1989. And being muzzled in this way means that we have to seek out other alternative methods to get our message across.

The alternative that we are attempting to convince the government to accept would be the alternative of having our agricultural experts sit down with their agricultural

experts and negotiate changes — not to the 1993 program — but changes to the 1991-92 programs that are causing us so much trouble.

Mr. Speaker, that negotiating could then overcome all of the problems that have resulted from the fact that we've had closure imposed on us. It will be important, very important for us to see these negotiations go on. And it's amazing, but a fact of life, that when people have 20 feet between them and they sort of have the adversarial approach in debate, often I think it's easy to sort of just stare across and close one's mind and not consider the views and the points of view of those that are expressing their opinions.

But in a one-on-one situation, eyeball to eyeball, nose to nose, it's really hard not to listen to what the other fellow's saying and just sort of tune yourself out. You can't just say, well I'm going to sleep now or whatever. You have to actually hear the words and they might just soak in. We might in fact even accomplish something in the area of getting some of these problems solved and getting some much-needed cash flow into the hands of the community.

This has an effect, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you're aware that if we could convince the government to get into this plan and get this cash flow out there, this would have the effect of a spin-off that would help our entire province. The people of Regina and Saskatoon would be helped as much as farm families would be if we were successful in this area.

And I say in all honesty that the people of the cities of Saskatchewan have suffered enough as well. This recession has wreaked havoc on all of the people of our province. The folks in our cities have had to tolerate the need to be competitive with the rest of the world with far too little cash flow for far too long. And the ability of the government to bring cash to farm families by changing this program . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. This is the third time I had to remind the member to speak to the subamendment. If he continues to ignore my suggestion, I will call upon another speaker.

Mr. Goohsen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to keep on the subject of how closure had affected us and how we weren't able to use the length of debate in the House to convince the government to change its position and to bring in amendments to the Bill.

I think you're well aware, Mr. Speaker, and those people through you . . . I talked to the rest of this Assembly, the people on the government side, I think they're well aware of the fact that lengthy debate has always been a tool that has been used by oppositions in order to convince the government to take a different point of view. If not to convince the government directly, at least to provide the general public with the arguments that were being used so that they could put pressure on the government.

Now we have closure, Mr. Speaker, that eliminates that ability for the opposition to use lengthy debate to convince the government that they should in fact take a different direction. This has really got, at this point,

nothing to do with this particular GRIP Bill as such. It has to do with process and the ability of process to work.

(1530)

Now seeing that we haven't got the ability to make the process work, we are now faced with the dilemma, as an opposition, of trying to find a vehicle that we can use to get the views of the people from out in the country across to the government. How do we achieve the goal of getting the government to bring in amendments to Bills? How do we achieve the goal of getting the government to listen to the arguments? How do we achieve the goal of getting time for the general public to absorb what we are saying and what we are doing if we have closure, and the lengthy debates that used to work for oppositions in the past are no longer allowed to this opposition?

So we have taken the view that because closure has been invoked on us so many times, we will have to try to use these other vehicles, such as trying to encourage the government to bring about a process of negotiation where the Minister of Agriculture from the government side along with the minister of Agriculture from the past administration, and the associate minister from the past administration assisting him, would sit down and attempt to, in meaningful negotiations, convince members of the government that they in fact should make some changes to this particular Bill. But the process goes on even further when you're talking about closure, because it can affect not only this Bill but any Bill that closure is invoked on.

And so my debate and my points that I make, while they apply directly to this particular subamendment, Mr. Speaker, could for all intents and purposes be transferred to the argument against closure in many other areas as well. But I'm not going to stand here and say that closure should never be used ever by any government because obviously there has been two other times in the history of this province when it was felt that that was necessary.

The reality being though, that when you've seen it used the four or six times that we are going to see as this day progresses, the reality then is we have to start to question, is this tool of government now being abused? Are they using closure more readily than is good for the sake of the democratic process?

And I think our argument will be well taken by those that watch how this process and these proceedings work. I think our point will be taken that if you have lost major tools to work with as an opposition without getting in return something back to use, then you will have effectively muzzled not only the individuals but the democracy itself.

In other jurisdictions we understand, for example, that bell-ringing was discontinued some time back. And of course now it has been restricted and theoretically removed from the tool-chest of opposition in Saskatchewan.

With that gone, it is then even more necessary for the opposition to be able to use the tools that it has remaining in order to sway the opinion of government. And that's what debate is really all about. And lengthy debate of

course, while it seems somewhat boring to a lot of people, is designed for that purpose, Mr. Speaker, of giving members an opportunity to sway the thinking of the government, to get them on track with a different wavelength, as it were.

Because when they listen for a long time they might in fact change their mind a little bit and put in an amendment, or they might even take a Bill off the order paper and send it back to the original drafters and say, this really isn't what we want to accomplish; it's going to hurt too many people; we want to do something else.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the way that closure has affected us, it affects us very directly in this Bill, and we want those arguments to be considered by the government as well, that we no longer have that tool of lengthy debate to sway their opinion. And because we don't have that, we now need from the government some attention in some other way.

And these amendments and the subamendments are designed directly to do that. They are designed directly to get the government to listen to our arguments, not in a lengthy debate now as we used to have under regular rules because that regular rule now is cut off with closure, but now we are asking that we will be able to sit down in one room, one on one, with just two or three people, and discuss this matter with the experts that we each side would choose from among us to debate this issue in a closed session, not here in this Assembly where closure has limited our ability to debate and to pass on information.

So then I think we have to take this a step further and we have to consider the arguments of why closure was used and why it should probably not be used so much in the future. I think we have to at this time, when closure is being invoked on this very important issue, make some of those points of why closure should be used with caution.

We can quote, Mr. Speaker, from some of the people that have been in this Assembly to prove our point because they have said it so eloquently. I will quote from one of those members, and it says here that: That is why, Mr. Speaker, I find this piece of legislation so abhorrent. He doesn't have the right to deny how long I can speak in this Assembly. He doesn't have that right. The people of Saskatoon South have elected me to speak for them.

Now that's what an eminent speaker in this Assembly said on August 7, 1989 in this very Assembly. And I take that from *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. And it's important that those kind of eloquent speeches that had substance and meaning then be applied to today's circumstance on the issue of closure.

I won't quote from that particular page any further, Mr. Speaker, because I don't want to appear to be picking on any one individual that spoke on that subject back in those days, but I would like to read one more quote from a different member of the Assembly at that time, dealing with the issue of closure and how it affects the ability of people in a democratic process to be able to perform their duties in opposition.

Ah, here's the one I was looking for. And I will quote without use of name: A government coming in and using the heavy hand of its majority and arbitrarily — I guess that word is, excuse me — deciding in its opinion that the opposition's debate has been too long, in its opinion that our arguments have been irrelevant, in its opinion that we ought not to be talking about it. They come here to define the rules of this legislature to do this arbitrarily by simple majority and to equate this kind of a heavy-handed, undemocratic, unprecedented, unwarranted attack on the rules where all the members agree.

That was said on August 4, 1989, Mr. Speaker. And I expect that to some extent these words still apply.

It goes on: But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, what this does show, this motion today shows that this black Friday for democracy, this unprecedented attack on freedom in the province of Saskatchewan may be an attack on 26 lonely members of the opposition. Again that was from August 4, 1989.

Obviously there are not 26 members in opposition today. But, Mr. Speaker, in all fairness the same principle does seem to apply. And closure has done exactly what these members in those days said it did to them. It does it exactly the same to this opposition today. The numbers are irrelevant but the principles are equal.

And we've said, Mr. Speaker, that having had our opportunity to debate in length, to use that as a tool of opposition to convince the government to change its opinion, we now are restricted to trying to find other tools.

And the tool we are trying to use, for those that haven't figured out what we're up to here, is quite simply this. We are asking that the government support us in proposing an amendment . . . and that now we've discovered that the amendment itself which would lend to having the Minister of Agriculture and the agricultural experts from the opposition sit down in a closed kind of a meeting, or some other forum where they would discuss these issues instead of just ramming this legislation through without consideration for the needs of the farm families out in the province and for the needs of the taxpayers in the city.

Instead of having that happen, Mr. Speaker, we are asking that these people be sat down in a negotiating format and that they exchange their views and their ideas and try to better the situation in the province of Saskatchewan rather than to make it worse.

And then we went on with our thoughts in this matter and discovered that we had appointed our House leaders to do this job for us. And as I explained earlier, Mr. Speaker, we did that, thinking that our House leaders were our best negotiators because that's what they do each day in this House is negotiate the operation of this very Assembly.

So faced with that reality that we had picked those gentlemen, and then realizing that in fact they might not necessarily know the most about this particular Bill at this particular time, we realized that we should have picked the people who are experts in the area of agriculture. And having that thought, we decided that we would put in this

subamendment to change the amendment, and we are today asking the government to support that.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that some of my other colleagues are getting anxious to contribute to this debate, so I'm going to run a little bit of a conclusion on the things that I've said here today, and of course while I complete that I'm sure they will have their notes in order and be ready to go into this debate and try to convince the government to support us.

We've had the whole issue, Mr. Speaker, of why we brought in this amendment to begin with. We've had the whole issue discussed of why we now find it necessary to bring in the subamendment. And as you will recall, there were many reasons other than the closure aspect of it that we thought in fact that we should get these experts together from the two sides of this House to discuss this GRIP Bill. A lot of input, as you will recall, could have been put into this debate by each of those sides.

I think I mentioned earlier that — or on another day — that the 1992 GRIP program might have some irony in it for me because it might in fact even be better for my personal farm situation as a result of heavy rainfall this year. But next year if I had a drought it would be off.

So I wanted to point out to you why we needed to have the experts from the two sides go into these negotiations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, instead of the House leaders. Because the expert on our side would be able to reflect those kinds of needs that come from my experience this year out in the country where we've had the rainfall.

And it would also happen of course that the Minister of Agriculture for the government could reflect perhaps to us some of the reasons why he has been very adamant in wanting his program to go ahead. And who knows? He might be able to convince our experts in a one-on-one consultation process that in fact we should reconsider our position. It's altogether possible.

I should hope that open-mindedness would flow both ways and I should hope that if these negotiations were to happen, that information would travel from one side to the other and from that side to this and back and forth. We have to have two-way discussions with open minds on both sides, especially on this kind of a critical issue where so many people's lives are going to be affected.

Now we've said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that while it would have been nice to have our most powerful negotiators, the toughest hitting team we got, the person who could most readily handle those kinds of situations, we at the outset would have thought that that would be the person to have. But in reality, we realized that what we need is the people with expertise on this particular Bill and on this particular issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've come to the point where we've got all of our ducks a bit in line here. We've decided that the Minister of Agriculture would discuss this with our agricultural experts, that they would trade information, that they would come up with some kind of idea that would perhaps bring cash flow to the farmers of our province and at the same time perhaps not break the

economy of the province. It could be worked out in such a way I should hope that most of these needs could be served without totally upsetting the entire province.

(1545)

And then we came to the point where, how were we going to get the folks across the way to listen to us? And we tried to think about the tool of long debate, but unfortunately closure has now come into the picture. With closure in the picture we find ourselves having to decide which direction are we going to go to get around closure, as a tool by government, stopping us from talking about this issue. And how are we going to get around that now so that we can get our point of view across to the government?

Well in conclusion, there was only one way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that was to introduce an amendment that would allow us a different process of being able to sit down with government members to discuss this very issue. And that's what this amendment is all about. It's a sitting down by those of us who know something about agriculture. In our caucus, we have the former minister of Agriculture and the former associate minister of Agriculture, and we know very well that the Minister of Agriculture in the government has a colleague or two that would be very, very helpful in these kinds of discussions. And we've decided that the only tool we have left would be to convince the government to set these folks down to deliberate and to negotiate some kind of a sensible resolve to the problems that we have.

I'm not saying that they'd redraft the whole Bill, but perhaps they could come up with some amendments that would greatly alleviate the problems in our province. And at the same time, then closure would not have in fact destroyed the whole ability of the democratic process to work in this Assembly. In fact it at the moment does muzzle us because we can only talk for so long on the issues. But in reality if we had a conference with our experts along with their experts, we would be accomplishing in the end perhaps the same thing that we need to accomplish and that being a common sense, conciliatory resolve to the problems that are raised in this particular Bill.

And perhaps we could set a bit of a precedent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a precedent where we could try this approach in future on other Bills. It might in fact work. And if the government is intent upon using closure to limit debate in this House, then at least we would have another vehicle for presenting the views of the people to the government and to make sure that the needs of the electorate, the people that put us here, are properly addressed and in fact then to justify the opposition being in existence and quite simply to justify my collecting my wages as an opposition member.

If I can't do a job here, if I'm not allowed to speak, if I'm muzzled, if I'm not given an opportunity to sway the thinking of the government, then I certainly can't justify in my mind that I've earned my wages for the right reasons. And so closure has that effect on me personally, and it has the effect on the general public of not getting their view across. But this new proposal that we put forth, where we

would have the experts from the government and opposition sit down and negotiate, might help to alleviate some of those problems.

So, Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all seriousness I ask the government members to support our subamendment, to vote with us on it so that we can straighten out the people that will be involved in these negotiations just in case we happen to go ahead with it. And then I would seriously suggest to them that they would not lose anything if they voted for our amendment and allowed this negotiation to go on. It would not necessarily change the Bill. It wouldn't change the government's position, and in effect it might even help them to improve their image with the people in this province. So I strongly urge the government to consider supporting us on these matters. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Johnson: — Mr. Speaker, I realize that the member from Maple Creek has taken a considerable length of time to indicate why the amendment to the amendment should be placed and followed. I don't believe I'll take as long in giving some rebuttal to that. But what I think . . .

An Hon. Member: — Are we going to get a speech on field grain?

Mr. Johnson: — The member from Thunder Creek is very interested in what I have to say and I hope that he will continue to listen and not leave.

One of the things that the member from Maple Creek did not indicate is that the person that they are moving forward to negotiate from the opposition side is also . . . has also spoken in the debate in one of the . . . in the amendment, I believe. But he indicated in that, while he spoke, that he did not remember what items that he had taken out of the crop insurance program as the GRIP program for '91 was formulated. He didn't remember that spot-loss hail had been removed.

So I suggest to the members opposite that the subamendment to the amendment is probably not achieving any great help to them when the individual who they are suggesting as being their best negotiator is not in a position . . . or cannot remember what the program was that he actually put forward. And in that regard I think that to support the subamendment is not something that should be done by anyone, and I know I am not going to myself.

One of the things that it appears to me is that the members opposite feel that they can drag out a debate in the House and achieve something. Well from my perspective it is not the . . . you do not achieve something by dragging the debate in the House unless you end up winning public support.

If they were dragging a debate on some other items that have been brought before this House where there was probably more public support, I would think that they would be achieving something. In this case, they're not getting the public support.

And in the *Star-Phoenix* of August 11 there is an

individual who wrote a letter in and said, the provincial government should just lock the opposition out; not even use time allocation or anything, just simply just close the door and go ahead and implement the . . . move ahead on this particular program.

I should point out, Mr. Speaker, that the members might do well if they were to take some time and read the advisory committee report on GRIP and NISA (net income stabilization account). It would save them having to go back and take back some of the things that they're saying. Because in the report most of the things that have been changed in the GRIP program for '92 were recommended in the report.

The members that put that together were recommended from different groups, and if you look on about the third or fourth page into it, you will see that 10 of them signed the complete report, and then subsequent to that, two others at the end presented a report which would be a minor report. But what they had indicated there would mean that what we are now attempting to do is supported by them, and that is, is that to shift the cost of this program back to the federal government, something which the members opposite, when they were part of the government, did not do.

And it's easy enough to indicate what that means. If you take a look at the analysis of how the expenditures fall, you find that in the province of Saskatchewan for this particular type of program, we are being asked on a per capita basis to put up \$145. If you look at other provinces such as B.C. (British Columbia), it's 68 cents.

And the grain industry in Canada, I would like to point out to the members opposite, is an industry that provides a marketable item to the world, that actually offsets the importation of other food that we eat. There is nothing to indicate that the whole country shouldn't be expected to pay for maintaining an industry such as this. And in that sense, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point out that the members opposite have voted against a motion in this House that was asking for a \$500 million support from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the subamendment which is asking for negotiation is simply a . . . from their point is simply a way of extending the time that they speak, as far as I can determine, because except for very limited parts of their speeches, they immediately go back and talk about the GRIP program.

There are a number of things that have come up in the papers and different areas that would indicate that the program, as it is structured, is being reasonably well accepted. In fact, Mr. Speaker, a farmer from in the Kindersley area indicating that he can grow durum for \$45 . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I think I have to remind the member that he is on the subamendment. And the subamendment is to why the negotiations should take place between the Minister of Agriculture and the member from Morse, who is the critic for the government, and closure being unilaterally used to force introduction of this Bill. That is the item that is before us . . . Order.

Mr. Johnson: — Mr. Speaker, as part of the . . . I realize that, as you indicate, the amendment deals with changing the two members, the opposition member responsible for Agriculture and the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment, as I was indicating previously, to some degree is only being used to extend the debate and is not, from the perspective of actually implementing a program and putting together a program, is not that seriously taken. Because if you look at what the GRIP committee put forward in their report, this is not a program that one individual put together. It's a program that was agreed to and brought together by a number of different people. And as I'd indicated previously as well, they signed the report indicating their support for it.

So in that particular regard, it's very unlikely that anything would occur. And, Mr. Speaker, for that particular reason, I'd like to say that I will not be supporting the subamendment or the amendment, but will be supporting the original motion to move forward with the income insurance legislation.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to speak to the subamendment to the amendment that was proposed some days earlier in this Assembly. And it's obvious from some of the comments that we've just heard from the member from Turtleford that it's absolutely necessary, Mr. Speaker, for this opposition to bring many amendments forward to try and get this government to listen to reason. It's the only tool that's available, when one hears the attitude of government members, that we have available to us because obviously the member from Turtleford makes remarks about locking the opposition out of the legislature.

That smacks of totalitarianism, Mr. Speaker, and I just wonder if the front benches of the government subscribe to that view. It's one that quite surprises me from this new NDP government that sort of talked about being open and accountable. And that's why we have to bring these amendments and these subamendments forward when we have views like that sitting in the back benches.

And it reminded me of a quote, Mr. Speaker, from another member of the Assembly on this totalitarianism that we just heard the member talking about. And I quote the member from Prince Albert Carlton. And that would be in August 1989 on this topic, Mr. Speaker. And this is closure and totalitarianism that the member from Turtleford just raised here.

And the member from Prince Albert Carlton said. He said:

What can we say about closure, Mr. Speaker, and closure . . . in this case it's a matter of closure on closure.

Well we've certainly had our diet of closure here, haven't we?

Sitting back and listening to a lot of the arguments

that have been presented, and listening carefully and knowing very well that this is the first time that closure has ever been proposed in this legislature . . . ever used in this legislature, I can say that to me it smacks somewhat of totalitarianism.

And now that very word has raised its ugly head again in here, Mr. Speaker, by the member from Turtleford who said that we should all be locked out of here and not allowed to bring amendments forward and subamendments so that we can try and bring some sense to the government on this particular question of GRIP. And I'm afraid that what we've been saying so far, Mr. Speaker, obviously hasn't made an impact.

(1600)

And that definitely will necessitate the opposition bringing forward reasoned amendments to try and get to a place where we can get somewhere here because obviously the House leaders, the process . . . And they're both good members of this Assembly, but obviously that process of House leaders didn't have a feeling for an agricultural issue that it should have, that both of them had other things on their mind, and that obviously that amendment didn't go well with the government because we saw very little feedback.

We didn't see them sort of getting up on their feet and talking about that process and whether that was the proper one to rectify this situation. So as a responsible opposition we had no alternative, and that was to bring forward a subamendment that dealt with a change to the process.

And obviously now we're getting down to some people that have some technical expertise rather than perhaps political expertise, because the Minister of Agriculture has shown no adeptness at all to the political side of this equation. So maybe it's appropriate that we deal with people that have some technical expertise.

And they tell me that the Minister of Agriculture has a couple of degrees and our former minister of Agriculture here has got a couple of degrees, and the member from Morse here is probably as down-to-earth a former Agriculture minister that you're going to get in the province of Saskatchewan, runs his own ranch and farm. And I think that if you put the three of them probably in a room, with a little bit of help, Mr. Speaker, that you might be able to come up with some reasonable solutions.

And it amazed me when we put forward an amendment like that, a subamendment, saying okay, that you didn't like the first part of the process; that when we came forward with a reasoned amendment like that, the first government member to get on his feet or her feet would have had some comments as to its appropriateness. But instead we get the remark that we should lock the doors and throw these guys out of here rather than have them bring forward reasoned amendments like that.

And that, given what the member from Prince Albert Carlton said about totalitarianism back in 1989, I just . . . well I find it very strange, Mr. Speaker, that those kind of views would be residing within the ranks of the New

Democratic Party. I mean they are the great defenders of free speech in this House. And I'll be reading into the record a number of quotes from members opposite and their views on closure as this particular delivery goes on.

But I'm very surprised that the first one up would say, well we should simply boot these people out of here and not let them speak at all. It harkens back to the amendment made last night in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, by the member from Saskatoon Broadway, who said that we should be quiet, we shouldn't speak; that we should simply sit back and let these people do whatever they want. That we didn't have the right to speak because we'd been defeated in an election.

And I find that the sequence of events, Mr. Speaker, that we're seeing now is setting dangerous precedents. I mean we have obviously speaker after speaker saying that they don't appreciate this British democratic process that we have here; that oppositions have become a terrible nuisance to the process and that we've got to look at ways of removing them.

And we're seeing this in speaker after speaker, Mr. Speaker, and that's unfortunate that this Chamber has subsided to that level. And that's why this is a very reasoned amendment, Mr. Speaker. Obviously we've got to get down to some technical people here because the political process has broken down.

Mr. Speaker, as a farmer in this province it was very disturbing, when I had a look at the GRIP legislation, to see references throughout that . . . well I find they're strange, Mr. Speaker, but I think they're a direct affront to anyone that is in agriculture today in Saskatchewan because it makes some very strange statements. And I think that's why we've got to get some technical people here involved rather than political people.

It says — and I was thinking of my own farming operation, Mr. Speaker, last year — it says that:

. . . after April 1 of that year, is void (it's talking about 1991) and of no effect and is deemed to have always been void and of no effect.

Well, Mr. Speaker, all of those things that I did last year on my farm aren't void — at least I didn't think they were. There's was a whole lot of hard work and sweat involved there many days. Of no effect? I mean, everything that I did last year on my farm is void and of no effect?

Now, Mr. Speaker, those are fairly harsh words. Those are fairly harsh words for the government to use in a piece of legislation when it's talking to 60,000 farm families. Because all the planning and all of the endeavour that you did, I mean, you're out there . . . last year my combine caught on fire, you know, and yet the minister says it was void and of no effect.

Well quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, there was a whole lot of things going on that cost a great deal of money. And there was times when I really wondered if it wouldn't be better to slip off into the void somewhere rather than try and pay my bill.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order. I want to direct the member's attention that he is on the subamendment, and the subamendment simply indicates that we should replace the two House leaders with the Minister of Agriculture and the critic for Agriculture, and on closure. Those are the only two items that are on the subamendment. And I ask the member to get back to the subamendment.

Mr. Swenson: — Well I appreciate your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I guess this totalitarianism that I've been talking about does equate with closure. So it is in there. I've thought that my farm treated me that way sometimes too, but I'll respect your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think what this subamendment is really giving the members of this legislature an opportunity to do, by combining people with technical expertise in agriculture together, is that perhaps it'd give us a chance to move off of some of the norms here. I know members of this legislature have complained in public. And I know Mr. Speaker has at different times raised the issue with the public about how we seem so intransigent here, that we don't seem to have the ability to do things the way that this legislature operated in the past, that members had the ability to be just really forthright with one another in here. But afterwards they could go out and they could socialize and they could come to conclusions that were reasonable. And we seem to have broken down.

Well maybe it's time with this subamendment to think about, think about ways that this legislature perhaps moves off of the path that we're on and we go to a different system. And they tell me that other systems of government have the ability of people of different parties to sort of work together and bring a resolution forward to the House to vote on; that oftentimes Republicans and Democrats get together and they work out a mutually acceptable solution to a particular Bill and then they take it to the House. And the House then votes on it and there's none of this partisan-line business attached to it.

And that the British parliament has the same ability, that you'll get Labourites and Conservatives and Liberals and whatever else . . . Scottish Nationalists, able to get together and they'll redefine a particular piece of legislation and bring it forward to the House, and they will rectify the problem with a piece of legislation.

And maybe, just maybe, if the government would disregard some of this . . . well the stuff that the member from Turtleford was talking about, about throwing us out of here and locking the door, and would rethink this process, then maybe, just maybe we could set a precedent here. I mean it only takes once, Mr. Speaker. It only takes once to set a precedent, as we know.

I mean we've seen the rules changed and I suspect that since the rules have been changed in this House that that precedent's been set and you'll see it happen now unfortunately maybe in more occasions.

And it's the same with closure. I mean we've had member after member stand in this House over many debates and say that we shan't go forward with this closure stuff because it creates problems in the future. And I think

we've had most of the New Democratic members from prior to 1991 well on the record on that, that once you get over that threshold, that closure then becomes very easy to use.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we've seen this closure process building. It seems to almost be a daily occurrence now, and that unfortunately once we got over that first hump, it's a slippery slope. You know, it's that old expression, on a downhill roll and the brakes are gone, and where we're going nobody knows. Well that seems to be where we're at with this closure stuff.

Matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the member from . . . well no, I won't use that member right now. That member fits into a different part of my speech, Mr. Speaker. I would go to the member from Regina Hillsdale, the current Minister of Health — very, very definitive on this particular subject, very definitive person, yes.

This debate I quote. This is from August 7, 1989 *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker:

This debate, Mr. Speaker, is about a government with its own agenda, an agenda that is not in the best interest of the people and that is not good for the people of Saskatchewan . . .

This debate is about muzzling the opposition, Mr. Speaker — muzzling the opposition — something that this government is not reluctant to do because we've seen repeated examples of how they've muzzled other people who have effectively spoken out against their policies, (I didn't know that the Minister of Health knew about spandex, Mr. Speaker, but obviously she was thinking well into the future) their cutbacks, (oh, RMs, cities, that sort of thing, hospitals) and their harsh and cruel tactics, Mr. Speaker . . .

Another thing that I wish to talk about, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this motion violates the very spirit of democracy. It violates the right of freedom of discussion, free debate in the legislature on an issue of importance.

Very definitive, Mr. Speaker. Very, very definitive about where that MLA stood on this issue. And that's why I think that member . . . and I would really invite that member to come and speak to this amendment because there is a classic example of a mind-set that says we need another alternative, that the process is flawed. The process is flawed.

It's flawed for many reasons. Perhaps partisanship. It's flawed because members have grown accustomed to certain things. And I would invite that member to join this debate and explore the idea of the people with the technical expertise in Agriculture and the technical expertise in Agriculture on that side getting together and sort of being a first — being first, setting history, being precedent setting.

Because I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, with the amount of issues that are on that member's plate now as Minister of Health, that it might open up whole new avenues of

discussion for that member.

I mean instead of using closure on all of these health initiatives that are coming along — and I can think of a Bill that's before the House right now, the MCIC (Medical Care Insurance Commission) Bill — instead of having closure as part of that matrix, then perhaps the member from Regina Hillsdale, the current minister would get together with the Health critic on this side and perhaps other people in this Assembly, and we'd get through some of these questions. We'd get through some of them rather than having this repeated use of closure over and over again.

Closure just simply isn't acceptable, Mr. Speaker. It never has been. And I guess it's unfortunate that it's gotten so out of hand and used so often because it has just quite frankly brought this legislature to an impasse. And it's going to take a lot of talking. It's going to take a lot of reasoned amendments, subamendments, I think to . . . a lot of argument to bring the government members back to the point where we can have these reasonable discussions.

It's obvious, Mr. Speaker, that when you think that you can void a person's life for a year and a half that you've got a long ways to come. It's going to take a lot of talk, reasoned talk, in order to get people off of that, that they would void my life for a year and a half. And I think, Mr. Speaker, the only way that's going to be done is people that clearly, clearly understand the issues involved.

Now it was tough, Mr. Speaker, I know prior to the October election, for the New Democratic Party to have that ability because they only had one rural member. But that process — Mr. Speaker, now with many rural members, many, many rural members — I think it could move forward because you not only have our two agricultural critics presently, the minister and the opposition critic, available to the legislature, but they've got lots of back-up.

(1615)

I mean our opposition critic in Agriculture here can draw on a wealth of expertise, information, people that have had negotiating ability in the agricultural sector for many years. We've got people that have been reeves of RMs. We've got people cattle business, hog business, people that have been involved in their fair boards — all sorts of agricultural endeavours.

And I know on the other side now, since the election, there are all sorts of people in the New Democratic Party seats that have some agricultural expertise. And when you think of the ability of the minister to listen to some of that, I think there's a decent chance that the impasse could be broken.

I mean obviously, as I said before, Mr. Speaker — and no disrespect to the House leaders because they both have finely-honed political skills — but obviously it was political skills weren't getting us anywhere, you know. The Minister of Agriculture has no political skills. It's obvious by the GRIP Bill. Therefore some of the other members of the government benches that have expertise

in agriculture — they may be a little light on political skills also, but they're learning as new members — could bring that agricultural expertise to the fore.

And I don't care how many people really we have in the room to start with, Mr. Speaker. I mean they could draw lots over there, I suppose, and come up with five, and I'm sure we could get five. I don't know what the correct formula would be but, you know, you could get them to sort of be there as back-up to these two individuals that we've mentioned in the subamendment — two individuals picked because of expertise, technical expertise, not political expertise necessarily.

Because politics seems to be what's getting everybody in this Assembly into trouble these days, Mr. Speaker, it's too much politics and not enough rational thinking, not enough sort of down on the farm, get down in the dirt and scratch around . . . you know, kick a few tires type of thinking. If that had been the case, Mr. Speaker, we wouldn't have been faced with a Bill that would void farmers' lives for a year and a half. Not a chance, Mr. Speaker. We would have never had such a piece of legislation come forward in this Assembly. You just can't.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, it's like every farmer in Saskatchewan was Alice in Wonderland. And we all were going along one day, and we popped down a rabbit hole and — poof! — everything just disappeared. Just like that — poof! Everything just went down the rabbit hole. And that's, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of legislation that quite frankly I think makes a mockery, makes a mockery out of this legislature. It says to me that there was none of that down on the farm, you know, tire kicking kind of thinking put into this particular piece of legislation, that it was done in a dream world somewhere.

You know and I hate to cast aspersions, Mr. Speaker, but I have this terrible feeling that some of that dream world existed in the Department of Finance, that the bureaucratic mazes there in the Department of Finance were sort of dictating to the Minister of Agriculture that you didn't want any of this practical stuff. That's why we had to get to this voiding business, you know. That's where we had to sort of take a year and a half out of the lives of people and just void it.

And that's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, and it's all the more reason, all the more reason that members of this Assembly have got an opportunity, an opportunity to get back down to some down home kind of thinking about some practical sides of solutions. And I can't think of anything more practical than people . . .

I don't know how many years the former associate minister of Agriculture would have as far as public life; I suppose it's got to be close to 25 years, probably as much time as the now Premier spent in this Assembly, about a quarter of a century. And I would think that the former minister of Agriculture, the former premier, when you add up his days in university and as a lecturer, as a farmer and as a minister of Agriculture, he's probably got about 20 years experience. So there's 45 years right there. And they tell me the Minister of Agriculture's got two degrees. He got at least five or six years of university in agriculture, and then he's been farming since the early '70s, so there's

another 20 years. So there's another quarter of a century of agricultural expertise.

So you add them up, Mr. Speaker, and you're looking at about 75 years, 75 years of various abilities and know-hows, you know. I think if you put that kind of expertise together, Mr. Speaker, you might come up with something that would be a little saner, a little more palatable than what we've had foisted on this Assembly through the use of closure. Mr. Speaker, that to me seems to be an alternative that is far more acceptable to the general public than what we have before us today.

I mean, I for the life of me can't think that people want their elected representatives to come down here and just be involved in closure day after day after day. I mean, my colleague from Moose Jaw Wakamow there — and it was read into the record last night when he was talking about closure — said that he didn't want to have anything to do with a front bench that would get involved in that, that he couldn't sit with them, that his distaste for closure was so great that anybody that did that he'd have to distance himself from.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's fairly strong words, fairly strong feelings. And I'm afraid if this closure business keeps going at the rate it's going so rampant, that we are going to lose a member of this Assembly. I just for the life of me can't understand how a member of as much integrity as the member from Wakamow, who's made those statements about not being able to associate with people that would do that, will be able to take this much longer.

I only warn the Government House Leader that those kind of strong feelings obviously are going to cause problems in this House because we're going to see somebody up and pick their seat up and go who knows where with it, Mr. Speaker. That member would far sooner see, I think — rather than having that ultimate sort of solution to the integrity problem — would rather I think vote for an amendment that allowed some people with some real problem-solving abilities as far as agriculture to get together and sit down and iron this Bill out because the alternative is pretty gruesome for that member, Mr. Speaker.

It's a step that's almost irrevocable when you can't stomach it any more and you simply got to up and leave. On the record, very definitely on the record about closure and principles and where the alternatives are, and I think this alternative is far easier to accept.

And I'm sure the other members of the government who are on the record in such a way that they . . . Well they just felt very strongly about it, can look at this as not only precedent setting because it sets some new directions, but also that it gives people the opportunity to get off of that very pointy stick that one gets on when you make definitive statements like that because they're always there for the public to be reminded of that you just can't get away from it when you get on the record like that.

And that reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of another member that did get on the record. And I think this member, because that member is one that would probably join with the member from Rosetown-Elrose in any sort of

technical discussion, would be a first choice. Or if he wasn't a first choice, I think he would be very disappointed because he was the sole voice of agriculture in the former NDP opposition. The only one that did come through sometimes with rational comments and statements about agriculture. And that person wouldn't want to be excluded, I don't think, from the discussions that might emanate from this particular subamendment.

Anyway this is the member's views, Mr. Speaker, on this particular issue. And that's the issue of closure and how it would affect agricultural discussions:

Mr. Speaker, we are in this debate because this government, I believe, is (oh dear) drunk with power as well. They are so consumed with themselves, so consumed with their friends, and so consumed by the power that they wield, that they just refuse to allow the democratic process to work. They simply just do not respond to democracy in a traditional way in this province because they are so drunk with the power that they hold.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that was on August 7, '89, but I think it referred to a very large New Democratic Party victory in October 1991 because all the evidence that's been presented to this legislature and all the evidence that we've seen, particularly with things like Bill 87, says that the member's words — and they're so fitting for that member to use in this Assembly, that they are drunk with the power that they hold — I think, Mr. Speaker, is one that we have to think about very seriously.

And he goes on to say, Mr. Speaker:

It sets that arrogant attitude, and let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I think the reason they're doing this is because every time they do it it becomes easier, (every time they do it, it becomes easier) it becomes more accepted (it becomes more accepted) by the people of the province. Once it's done, (it being done, I think, is referring to closure) then the people they think will say, well it's been done before, then they'll accept it a little easier next time and the next time and the next time.

That's from August 7, 1989 *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. And that's what I was trying to tell you before, Mr. Speaker, earlier on in the debate. It's a slippery slope that we're on here with this closure business. And the member from Humboldt identified it so aptly in 1989. I wonder if he was having premonitions, Mr. Speaker, of what we were going to see in this legislature in the summer of 1992.

I wonder if those words that were so eloquently spoken in here weren't a premonition of what would happen when the New Democratic Party achieved power in this province. And you know what they say, Mr. Speaker. Some people when they're thinking terrible thoughts, they sort of dream out loud, you know, because they're scared of their own conscience. And they say things, you know, right out loud when they don't want to but it's on their mind.

And obviously the member from Humboldt was speaking

out loud about this use of this slippery slope that we're going to get on when we use closure. Because I mean, it's very clear: every time you do it, it becomes easier. Once it's done, then the people will say that it's more acceptable. I mean, very, very definitive about this closure business and where it would lead us.

Now that member, Mr. Speaker, is another member that I think should be ready to vote for an amendment like this, because as the sole voice of agriculture in the previous opposition, now he's one that could join with the member from Rosetown-Elrose, could join with the member, and add something to the debate.

That these very technical points that we've obviously got in Bill 87 — and I won't go into the depth of the Bill, Mr. Speaker, because I know that's not what you do in a subamendment — but that goes to the depths of . . . I mean, the member from Humboldt farms just like I do. And I've got to say to the member from Humboldt: it says here, Mr. Member from Humboldt, that last year was a void for you, that everything was grey and fuzzy, that you didn't have a clue what you were doing out there on the farm. It was a big void and it had no effect. All the work that you did last year had no effect at all.

Now that's a terrible thing to say in a piece of legislation. And I think every farmer in this legislature, every farmer in this legislature should be . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I don't think, Mr. Member from Humboldt, that all of those people that voted for you . . . Just like those guys up in Humboldt the other night, I don't think that they would appreciate knowing that they were in a void in 1991, that you had voided everything that they had done in their particular endeavours.

So I think the member from Humboldt would be one to join with the member from Rosetown-Elrose as the agricultural expert, as the guy with the technical sort of know how to join with the member from Morse, the member from Estevan.

And like I said, we can broaden this subamendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because there's a lot of agricultural expertise now in this legislature. It used to be one-sided but now it's spread around. And we can broaden that subamendment out so that the member from Humboldt can get his two-bits in to get this thing straightened away.

And I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the member from Humboldt has a fairly loud voice in the government's agricultural caucus. People have told me that he's fairly forthright with some of his opinions. Now I can't think of a better place for that member to place his vote in the legislature so that he can have a say, a direct say in what's going on in this House through this negotiation process.

(1630)

Because that's a far, far better way, Mr. Speaker, than to have this closure thing hanging over us, that the member from Humboldt objected to so vociferously a couple of years ago. I mean he objected very, very strongly. His own words say that, that he doesn't like this closure process.

So the alternative to the closure process, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is for him to join with the member from Rosetown and join with this process and start straightening it out.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are other members of the New Democratic Party that had views on closure that didn't fit very well with what we're describing here. And they were just kind of an aside, I think. But I think I need to read this one into the record because members on this side of the House have been getting this sneaking suspicion that rather than deal with an amendment like this that talks about the process of our House, they've got other things on their mind.

Now I hope this isn't the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think I need to read this one into the record just so members of the government will have the opportunity in this debate to get up and refute it. Because I think it's important that this sneaking suspicion not be left with the public at all, the public who are watching on television and this Assembly.

I quote the member from Regina Churchill Downs. The member from Churchill Downs in 1989 was also very strong on the question of closure, but he had a different twist. And I think it's a twist that's bothering some members of the public today:

Mr. Speaker, (he says) it is undoubtedly another factor — I wish it were not so — (but it's) undoubtedly another factor is simply the desire of members opposite to enjoy their summer.

. . . They don't want to be here, Mr. Speaker, because they don't want to face the music. They don't want to admit and they don't want to be reminded that the public don't want this. They are acting contrary to public opinion and they are being arrogant, insensitive, and undemocratic.

Now unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, as we've gone through this debate, there are those — and the evidence has mounted unfortunately — that members of the government would rather be some place else. They'd like to be enjoying their summer holidays. And unfortunately the attendance has been dismal lately. And it's left the public with this idea . . . And I mean, I'm only quoting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm only quoting from the member from Churchill Downs on this issue. I mean he identified the problem some years ago, and I think there's a sneaking suspicion, a sneaking suspicion by members of the public that what we've got going here now is the same thing.

And I can only commend the member from Churchill Downs. And I'd like him to get on his feet in this debate and tell the folks emphatically, tell the folks emphatically that that isn't the case with this government; that in 1992 that's not what's going on at all; that the 25 or 26 members that are missing all the time are simply doing something, simply out there doing good works; that they're not enjoying some type of holiday. And I hope the member does join in this debate because we're talking about a process here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is very serious, very serious.

We've got a subamendment. We've got a subamendment here that can get this House back on track. We've got a subamendment here that can set a precedent, can be first, can allow this minister to draw on some expertise garnered in a few other areas. Garner on the expertise of the member from Humboldt, the member from Nipawin over here, and the member from Kinistino and others that are touted as being agricultural people; that we garner some of that expertise up into a concerted drive, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a concerted drive to get this Assembly out of the hole, out of the jam, out of the public's suspicions, so enunciated by the member from Churchill Downs, that members of the government are simply in a holiday mode.

We've got this opportunity to allay all of those suspicions simply by having the members of the government support this amendment. I mean it gets us out of the political process that we were in with the government . . . with the House leaders. The House leaders, well by nature they're political people.

And because that didn't work, it gets us out of that mode. It allows us to . . . well I wouldn't use the term, Mr. Speaker, but it allows us to maybe venture into the realm of either congressional or some of the changes done in the British parliamentary system that are different than Canada's system. It allows us to attain some all-party type of consensus on an issue.

Obviously in this province agriculture is still the number one industry. It's still the largest employer. It's still the one that makes or breaks come budget time, you know. I mean we're several hundred million dollars short in this province on income tax that used to be paid by the farming sector. You can only ask the Minister of Finance to verify that. So we know that an industry that has that much effect on the province is one that we've got to put a lot of time and diligence into, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And that's why it might behove this government, even though they have a very large majority — and they seem very intent on sort of using that majority at each and every excuse — that it now would behove them, now that things have not worked well, that the heavy hand hasn't worked, so now it might behove them to try something different. I mean, I would think something like this that is open, it's above-board, it's precedent setting, isn't that the kind of campaign rhetoric that we heard from the New Democrats for so long? You know, we're going to be so different, we're going to change, we're going to open government up to the people, this open, honest, forthright . . .

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the ideal opportunity, the ideal opportunity to practise what you preach. Absolutely practise what you preach. I mean there have been suspicions I'm afraid in the last 10 months, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that hasn't been the fact, that this practising what you preach is sort of . . . Well it's crawled back under the carpet a little bit.

But you know, we've got an opportunity here to break the mould, an opportunity to break the mould, a reasoned amendment, a reasoned amendment that says from now on, once this is done — this is like closure, remember? —

we said that once we use closure, it would happen over and over and over and it would gather its own momentum. It would become a creature of this Assembly. Well that prophecy came right, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What we're saying now is that this amendment has the same ability. It has the ability to be that kind of a creature that it can kind of feed on itself, you know. It can kind of grow once it's done once, once it's done once. Once these sort of political things that designed a Bill that voided my life for a year and a half got put aside, that then we'd get down to some technical stuff — all-party technical stuff — that would never dream, never dream, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . I mean I can't imagine the member from Morse and the member from Nipawin and other people ever coming up with a piece of legislation that would try and void my life for a year and a half as a farmer. I mean on the reality side that would never occur.

So what we have here is a precedent-setting subamendment. It's a process tool that can be just like closure, just like closure. See once members lose the fear of doing it once, doing it once, then somebody else will say, well that didn't hurt quite so bad; let's do it again and again and again.

And, you know it's like the member from Humboldt said, the public will start to accept it. You know they'll say, gee these guys have broken the mould here. They're not quite the same old political creatures that we knew in the past and have come to loathe so much, that they've broken the mould. And I'm sure that as it's done over and over and over again, that the public will start to accept it. It's like some of the rule things, you know, that have been contemplated around here about, well, political satire and other things, that we're not sure how the public is moving with them. But I'm sure that once this subamendment was tried once, that the public would grow to accept it. And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I bet you down the road a couple of years that if this thing ever got tried and worked that they wouldn't let us go back to our old ways.

You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that if this process that we're talking about here amongst agricultural people worked — and then we found it worked in Health and we found it worked in a few other areas — that they wouldn't accept us going back to our old ways.

I'll bet you that by the time the next election rolled around, when people were saying now where do you stand on this, if you said well, I'm going back to this old partisan, heavy-handed closure kind of mode to get my job done, they'd say, no, I don't want any truck with you. You're behind the times. You're behind the times.

I want the guys that are ahead of the game; that are willing to sort of do these technical discussions ahead of time and sort of make the political passage of things much easier. Those are the guys that I'm going to vote for. I don't accept this old stuff.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that as politicians and as people that are supposed to have the best interests of the taxpayers of this province at heart that we would want to

embark on a process like that. That they would simply say you've got to change, that you can't have this old process any more.

That's why I find it so strange, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we haven't had more people from the government on their feet. This is the kind of thing that I thought New Democrats were talking about when they were . . . last fall they were campaigning and they were talking about openness and above-board and being diametrically different than the process that we saw before, that that old process just wasn't acceptable.

I mean, the former government used closure a couple of times and that's why we had so many people getting on the record about it. You know they were warning, as the member from Humboldt did, about the slippery slope, about closure over and over and over again.

And I go back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the member from Regina Dewdney, another member that obviously recognized this slippery slope and was prepared to stand up in this legislature on principle and get on the record and say, I'm willing to put myself in front of the people, on record.

And I would quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from *Hansard* from August 7. August 7 was a very popular date in 1989 for members of the New Democratic Party to sort of draw a line in the sand about the issue of closure and how important it was. It was a hallmark day in the lives of many New Democrats.

And the member from Regina Dewdney on that day rose to his feet and said:

But I want to say, as other colleagues of mine 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 this province wherever we go, because those are the kinds of things that are important to the people of Saskatchewan. Democracy will be protected by this opposition to the largest extent that we can, at every opportunity that we can.

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

Well see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he was talking about that issue of closure and how once we got on that slippery slope, bang, it was going to happen time and time and time again.

It's unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that on that whole issue of closure that when one of the motions came forward that the member from Regina Dewdney was the mover of that motion; one of the closure motions that we've seen in this legislature, that the member from Regina Dewdney was one of the people that brought that forward.

And that's a real travesty because I think that member would have preferred an amendment . . . a

subamendment such as you've seen presented by the opposition today, Mr. Speaker. One that wouldn't have got us on this downhill ride with no brakes. Because given what I hear here, now unless words mean nothing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless words mean absolutely nothing in this legislature, what I think I read here was that anything was preferable to closure — absolutely anything.

And it would really, really surprise me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that were the case. I mean, I wouldn't want members to say that they come to this House just to speak words, that there was no heart, no soul, no feeling attached to them. I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this next person does always speak with heart and soul because I've known this person for a great many years. I belonged to the same toast-masters club as this individual for six and a half years. And I always heard him speak very pointedly, with a lot of preparation, a lot of forethought.

(1645)

And I know this person speaks with heart and soul. So I think it's important that we put this one on the record too because I fully expect him to enter this debate on this subamendment, because this subamendment is the kind of issue that that member often spoke about in private life. It was an opportunity for people to draw together. That member is on record in my community over and over and over again in private life about drawing people together. And I know he'd want to enter this debate.

And I quote, Mr. Speaker. Oh, once again this is August 7. This is that hallmark day, August 7, 1989 — hallmark day for New Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government afraid of words, afraid of words and afraid of ideas, afraid to let opposition MLAs, elected by their constituents to speak for them, do just that in these legislative chambers, the chambers of the people.

Very eloquent, isn't it, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

This PC government with this motion has said formally and officially with their closure upon closure motion, they said, if you dare to oppose us, if you dare to criticize us, if you dare to speak against us, we will eliminate your right to speak.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is quite a revelation. I mean, one could interchange the words in that particular dissertation. You could take out the PC and put in NDP, and you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? You'd be where we are today and why we're bringing this subamendment forward, why we're offering these people an alternative.

I mean, we're talking about eliminating the right to speak here in this Assembly. I mean, it goes back, unfortunately, to the words I heard coming out of the member from Turtleford earlier today in this debate. You know, he quotes a newspaper article saying that they should simply lock the doors and kick them out. Lock the doors and kick them out. And the member from Rosetown-Elrose says, there you go.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those kind of negative thoughts, those kind of negative thoughts are why we are where we are today, where we have this . . . Those are the kind of negative thoughts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that designed a Bill that tried to void the life of farmers for a year and a half in this province.

Now what we got to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is get rid of those negative thoughts. We've got to get rid of these thoughts that would simply say, well throw the opposition out of here because I don't like listening to their arguments, and let me get on with life even though my life is dedicated to destroying farm families.

Now that's a very poor alternative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to this amendment that we have here. This amendment that allows 75 — and I added it up just with three individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker — 75 years of agricultural expertise just in three individuals to get together. Now that didn't include the member from Humboldt, and that didn't include other members that obviously have many years of agricultural experience. But I'm just talking about the member from Rosetown-Elrose, the member from Morse, and the member from Estevan — just those three.

We've got 75 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of good . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well and some would argue that some of it wasn't so good, but I'll give the members the benefit of the doubt. They tell me the member from Rosetown-Elrose was not a bad farmer, that he got pretty decent marks in university, that he performed his duties with the rural trustees in an adequate fashion. Okay?

And they say the same thing about the member from Morse, that when he was on SARM's (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) council, that he performed his duties up to snuff. They said the same things about the member from Estevan when he was a prof at the U of S (University of Saskatchewan) in agriculture economics, that he went into the class-room and he gave the folks their money's worth, and that students learned and they graduated, and they've gone on to do other things in the agricultural sector. Certainly then there was all those years as minister of Agriculture.

Now that kind of stuff you don't ignore, Mr. Deputy Speaker — you don't ignore. When you put all of that together you should be able to come up with something better than what we have. I mean, one thing you definitely want to exclude from this, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . and I show a bias here because my years in politics have shown me that certain things happen when you mix too many lawyers into this agricultural process. When you get too many lawyers in this agricultural process, you start getting these words like "deemed" and "void" and "of no effect."

And that's the problem here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, instead of going the technical route with some good, old-fashioned, farm know-how, tire-kicking, knowledge. What we've had here is, I'm afraid, is we've gotten too many, we have had too many people get into this mix that have this legalistic background. And they have definitely influenced, definitely influenced people that should have

used agricultural common sense.

And I guess maybe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should have had more to this amendment because we not only have excluded the House leaders now because they're on a political agenda — they're on a definite political agenda, and we can forgive them for that — but we should have made darn sure that there's no lawyers get mixed up in this mess, that we're sticking straight to agricultural expertise. I mean the Minister of Agriculture, the member from Morse, and the member from Estevan. Because if we get, if we get lawyers involved, I'm afraid, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to get more of this deemed stuff. And we're going to get more voiding of people's life.

And that simply won't do. That's what got us where we are today. And that's why we're having to talk to this government. We're having to be very, very lengthy in our debate. We're having to make all sorts of analogies and arguments for these people. We're trying to remind them of their own words. We're trying to make sure that we can get through this process, that we can make our arguments in here, and we can do it without this closure business. That we don't need. We don't need closure.

What we need is dialogue here. We need dialogue between that minister removed from the hindrances of the legal profession. We need that member relieved of the hindrances of some of the political people around him so that he could get together with some of the people on this side that also aren't hindered by lawyers and aren't hindered by this political process, so we could get on in fixing this thing. So we get rid of those terrible "deemed" words and these terrible "voids" that are existing in the lives of farmers right now and come up with something that is a sane solution.

I mean, Mr. Speaker, no one, no farmer out there wants to feel like Alice dropping down the rabbit hole, like I described earlier. That's not what they want. They don't want to know that their life just went poof, and all of a sudden we've got a whole host of different things going on in our life. We want to know that we've got elected representatives, elected representatives who are going out and setting new directions.

I mean it's an affront, I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when one reads all the verbatim that's been entered into in this legislature by members in the last few years, to think that the only solution that the taxpayers and the voters of this province will accept is closure. I mean I would think that would be . . . that would simply be abrogating our responsibility. That would be abrogating all the things that you promise when you run to be a member of this Assembly.

I mean, is not the whole idea that you come here and you stand on your feet and you speak and you speak for . . . Well no one ever said that you couldn't, that there was any sort of time limit on it. You're supposed to come and make rational, lucid, arguments that you put back and forth, you know. I mean they always talk about the great debaters, don't they, in this Assembly? I mean the people that sort of leave their mark, that leave their mark here, are the ones that could stand and debate for days on end. I mean they make all those jokes about how these people

used different accessories in order to stay on their feet for days on end. And I mean the litany goes on and on about the great debaters that have spawned in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Just think, there would be no . . . With closure, with closure in the last 85 years, as prevalent as it is today, where would Tommy Douglas have been with all this closure around? Where would Ross Thatcher have been with all this closure around? I mean where would Davey Steuart have been with all this closure? I mean they would have never had an opportunity to get on their feet at all because we would have nothing but closure. I mean day after day after day — closure.

And we would have never had these people sort of garnering this tremendous reputation in this Assembly. I mean people used to . . . Can you believe it, Mr. Chairman; they used to broadcast this on the radio. And people in this province — because they enjoy politics and they always wanted to know what their legislators were saying — would gather around the radio and they would listen to these great debaters. And the reason that they were having these great debates was because they weren't hampered by closure, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They weren't hampered by these rules day after day, and I think that's why members in the New Democratic Party have spoken so long and hard on that issue because they always remembered . . . and some of these members here I know are old enough that they can remember the days when it was broadcast on radio.

I unfortunately am a little bit too young to remember those days, but there are members around that probably got around the radio with their family, and they listened to Tommy Douglas debate in this Assembly. And he would debate without closure. He would debate freely for days on end without closure hanging over his head.

And I have to wonder if maybe they didn't work things out a little bit differently than we do now, that maybe there was some informal sort of negotiating back and forth about these things, like on agricultural issues. I don't know who the Agriculture minister was back in the days of radio, but probably that member got together with the opposition critic for Agriculture once in a while as they rode the train home, and they probably talked over things. Maybe one of the problems we've got here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we don't ride the train any more. I don't know.

Maybe we don't spend enough hours in an informal setting together. They tell me that it took two days sometimes for members of this Assembly to get down here because they had to ride the train. And maybe they spent some time, as the Minister of Agriculture and the member from Morse should do.

Maybe we should buy . . . I know what we could do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's just like when you go to a stag sometimes and everybody pitches in and you buy the bridegroom a ticket on the train and you plunk him on the train and you send him to Calgary or something like that.

Maybe what this House should do is . . . I'll tell you what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you pass the Speaker's hat and we'll

take a collection here. And we'll get up enough money to get two train tickets to Vancouver, and we'll put the Minister of Agriculture and the critic for Agriculture on that train together. And we'll ship them out there and see if at the end of that two, three days — and maybe they could even share a berth together if they were so inclined — that we would get this thing ironed out, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Instead of deeming and voiding and all of these things . . . and I'm sure after these two shared a compartment for all that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would have a Bill, a Bill that most farmers in this province could live with.

I don't think we'd have any protests on the lawns of the legislature. I don't think we would have those things occurring. And this legislature would just be moving right along, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm sure while these two were on a train heading for Vancouver we'd be down to some other business here, and we'd probably get a few estimates done, and we'd probably get a few Bills passed and this legislature would just be moving right along. Because we knew at the end of that process, just like when you ship off the expectant bridegroom, that he'd come back with a different frame of mind and prepared to settle down and get things consummated the way they should be consummated and not this process that we've got in front of us today, that that consummation would . . . If we had these two on the train together, Mr. Deputy Speaker, outside of this Assembly and removed from this partisan process here, that we would end up with a Bill that . . .

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you can see from the points I'm bringing forward, that there's a great deal of interest here by members of this Assembly. For the first time today, there's a great deal of interest in this solution. And I think that's what it's going to take. It's standing on our feet, standing on our feet in this legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and coming up with . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, order. It being 5 o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 7 o'clock pursuant to an order of this House.

The Assembly recessed until 7 p.m.