

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

April 19, 1993

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 2:02 p.m. until 2:12 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 4

Devine	Boyd
Neudorf	D'Autremont

Nays — 30

Van Mulligen	Bradley
Thompson	Lyons
Tchorzewski	Calvert
Lingenfelter	Murray
Teichrob	Hamilton
Koskie	Whitmore
Anguish	Sonntag
Solomon	Roy
Goulet	Cline
Atkinson	Scott
Kowalsky	Wormsbecker
Mitchell	Crofford
Cunningham	Stanger
Upshall	Knezacek
Hagel	Haverstock

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure this afternoon to present petitions on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. It's a health petition, slightly different than the others have been, and I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

The mayor, Ron Folstad, of Nipawin.

Please be advise the council of the town of Nipawin strongly opposes the process of health reform as being presented to us. We have common-sense, creative alternatives that we would like to include in the reform. However this process eliminates our input. Please continue to defer the implementation of any legislation which would support this process and replace it with a process allowing input from the bottom up.

And this petition, Mr. Speaker, is signed by Ron Folstad, mayor, on behalf of the town of Nipawin. And it gives me a great deal of pleasure to present this at this time, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the House now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 2:15 p.m. until 2:25 p.m.

Motion negated on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Swenson	Boyd
Devine	D'Autremont
Neudorf	

Nays — 30

Van Mulligen	Lyons
Thompson	Calvert
Lingenfelter	Murray
Teichrob	Hamilton
Anguish	Johnson
Solomon	Whitmore
Goulet	Sonntag
Atkinson	Roy
Kowalsky	Cline
Mitchell	Scott
Cunningham	Wormsbecker
Upshall	Crofford
Hagel	Stanger
Bradley	Knezacek
Lorje	Haverstock

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure today to present petitions on behalf of many people on the west side of the province of Saskatchewan who are upset with the government's plans in health care. And I'll just read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, they are people all up and down the west side of our province who take a great deal of issue with this particular item. I table and ask, Mr. Speaker, that this House do now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 2:29 p.m. until 2:39 p.m.

Motion negated on the following record division.

Yeas — 4

Swenson	Boyd
---------	------

Neudorf

D'Autremont

Nays — 28

Van Mulligen
Thompson
Lingenfelter
Teichrob
Anguish
Solomon
Goulet
Kowalsky
Mitchell
Cunningham
Upshall
Hagel
Bradley
Lorje

Lyons
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton
Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Roy
Scott
Wormsbecker
Crofford
Stanger
Knezacek
Haverstock

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present a petition on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. I'll read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

The petitions, Mr. Speaker, come from Alida, Eston, Madison, Saskatoon, Eaton, Macklin, Denzil, and various places both in the south-east and the south-west corner of the province, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to move that this House do now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 2:42 p.m. until 2:52 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 3

Devine
Boyd

D'Autremont

Nays — 28

Van Mulligen
Thompson
Lingenfelter
Teichrob
Shillington
Anguish
Solomon
Kowalsky
Mitchell
Cunningham
Upshall
Hagel
Bradley
Lorje

Lyons
Calvert
Murray
Hamilton
Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Cline
Scott
Wormsbecker
Crofford
Stanger
Knezacek
Haverstock

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present to the Assembly on health care, and I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And these people are from Swift Current, Vanguard, Hazenmore, various places across western Saskatchewan, including Saskatoon. And I will table this, Mr. Speaker.

And I move that this House do now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 2:54 p.m. until 3:04 p.m.

Motion negatived on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 5

Swenson
Devine
Neudorf

Boyd
D'Autremont

Nays — 24

Van Mulligen
Lingenfelter
Shillington
Anguish
Solomon
Kowalsky
Mitchell
Cunningham
Upshall
Hagel
Lorje
Lyons

Calvert
Murray
Hamilton
Johnson
Whitmore
Sonntag
Cline
Scott
Wormsbecker
Crofford
Stanger
Knezacek

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition that I'd like to present to the Assembly this afternoon, and I'd just like to read the prayer.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Honourable Assembly may be pleased to postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act so that communities may continue their efforts to organize their people and have a genuine impact on the process without intimidation or threat of arbitrary action by the government.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, this petition comes from the west side of

the province. There are a number of names on it from the Eston, Plato, Elrose, Kindersley area. Mr. Speaker, I also move that this house do now adjourn.

The division bells rang from 3:07 p.m. until 3:17 p.m.

Yeas — 4

Swenson	Boyd
Devine	D'Autremont

Nays — 23

Van Mulligen	Murray
Teichrob	Hamilton
Shillington	Johnson
Anguish	Whitmore
Solomon	Sonntag
Kowalsky	Cline
Mitchell	Scott
Upshall	Wormsbecker
Hagel	Crofford
Lorje	Stanger
Lyons	Knezacek
Calvert	

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

Mr. D'Autremont: — Mr. Speaker, to present a new petition.

The Speaker: — I would like to draw the member's attention to the ruling made by former Speaker, Mr. Tusa, on May 16, 1991.

A Member wishing to present petitions will be recognized only once during routine proceedings for that purpose.

Therefore, no more petitions will be received today.

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 postpone consideration of The Health Districts Act.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING, SELECT, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on the Environment

Mr. Scott: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of my brief comments, I will be moving a motion that the first report of the Standing Committee on the Environment be concurred in.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the standing committee enjoyed a very good and productive

working relationship.

The committee, as instructed by the Assembly, conducted 15 public hearings across Saskatchewan and received 71 written submissions regarding environmental rights and responsibilities. This committee has focused on the issues and worked diligently and effectively together to generate this report. The committee is optimistic this report will be used to further environmental rights and responsibilities legislation in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the public meetings were very successful, and the people of Saskatchewan welcomed the opportunity to express their views on the environment. The summary recommendation that was agreed to by all members of the committee is as follows.

It is recommended that the minister should use this report as the foundation for further consultation and preparation of new environmental rights and responsibilities legislation. The committee recommends that existing government structures be used, wherever possible, to implement the recommendations in this report. Bill 48 of 1992 should not be reintroduced.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Regina Elphinstone:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on the Environment be concurred in.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to congratulate the committee for the excellent work they have done.

And I would move:

That the House do now proceed to government orders, adjourned debates, item number 17.

Seconded by the member for Regina Churchill Downs.

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Speaker: — Order, order. What's the member's point of order?

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe it was the member from Qu'Appelle-Wolseley . . . Indian Head-Wolseley that made a motion that this report be concurred in. And I don't believe we've dealt with that issue yet, so we have two motions on the floor.

The Speaker: — I would like to draw all members' attention to rule 44 in the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* of Saskatchewan.

The motion that was originally moved by the member from Indian Head-Wolseley and seconded by the member from Regina Elphinstone was under debate and the rule 44 simply states the following:

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received unless to amend it; to postpone it to a day certain; for the previous question; for reading the Orders of the Day; for proceeding to another order; to adjourn the debate; or . . . (to) the adjournment of the Assembly.

So the member from Regina Elphinstone has moved a superseding motion which takes precedent over the motion that was before the House and that is a non-debatable motion according to rule 32 of the *Rules and Procedures*.

So the question before the Assembly is the motion that is before us right now, moved by the Government House Leader, seconded by the member from Regina Churchill Downs:

That the House do now proceed to government orders, adjourned debates, item number 17.

And that's a non-debatable motion.

The division bells rang from 3:26 p.m. until 3:36 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division:

Yeas — 23

Van Mulligen	Murray
Tchorzewski	Hamilton
Lingenfelter	Johnson
Teichrob	Whitmore
Shillington	Sonntag
Anguish	Cline
Solomon	Scott
Kowalsky	Wormsbecker
Upshall	Crofford
Hagel	Stanger
Lorje	Knezacek
Lyons	

Nays — 6

Swenson	Boyd
Devine	D'Autremont
Neudorf	Haverstock

CLOSURE MOTION ON TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Regina Churchill Downs:

That debate on the motion regarding allocation of time for proceeding to Bill No. 3, An Act respecting Health Districts, or on any amendments or subamendments proposed thereto be not further adjourned.

I so move.

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

Mr. Swenson: — To speak to the motion.

The Speaker: — Order. On closure I would draw members' attention to rule no. 34 where it says that:

. . . and shall not further be postponed; and in either case such question shall be decided without debate or amendment . . .

So there is no debate.

Order, order.

The division bells rang from 3:40 p.m. until 3:50 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 25

Van Mulligen	Lyons
Thompson	Murray
Lingenfelter	Hamilton
Teichrob	Whitmore
Shillington	Sonntag
Anguish	Roy
Solomon	Cline
Goulet	Scott
Kowalsky	Wormsbecker
Mitchell	Crofford
Upshall	Stanger
Hagel	Knezacek
Lorje	

Nays — 5

Devine	D'Autremont
Neudorf	Haverstock
Boyd	

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried. The debate continues on the allocation of time motion, pursuant to rule 34.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTIONS

Motion for Time Allocation

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

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've noticed that members of the government are not prepared to stand in their place and defend their cowardly actions of providing closure on closure. And they sit in their place and sit on their hands as people are in panic across the province of Saskatchewan because of their communities, the closure of

hospitals, 52 closures of hospitals. And these so-called New Democrats are not even allowing us to debate in the legislature without closure, which means that it's limited to 20 minutes. And the people don't even get a chance to have input.

And it's the opposite to what the NDP (New Democratic Party) said that they were all about and what they believed in in terms of democracy. Every single sitting member that was here in the last Legislative Assembly said closure was the wrong thing to do. And now on health care closure they believe that they're doing the right thing by closing hospitals across Saskatchewan even when the people say: we didn't elect you to do that; there's no mandate to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that this motion is so abhorrent is the fact that the NDP promised in fact that they would do the opposite. I want to read into the record what the NDP leader said to a letter to the people of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg when he was campaigning in 1989 . . . '88. And this is exactly what the NDP have campaigned on: they would help people maintain their health care, help them maintain hospitals, help them in rural Saskatchewan as well as urban, look after senior citizens. And this is what the NDP Leader said at the time:

Dear Friends:

The central issue of this Assiniboia-Gravelbourg by-election is the record of the PC government in Regina; a record which is hurting average families.

These are tough times for many of you. The waste, mismanagement, and warped priorities of the PC government in Regina are making these problems worse.

The most glaring examples, of course, have been the cutbacks in health care.

I notice that the opposition member . . . or the government members didn't say "right" that time.

Families all across this constituency are saying that the PC cuts to the Prescription Drug Plan and the Children's Dental Plan were unjustified.

This is what Mr. Romanow is saying at that time.

And the latest PC proposal to close down all five hospitals in this constituency is unacceptable.

So the NDP leader, Mr. Romanow, is saying that a proposal to close down five hospitals in Assiniboia-Gravelbourg is unjustified and unacceptable, and that the prescription drug plan cuts and the children's dental plan cuts are unacceptable, according to the NDP. This is what he says in a letter to thousands of constituents. And he goes on to say this:

Families are also being hurt by the unfair PC tax increases.

It implies that he wouldn't do this.

They are saying that tax breaks to big corporations mean unfair income taxes for ordinary people.

He'd never provide taxes to ordinary people.

And PC cutbacks to our municipalities and schools have caused an unfair property tax burden on rural families.

He talks about an unfair tax burden on rural people in terms of property taxes in this letter.

The people of Assiniboia-Gravelbourg are telling me (that's what he says) they want to send a message to the PC government in Regina (and I quote) to stop its attacks on health care services, its waste, and its unfair tax increases.

Then Mr. Romanow writes this:

In this important provincial by-election I invite you to support the New Democrats, working together for quality health care services for all Saskatchewan families. Let's send them that message, and let's make it count. On December 15, let's elect Allen Engel, New Democrat.

Yours sincerely, Roy Romanow, Leader of the Opposition.

Now I read this letter into the record, Mr. Speaker, so that people would know this closure motion, which does the very opposite to what the NDP promised as far back as 1988 under the leadership of Roy Romanow, this closure motion . . .

The Speaker: — Order, order. I remind the member to refer to the members in this legislature either by their constituency or by the portfolio they have.

Mr. Devine: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was signed by the leader of the opposition at that time and now the Premier of the province.

An Hon. Member: — You can quote his name.

Mr. Devine: — And I just quoted his name because it was signed there, but I accept your suggestion and your advice and your ruling.

The point is, Mr. Speaker, is that the Premier of Saskatchewan, who is head of the NDP Party, promised the people of Saskatchewan that he would not close hospitals, that he would not raise taxes, that he would not cut the children's dental plan — he would put it back in place — he would not charge people for prescription drugs. And he's done all of that, Mr. Speaker.

And he won't even allow adequate debate by the people of Saskatchewan, either in this legislature or outside. People are resigning from boards, people are turning up by the hundreds and now by the thousands, and they're going to be here in Saskatchewan in front of the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday by the hundreds, and perhaps by the thousands, saying you never promised this. You never said you were going to cut like this. You promised the opposite, Mr. Leader of the NDP. You promised the opposite.

And in this letter to the people, he signed it and he said, oh shame on the Tories for even charging \$50 deductible. That's no good. What is it today, Mr. Speaker? It's up over \$800 per quarter for senior citizens.

And they are bringing in closure to cut off debate because they think they have the support of the people to do this? Mr. Speaker, I contend here today that they don't have the support of their own caucus, for heaven sakes.

As it was on television last night, the NDP leader said, I grant you there is problems in our caucus and there's problems in our party. And he said that on television. Well I guess there's problems when he tells a fib like this. He doesn't campaign . . . He campaigns saying one thing and then he turns around and gets elected and he does absolutely the opposite.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when they bring in closure on debate because they are too afraid to meet the people, too afraid to have members of the Legislative Assembly and the opposition speak up for the people, then they . . . it's a cowardly act. And there's nothing more cowardly in a Legislative Assembly then to cut off debate in democracy. That's what this place is all about, is to be able to express yourself. And the big, brave heroes on the NDP side say no more debate, we don't want to hear your arguments, we don't want to listen to the people, we know best. And that is the lowest form of democracy, it's the lowest form of common denominator in any democratic institution. You turn it into a non-democratic institution. It's totally uncalled for.

(1600)

If you had've campaigned on it, it's one thing. If you'd have said to the people: elect the New Democrats and we'll close 52 hospitals; elect the New Democrats and we'll raise the PST (provincial sales tax); elect the New Democrats and the end of GRIP (gross revenue insurance program); elect the New Democrats and we will raise the prescription drug costs — if you'd have campaigned on that, fair enough.

Then you say, lookit, the people voted for us, the opposition has no grounds to speak, cut them off. But you didn't do that. You were cowards during the campaign and cowardly now. You wouldn't stand up there in front of the people and say, I am going to raise the PST and I'm going to close your hospitals and I'm going to end GRIP because you knew the people wouldn't vote for you. They wouldn't vote for that and

they're not going to vote for it now.

As Senator Davey Steuart said, they won't vote for you in the future either because you haven't told them the truth. And you didn't have the courage to stand in your place and tell them in 1991.

An Hon. Member: — What else was said?

Mr. Devine: — And what else was said, the hon. member said. I'll tell you what was said. You promised that you would take off the PST and balance the budget. Do you know what the PST is worth? Two hundred million dollars, the way it starts with; and fully implemented it's \$400.

You promised the people of Saskatchewan a \$400 million tax cut, and then you said: whoops, I guess we can't do that; I guess we have to add 1.6 billion to the deficit that's already there. And that's what you have — \$800 million deficit, a \$590 million deficit, and now a \$300 million deficit. You've added to the debt 1.6 billion because you couldn't even begin to manage the province without some sort of taxation mechanism. And then you finally said, well I guess it was a mistake that you made; you promised them something that you couldn't keep.

And it's interesting on television last night, even when you watch it, you say, well the promises that were made in the '80s . . . Somebody should've asked the NDP Premier, did you make any promises to get elected? Did you make any promises? Oh yes, I happened to say no PST harmonize.

Well what was that promise worth? What was that promise worth? It was a couple of hundred million dollars the way it was and a couple of hundred million dollars if we did it on services. Oh, I just promised that. Mr. Speaker, he promised \$400 million break to the people of Saskatchewan, knowing it in the debate that the deficit was 14.2 billion, and he promised that. And then he says, I'll give you more money for health care and I'll give you more money for schools and more money for agriculture, the cost of production.

And then when he gets into the Legislative Assembly because he won on a sham, he says no — the PST's got to go from 7 per cent up to 9 per cent. No — income tax, property tax, sales tax, and then the prescription drug costs got to go up. And I'll tell you what. Just to top it off I'll end your agriculture support and then I'll really get you — I'll close 52 hospitals.

And he's running around the province now, saying: well they're not closing; the building's still there. Is the hospital open or the hospital closed? It's closed. There is no more hospital. That's what he said. So don't let anybody be fooled. Oh well, I'm just converting this building. The hospital will be no more. And no more debate. No more discussion. No more campaigning that, oh well I can fix all this and I'll be kind to you because I'm a socialist. This is on the backs of Tommy Douglas. Don't forget Tommy. He'd close all those hospitals and he'd tell you he'd give you a big tax break and he'd really, really rip into farmers like this.

Oh yes.

Well no wonder they have to bring closure in, Mr. Speaker. Because they can't stand in their place and defend this kind of hypocrisy. It's awful what you've done. You've misled the public. You fooled them so that they would vote for you and then when you won you said, I'll cut you off at the knees because I can't really live up to it.

And now what we see is people digging out these letters and said, you promised, NDP. You promised lower taxes. You promised more money for health and education. You promised a balanced budget. You said it would be easy. And you promised cost of production for farmers. And you have done none of the above. You've gone exactly the opposite. And when you get into trouble, what do you do? You shut down the Legislative Assembly and won't let us debate.

What cowards. What hypocrisy. It's shameful. I mean you campaigned for this. You campaigned for this. This is your *raison d'être* to be a New Democrat, to cut off this. And after all of these promises and after — imagine — after watching the 1980s you say, well I could go with a bit of a \$400 million kind of tax gift to your promise, and we'll get away with it. And then we'll come in and we'll really show them what we're like.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP who stood in their place in opposition and soundly criticized closure on something as — imagine — as sinful as selling shares in an energy company. Can you believe that? Offering shares in an energy company. Get some equity rather than debt. And they said, oh it's such a big economic and social sin.

I'll tell you what you could do right now. You've got shares in Cameco. You've probably got \$300 million-plus shares in Cameco. Do you know what you're going to save this year in closing 52 hospitals? You're going to save \$5 million. And for \$5 million you're closing 52 hospitals. You should be ashamed of yourself. You've got over \$300 million in equity just in your shares in uranium company, and you're putting these rural people through all of that.

And even fully implemented next year, it'll be up to 15 or \$20 million. That on a \$1.5 billion budget is 1.3 per cent savings. And you have to bring in closure for a 1.3 per cent savings?

Who's driving this? We went through this on GRIP, but finally the Premier admitted: I shouldn't have touched it; it was a mistake. Leave it alone. Why change the rules of the legislature? Why cut off debate? Why be so silly? He ended up firing the minister of Agriculture because he shouldn't have listened to him.

Who's he listening to on this? You're closing 52 hospitals, the heart and soul of rural communities. Give me a hospital and a school and a church and you've got the basis of a community. And you just

went in and you plucked it right out without asking, without consultation, and nothing else done. And then you can't even allow people like me or others to speak in the legislature longer than 20 minutes because you're so proud of it. For what? For \$5 million?

And you walked out of here because you wouldn't allow people to trade shares in a . . . I mean the whole world is trading shares.

I'll tell you today, you could take Cameco shares and you could supply the \$5 million to keep those rural hospitals. And you could have all kinds of consultation with rural people on how to run them and to protect them and to keep integrated facilities working, and they would tell you. You don't have to ram it down their throats.

Why don't you just go out and talk to them, visit with them? Have the courage to say, look, push it a little hard just like GRIP; we don't need to wreck this place. Allow people to talk. Let's get some ideas. Gosh, we've got alternatives. As somebody said on TV last night, there are choices. You've got choices. You don't just have to pick on 52 communities that didn't ask for this and didn't vote for this.

I can't understand you. Are you so afraid of it that you've got to ram it through? There's no other logical answer.

What in the goodness are you about? Why? Is this good for the towns that you're talking about? Is it saving you a lot of money? No. Do people support it? No. Well the hon. members can laugh in their places. I'll tell you, the people watching on television, the people are going to be out here in front of the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday. They'll want you to come out and laugh in their face, member from Humboldt. You be there. You be there, and you laugh in their face.

An Hon. Member: — I won't laugh.

Mr. Devine: — I'll bet you won't laugh. You talk about closure . . . And they will tell you, you had no mandate to do this. You had no mandate at all to do this . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And he said, the member from Humboldt just chirped up and said, well Devine created the deficit; well if that's true, why in the world would you offer a \$400 million tax break on its back? Why would you do that? Why? Why would you offer no PST if you thought the deficit was that big? But you did.

You offered people no PST if you vote NDP. And on top of that, you said I'll fund your hospitals, and I'll fund your health care, and I'll give you prescription drugs, and I'll reinstate the dental program. You offered all of that, and you and your leader knew that there wasn't money to do that. But you said, well we'll tell the people that; hopefully they'll vote NDP. And if they vote NDP, then we'll really stick it to them. And boy have we got it today . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . And another member chirps up from Regina and says,

gosh I thought there was time allocation because she can't stand to hear the truth.

The truth is you didn't campaign on this, and you have no mandate to do it. If you think you've got all the answers, you come out on the steps of the legislature on Wednesday, and you tell all the people.

An Hon. Member: — I'll be there.

Mr. Devine: — You be there. You be there. And you can laugh at them. You can say, hey, go home; there's closure. Go home; there's closure. That's what you can tell them. You don't get to speak about it in Saskatchewan with the NDP in power. You can close hospitals because the NDP say go home, there's closure. The democratic institution of the Legislative Assembly says there's no debate in health care in Saskatchewan. Really proud. Boy, you've got to feel good about that. You go tell all your constituents, vote for you.

I hope you've got just as many answers when they come here to find out why you have closure on their communities. Why is there closure on their communities?

Listen. Listen to this guy speak in here, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order, order. Order, order, order. Order! Order! Will the member from Rosthern please just settle down. All I looked at him for is when the Speaker is on — Order! — when the Speaker is on his feet the member should sit down. That's all. I will address the member from Regina Rosemont if you just give me a chance. Just give me a chance.

I will ask the member for Regina Rosemont to either quit interrupting or leave the chambers. Quit interrupting, and give the member from Estevan his due to speak in this House.

Mr. Devine: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. While the time is limited, I do plan to speak to the member from Regina Rosemont.

It's members like that, Mr. Speaker, that campaign on no provincial sales tax harmonized with the federal government, but lots of money for health and education. And they ran around the province and they ran around the city of Regina saying, well I'll tell you folks, there's a \$14 billion deficit but we're going to promise you a \$200 million tax break and we'll give you more money for health and education.

And do you know what happened? When they got elected they ran up a deficit of 800 million, 600 million, and now 300 million, 1.6 billion on top of it. And then tax increases. And now when we go to debate it, they cut us off and say, well we're going to close 52 hospitals but we don't like you to speak up on behalf of people so we'll cut you off — cut you off. And he shakes his finger at me and he says, just wait . . .

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

elapsed.

Mr. Swenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the limited time that's available to me in this debate that the government has forced on this legislature, I want to talk about the issue before us, Mr. Speaker, and quote some of the members of this new-found democratic party over here who have sought to bring closure down in this Assembly for the sixth time in a year and a half.

And I quote the member from Regina Elphinstone, the House Leader, who finally did the despicable act in here today, Mr. Speaker. And I quote. This is from August 7, 1989 in *Hansard*.

Well I say that closure is the most despicable rule that this government could invoke . . .

Despicable, Mr. Speaker, that's the words of the member from Elphinstone, the House Leader, who is ramming through this legislature — ramming through this legislature a health Act that, Mr. Speaker, hundreds and indeed thousands of people around this province are finding despicable.

They're meeting by the tens and by the hundreds and by the thousands in communities all over this province because they say this government has not given me time, they have not given me the direction I need. They have not given us the ability as taxpayers in this province to determine part of our own future. And they are saying, in the words of the member from Elphinstone, that it is despicable.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this bunch of new-found democrats who so eloquently in this legislature just a short few years ago stood in their place for hours on end and talked about the use of closure . . . The member from Riversdale, August 4, '89:

. . . discredited and desperate, this government has no other choice. It resorts to the actions of a bully. It resorts to the actions of coming down and guillotining the opposition here.

(1615)

This same Premier that leads these new-found democrats in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This same Premier who now says that he will unilaterally change the way that health care is delivered in this province to people who took over three decades to build a system that makes them comfortable, that says that there are no second-class citizens in this province, a system that says that whether you live in the city or live in the country that you are a citizen of equal value, that you are a citizen who has access to the same quality of living standards no matter where you live.

This party that today in this legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so glibly takes away that right, this party who such a short time ago campaigned around this province on more for everything, particularly health care, who said that senior citizens under the previous

government were choosing between groceries and medicine, who said that children were dying in transport from Assiniboia to Regina because the former government only provided funding levels at the rate of inflation — and now we find this New Democratic Party, the party that always said that I care, when it came to medicare, is now the party of I don't care, that our political agenda is more important to us, more important to us than half the citizens of this province that live outside our major cities. That's what they say.

And they say not only that. That because we have this large majority, that we will force it through this legislature because our political timetable is being interfered with. The political hides of some of these people that sit across from us are being threatened, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The promises made such a short time ago mean nothing to these people.

And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? People all over this province are starting to say the same thing. They meet by the tens and the hundreds of thousands and they say: what happened to those promises? What happened to those commitments? What has happened to this political party that based so much of its foundation on equality of access, of equal opportunity? What has happened to this New Democratic Party, this bunch of new-found democrats that now rule this province?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they hide. They hide in this legislature; they hide behind closure.

I'd like to quote again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the members of this government, a member of the treasury benches who now hides behind closure in this Assembly. And this is from *Hansard*, August 7, 1989:

... I want to say to you that on this side of the House, democratic traditions do matter, the traditions of this place do count. Not once, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not once in all the years of CCF (Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) or New Democratic Party administration in this province, not once did we seek to stifle the free speech of this legislature; not once did we seek to limit debate in this House. Not during the heated debates of the late 1940s, not during the medicare crisis, not during that time when the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan was being formed, not once did we seek to limit the rights of the opposition to speak in this legislature.

So speaketh, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Associate Minister of Health, so speaketh the Associate Minister of Health, he who goes out now and so glibly closes rural hospitals across this province at the drop of a hat.

And the same minister said on August 7, 1989: on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, democratic traditions count. So sayeth the associate minister from this new-found democratic party of Saskatchewan, which now uses closure for the sixth time in this Assembly in

a year and a half.

The same cabinet minister quotes on August 7th:

... for this motion. I would be absolutely ashamed to be counted in with the first government in Saskatchewan history to limit free speech in this House. I'd be absolutely ashamed to stand up with the front bench and do as they had beckoned me to do.

Well it's obvious, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this debate, that the front bench has beckoned. And the front bench has beckoned them all to follow along and do what their own democratic traditions as a party in this province has prohibited them from doing at the most extreme of times. And that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to limit debate in this legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we were talking about a privatization, if we were talking about a farm policy, we might have some latitude from these new-found democrats because they've always voted consistently against those things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They've always spoken out against those things.

But on the issue of health care, of medicare, of one class of citizen in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have always stood firm in their place. They have never hidden behind their desks; they have never hunkered down like we see them today with this sixth introduction of closure in this Assembly.

But now we see them hunkered down, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this party of new-found democrats that now rules this province, these people that are the defenders of the rights of citizens, the defenders of equality.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's finish off with the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, the Associate Minister of Health, August 7, 1989:

Mr. Speaker, I stand to oppose this action to limit debate in the Saskatchewan legislature. I stand to oppose the silencing of an opposition. And I stand to oppose this motion, not simply because it is the means by which this government wishes to privatize ... I stand to oppose this motion because it limits the freedom of speech.

And I'll put my name on record against this limiting of free speech in this Legislative Assembly. And when that day comes and I no longer have a right to sit in this legislature and to speak here, when that day comes, I will at least not go away with the shame of knowing that I was a part of a group of men and women who sought to limit those rights in this House.

There was a day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when words — spoken by the member from Wakamow, the Associate Minister of Health — like that would have meant something to the New Democratic Party in this province. There was a time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when a member of this legislature spoke thus, that

when the contradictions stared him square in the face, he would have picked himself up and either crossed the floor or permanently removed himself from this Legislative Assembly.

But today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't see that any more because we see a political party that is more interested in saving their political hides, of covering up for the promises made and the promises broken. We don't see that member moving his seat across this Legislative Assembly floor. We don't see that member saying, I can no longer exist in a political party that would do this. No, that hon. member simply does the heeding of his Premier and the front benches.

He simply does — I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker — what the rest of them are doing. They simply hunker down behind their desks, they simply hunker down and hide from the fact that this political party that used to stand for so much stands for so little. And that is the sad fact of what we're debating here.

No, we're not debating it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because after 20 minutes, you're going to stand up and you're going to tell me to take my place, that I don't have the right to speak any more; that the constituents of Thunder Creek and the other constituents around this province who are upset, who see their towns being torn apart and destroyed, that they don't have that basic right any more.

Even the people that came in their thousands to the steps of this legislature in 1962 were allowed to have their champions in this legislature. They were allowed to have the members of the official opposition come in and speak their piece, and not once did the then New Democratic Party stand and deny that access. They said, we don't agree with you, we don't agree with the thousands of people, we are going to proceed, but we are going to let you have your say.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fundamentals of our health system are undergoing massive change again. There isn't a person in this province who says that rationalization of that system is not on in the 1990s — not one. But that pioneers of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people that have been a part of the auxiliary of every hospital in this province, the families that have contributed in every way that they could to those buildings, those structures and to their health care out of their pocket to see that equality and access were there, those people are feeling betrayed today.

If this legislature stood and debated this issue for the next 12 months, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would prove to the people of this province that its elected officials cared, cared enough about what the rest of Saskatchewan would look like beyond Main Street, Regina, and Saskatoon, in the next few years to stand and talk about it and work with them to come up with a system of health care in this province that will last another three decades.

But what they are being told, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by this motion is that it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter

what your town looks like, it doesn't matter what the landscape in rural Saskatchewan looks like because this bunch of new-found democrats is going to have their way.

And they're going to do it in time to try and heal the political wounds so that they can be re-elected in 1995 or 1996, not because there is a reasoned debate taking place; not because people are having the time and the wherewithal to restructure the fundamentals of their life. No, that's not what's on the agenda. What's on the agenda is closure. What's on the agenda is that the member from Thunder Creek and the member from Kindersley and others in this opposition only get 20 minutes — only get 20 minutes.

After these people get done with rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you should hope that there is medical care within 20 minutes of your life. You should hope, as I do every day on my farm, that one of my children doesn't stick his leg in the auger, that someone in rural Saskatchewan isn't going to die because 20 minutes was too much for these people.

And you say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you may say to me, you're being melodramatic. Well I can remember the member . . . the now Health minister, the member from Regina Lakeview, accusing the former government of a small four-year-old child bleeding to death on her way in from Assiniboia Hospital to Regina because we held our funding for health care at only the rate of inflation. The same member walked around Assiniboia-Gravelbourg constituency and said that the government would close all five hospitals and what a travesty it was because people were being put at risk.

That same member now says not only are we going to close three of the five, we're going to do it in six months, and that's it. There'll be no debate. There'll be no local people making those decisions. It's a done deal.

Twenty minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is all that those communities are being given. And this bunch of new-found democrats here in this legislature says that's all they deserve. Because if they weren't saying that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they wouldn't have brought this heinous motion in here to change the landscape of this province for decades to come . . . I say to you, demands more than 20 minutes. It demands that people out there be given the opportunity to make their own choices, free of interference from government.

(1630)

Because they are taxpayers, just as we are. And in Saskatchewan in 1993 I don't see too many taxpayers making unwise decisions. It doesn't matter if you're on the farm or in the small town or if you're a Main Street businessman — today you know that the dollars are thinner than they have ever been before.

And they are not making foolish choices. They aren't

allowing their politicians to make foolish choices, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's why they deserve more than 20 minutes in this Assembly. That's why they deserve more from this political party than what we're seeing today.

They need a fair hearing. They shouldn't have to come to the steps of this legislature. If this government and these ministers were doing their job, they would have been in every one of those communities and they would have listened and they would have felt and they would gotten the message. And we wouldn't be into this situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if they had done that.

Instead, it's ram, ram, ram. And as so many New Democrats so eloquently said in 1989, there can only be one reason for that and that is the salvation of their political hides.

Well I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this deed will not be forgotten. There are people all over this province who in the future will be asked to make some choices. And they will remember the 20 minutes that their community got in this legislature.

And if there is anything left of that community in two years time, anything at all, if there is even a community there to protest, I say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the words of the associate minister, the Associate Minister of Health, who said before that he was ashamed to be part of this process, will come back to haunt him and this political party. And that shame, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that shame should be borne by all 55 of them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Haverstock: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It normally is an honour and in fact a pleasure to represent the public in debates in this province. But today's debate is somewhat different. Mr. Deputy Speaker, today's debate, unlike many of the others in which I have participated over the last year, has come under the pall of closure. And there is no pride nor any pleasure in cutting off debate in order to deny the public a chance to clearly make their objections known to the members' opposite proposed legislation. There is no pride in stifling debate on an issue of critical importance. Actions like this only feed public cynicism toward politicians and our political institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find today's events ironic. Today we have a government that constantly preaches its allegiance to the principle of cooperation — cooperation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I question their commitment to cooperation.

I fail to see any indication that the member from Elphinstone and his colleagues are concerned about or committed to cooperation when they are using closure and time allocation to get a controversial Bill through as quickly as they can, to get this Bill through as quickly as they can in order not simply to avoid debate but in order to stifle debate in communities

across the province.

The members opposite and the Premier want to avoid further meetings, further protests; and the best way to do this, in their mind, is to avoid cooperating. The best way to do this is to get this Bill through as quickly as they can and to make our new health care districts a done deal.

It appears that the members opposite believe if this means sacrificing cooperation with the people of Saskatchewan, then so be it. It appears, Mr. Speaker, that ensuring cooperation with the people of Saskatchewan is not important at all to the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is one who often refers to his lengthy stay in this House and to the many great debaters that have sat in this Chamber over the years. And I'd like to take this opportunity to refer to some of those people myself. And as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, one to whom I will be referring is the present Premier.

On June 7, 1991, during a debate over the PST, the Premier stated — if not boasted — that he, quote: recalled many debates on many contentious issues in this House. The Premier went on to say that he recalled that the government, and I quote: of the late Ross Thatcher advanced on a matter of principle with the member from Riversdale on the opposition opposed to him. The Premier stated that, and I quote: there was no closure used by the Liberal Party or the Liberal government at that time. The debate ran its course. End of quote.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that quotation leads one to wonder what happened to the Premier in this Assembly today. Four years ago he sat in this House and touted the merits of following by principle. He argued that the noble thing to do was to, and I quote: let the debate run its course. End of quote. And to do so as a matter of principle.

That is what the people find cynical about politicians like the Premier and the members opposite. While they claim to be principled, they throw principles like cooperation in the garbage as soon as it suits them. The members opposite are showing that expediency or getting what they want by any means possible is what really matters.

They don't appear to care about the families or health care givers in communities across this province — rural people who have been losing so much over the last 10 years and are frightened by more change and they want more time. By stifling debate they are showing just how much they really care about the concerns and opinions of the citizens of our province. They do not care, Mr. Speaker.

If they did care, they would let this debate run its course and they would give everyone a chance to voice their concerns to the point where they would even allow people, the people of this province, to come to a committee of the whole in a much larger

chamber than this and really talk about these fundamental changes facing them. Let's talk about real democracy, Mr. Speaker.

It was the Premier and his colleagues that went across this province earlier this year, telling everyone what a crisis we had, all of the crises that we're in, and how we must all cooperate and make sacrifices together — together, Mr. Speaker — in order to get our fiscal house in order. Well that is a very noble and indeed a sensible claim, but how quickly people forget. The members opposite have forgotten what cooperation is.

As I stated last week, if the government believes it needs the cooperation of the people in this province to survive this difficult period, it must first gain their trust. Stifling debate and telling the communities of this province that regardless of what they think the government will have its way, is no way of building cooperation and trust. By saying that they are in favour of letting the debate run its course and then gagging with time allocation and closure those who chose to speak as soon as they get in power, this is no way to gain the trust and the confidence of the people of the province.

It is actions like these that make the public cynical. Mr. Premier, and the members opposite, the member from Elphinstone, and the member from Hillsdale must all remember that the people have had enough. Recent polls indicate that Canadians are more cynical about their politicians than any other people in the western world. And these members opposite are doing nothing to reduce the level of cynicism. In fact they're doing their best to encourage cynicism and the old-style political behaviour on which it thrives.

They are responsible for their behaviour, Mr. Speaker. I will be responsible for my party in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Chretien can be responsible for his in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, when in opposition the Premier made even stronger comments about the use of closure and time allocation. And he made the following remarks about gagging debate. The member from Riversdale four years ago said using cynicism-generators like they are using today, quote:

is an act of a government which knows it cannot win this debate with reason, so it resorts to the only tactic that old, decrepit and decaying and soon-to-be-defeated governments everywhere in the world would resort to — gagging the opposition and gagging the people.

Those are indeed powerful words, Mr. Speaker. They are from the Premier of Saskatchewan who is the Premier of Saskatchewan today. And I'd like to know, Mr. Speaker, when will the Premier stop creating more cynicism? When will the Premier stop gagging the people? When will the members opposite stop gagging the opposition?

And if the government refuses to step back from this despicable practice, what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? Does it mean that this government has become, as the Premier says, old and decrepit, or is it soon to be defeated?

I urge the members opposite to pay attention, pay attention to the meetings that are being held throughout our province, pay attention to the fact that three-quarters of the planning committee in Swift Current resigned because they opposed the way that the government was trying to force this upon them.

Pay attention to the people of Saskatchewan. Just listen to them. That's all that they're asking people to do.

I believe we need legislation to set up health districts, and I support legislation to set up health districts. We need legislation to allow the people of this province to move on.

But should the government, Mr. Speaker, ignore the recommendations of the people who understand their own communities, their own set of circumstances best? Can the government be reasonable in its aims when it doesn't understand the intricacies of people's homes and how it is they work together?

They are proposing a major overhaul, a complete reconstruction of the health system, and people are simply asking for more time. They aren't saying they object. They aren't saying they're against reform. They're saying, allow us to be part of the process of change — more time to adjust to the changes that lay ahead, more time to prepare for the future so that the people who will lose their jobs will have some alternatives in our communities.

Some say it's government's job to present the future to the people in the present, and I agree with that idea. I agree with putting a vision before people, but I do not agree with government arbitrarily ramming the future down the throats of people while the people are gasping for air.

I have alluded to the principle of cooperation during my remarks, and while cooperation is needed with the people and the communities of this province, cooperation is also needed with the health care providers that labour daily for the well-being and the health of Saskatchewan people.

I had a letter, in fact I have dozens and dozens and dozens of letters, hundreds of them, regarding this topic. And there are many nurses from around this province who are saying they agree with health care reform, but what they want is an opportunity to fully participate, to ensure that some things are in place so that job losses will be minimal, that they in fact will know how they can participate in being able to bring some income to their families, particularly those who are people in farm families.

Well health care is not an economic development project as has been used by governments in the past.

The impact of these closures and job losses is an issue which the government must and should have addressed with the communities that they knew were going to be earmarked for substantial changes.

People deserve to know what will happen to them, whether they're care-givers or health consumers. And until the members opposite offer some substantive answers to the people and a detailed view of their vision, they can hardly justify stifling debate so early, Mr. Speaker.

As the Leader of the Liberal Party, I believe, as the last Ross Thatcher once said, that the great tragedy is that we have not been getting our money's worth out of our health care dollar. And yes this is the person who stated in 1970 that if something isn't done, 20 years from now we couldn't afford medicare. Perhaps the New Democrats should have listened to him.

The time has come for a change. But change, like everything else, must follow a process that shows respect for the people, respect for their opinions, and respect for their heartfelt concerns.

(1645)

Just prior to the war, Saskatchewan began to set up union hospitals. In 1947 the members opposite introduced health insurance. The introduction of health insurance, hospital insurance, provides a good example, Mr. Speaker, of why we, the people of Saskatchewan, deserve to know the government's plans in full before allowing them to move ahead.

The implementation of hospital insurance demonstrates why a government launching program reforms like this — those before us today — should not be able to use such Draconian devices as closure and time allocation.

When hospital insurance was introduced by the government of the day — that government of the day was led by Premier Douglas — the premier forecasted that this measure would cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan \$4 million, a significant expense in that day. Not long after, the truth came to light. As noble a program as hospital insurance was, it cost \$7 million — almost twice as much as expected.

What will the changes that government wants today cost? We all want to make certain that we get value for our health care dollar, but I'm concerned about the cost to the quality of our health system, the human costs. How can we truly know what impact these changes will have on people unless we're given the details first?

I urge the government to do as the Premier prophetically urged four years ago. Win your arguments with reason, not by gagging the public and not by gagging the opposition with time allocation and closure. If your plans are the right ones, let the debate run its course. Let the public raise their concerns and objections. If their plans are the right ones, Mr. Speaker, they will win the argument with

reason.

I would like to refer to another comment that the Premier made some time ago during the debate over utilization fees. As a rookie MLA the Premier stated that, and I quote: democracy is based on the concept that man is rational; he can choose between good ideas and good men.

What was true in 1968, Mr. Speaker, is still true in 1993. Why does the Premier and the members opposite not let democracy prevail? Let the people use reason to judge between good ideas and good men. Give people a chance to use their reason.

Why should any elected representative fear this? The answer to this, Mr. Speaker, is they should not.

But unfortunately old-style politics continues to dominate in this particular Chamber. That old-style politics, Mr. Speaker, is the same attitude that took the rights away from civil servants and the rights away from farmers in the province of Saskatchewan.

That is the same attitude that is today telling everyone accept, accept the government's plans blindly without knowing what will happen to their local health services. It is the same attitude that is now telling people in 52 areas of our province that their hospitals will close and simply accept this decision without knowing what the overall plan will be.

There are people in this province like the people in Weyburn who have family members in the Souris Valley Regional Care facility who are mentally challenged. They want to know whether their relatives will be uprooted and forced to move to Valley View in Moose Jaw because of the government's health care reforms. I think any question that any of us might have. People are wondering what will happen.

And don't the members opposite who support time allocation and closure believe that these concerned families should at least be able to know how the health care reforms are going to affect their loved ones, their vulnerable ones in their communities? Is that not the morally right thing to do, Mr. Speaker?

I ask this government to show respect for the people of our province. They know what is best for themselves. And if they like your plans as government, they will support you and they will prevail. Cooperation will prevail.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there is no mechanism in this Assembly to prevent the ultimate passage of Bill No. 3. The only tactic which opposition members can use ultimately is the power of public opinion. The longer we can draw attention of the media, the concerns of the public, and the lack of conviction of many of the NDP back-benchers for these changes, the better the chance of forcing the government to remove its deadlines, to implement a pilot project, and slow down the legislation.

It is unfortunate that in a democratic process there are no tools other than stalling to make a point, which is critical. During debates on serious issues it is obvious that our system is not designed to develop good decisions on behalf of the people. Rather, it is designed to give government members an arm-lock on democracy where the sheer size and strength of their majority will override the arguments put forth however logical they may be.

History is an excellent teacher, Mr. Speaker. It was a significant decision by the New Democrats many years ago when with the swipe of a pen thousands of mentally challenged people in North Battleford and in Weyburn were deinstitutionalized with the swipe of a pen. And as someone who has worked for many years in implementing normalization, one of the things that people will not forget is, as laudable as that was, nothing had been put in place in the communities in order to take these individuals in who were deinstitutionalized. And as much as people across like to deny these things, perhaps what they should do is actually go and talk to people who are not New Democrats.

In the limited moments that I have left to speak, I urge the government to stop muzzling and ride out what might be indeed a stormy debate. Without a chance to voice their opinions, the people cannot feel part of this process, Mr. Speaker. This flies in the face of cooperation. It is the antithesis of openness.

The closure time allocation motion we are faced with today is really a lethal injection to democracy — a lethal injection — quick destruction of democracy with the most serious of long-term implications. And democracy is such a tenuous thing, elected official should do whatever we can to protect it and to strengthen it. The people must be encouraged to participate more fully, Mr. Speaker, not stifled, not gagged.

As you have noted, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe in antics that hold up the workings of this legislature. I also do not believe in bringing forward closure on closure which stifles the debate of people in this province. All the things that have been transpiring here over the last week points out how much reform is necessary if we are going to get down to the business of working for the people of this province. And if we are going to save our health care system, we are going to have to do it together. Not hide from debate or public scrutiny, but welcome debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's another sad day in this legislature when the government uses closure on closure to stifle debate in this province. The people of this province wish to have their voices heard, and yet the government opposite totally ignores what the people are trying to say to them. There are meetings going on, Mr.

Speaker, across this province. There have been a number of meetings in the last week. There are three meetings tonight. There are meetings in Carievale, Macklin, and Gull Lake, where the people of this province are trying to send a message to the government opposite.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, the government opposite is not listening. They're not listening to the people, to the opposition. They're not listening to the people across this province. If they were listening, Mr. Speaker, they would hold up their legislation. They would not have used closure to force it through. They would allow the people to talk to their government — to their government, Mr. Speaker — because the people did elect each and every one of us in here.

And yet the people, when they went to the polls in 1991, were not voting to close their hospitals. They were voting for all the promises that they had received during the election campaign, that for \$4.6 billion the party opposite could run this province and would run it — in their words — better than it had been run before, and still provide more money for health care, more money for education, Mr. Speaker. And that's not what they're receiving.

The government opposite, Mr. Speaker, does not have a mandate for what they are doing. They do not have the mandate to use closure on closure to end debate on this health care Bill. When you look back at closure being used in this province, in the last session, Mr. Speaker, it was used five times. In the previous nine years I believe, Mr. Speaker, it was used twice.

It seems to becoming a regular habit with the government opposite. Either you tow the line for the government opposite or they simply introduce closure and eliminate debate. The opposition has very few tools left, Mr. Speaker, with which to try and hold the government accountable, because the government will do what it wants irregardless of what the people in this province desire. They're not paying any attention, Mr. Speaker, to those things that are being asked for by the people of the province.

Instead of the members opposite going out to the meetings, they have to . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Some of the members are saying they are. Mr. Speaker, this process, according to the Minister of Health herself, has been going on since August last year. The members of the opposition have been going out in the last week only, Mr. Speaker, to meet with the public.

There have been a number of meetings across the province and the members opposite have not been there. They've simply sent their bureaucrats out. And those bureaucrats, Mr. Speaker, did not provide any information. The message was, form a steering committee to investigate the possibilities of forming a health care district. And that was their information, that they were to go ahead and try and form a steering committee. But there was no real direction given as to what this steering committee was to do, how they were to operate, and how they were to be funded.

When the members of the public approached us to ask those questions, Mr. Speaker, of the government opposite, what was the government's response? The government's response, Mr. Speaker, was closure. We're not to talk about these types of things in the province of Saskatchewan. No, no, the government uses closure so that the people cannot get the answers that they need to make the proper decisions concerning health care.

One of the suggestions that has come forward from the government that the people want more clarification about, that they were asking us about, is how many people, Mr. Speaker, should form a health care district. We asked those questions in question period. We asked them in the small number of hours of debate that we had, and there was no response, Mr. Speaker. And we needed the opportunity to continue to question the government on its plans.

How many people do form a health care district? The Minister of Health would suggest 12,000. Her bureaucrats that are out running around would suggest 40. Mr. Speaker, the people need some answers and they're not getting them. And with closure in place, Mr. Speaker, they can't get them.

Two of the hospitals in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, are slated for closure. Both of them are relatively new facilities. The fact is, the one was just opened up on April 2 of this year. Well the government is saying, well these hospitals are not needed because there's nobody in them.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I talked to the administrator of the Oxbow hospital this past week, and she said the hospital was full. They had more patients looking to come in the door. They were trying to move patients from Oxbow to Estevan; they were trying to move patients from Oxbow to Regina. And in both of these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, there was no beds available in either Estevan or Regina for the patients they wished to transfer, so they had patients stuck in the hallways.

And the same thing was occurring in Redvers two weeks ago, where their hospital was full, they were trying to transfer people out, couldn't do it. They had to move, Mr. Speaker, a 95-year-old lady out of a respite bed because they needed room for acute care patients. This lady had to be transferred to another hospital 50 miles away, so they could have beds in the Redvers hospital.

And yet the government doesn't want people to talk about it. They want to bring in closure so that nobody can discuss these issues, so that the people who will be here on Wednesday will not be heard. The government will have closure in place. The health care Bill will have its limited amount of debate, and it will be done.

We've had 12 hours, Mr. Speaker, 12 hours of debate on Bill 3. Other Bills have gone through this House that were contentious. The potash debate had a hundred plus — 120 hours, Mr. Speaker, somewhere

in that neighbourhood. The SaskEnergy Bill had about 90 hours of debate. We've had 12 hours, Mr. Speaker, on this issue — 12 hours. Not even every one of our members has yet had an opportunity to speak. I believe we've had about three members up to speak on this issue, three or four.

(1700)

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province need to be given more opportunity to provide some input into the government's action, and they're being denied that. The government is forcing their agenda on the people even though the people may not wish to go in that direction.

And because the government, Mr. Speaker, did not outline these plans during the election campaign, in fact has outlined totally opposite plans, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that the government opposite does not have a mandate to carry out the programs that they are now doing.

It seems that these programs that they are bent on providing for the people of Saskatchewan, if I may use the word provide, is the dismantling of rural Saskatchewan. The closure of 52 hospitals across this province is not a benefit to rural Saskatchewan. It is not a benefit to any of the people living within those communities that will be closed.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you this is just the first step; that the government will proceed beyond this point with other measures of a similar kind. I can foresee it happening with education. I can foresee it happening with municipal governments, that the government is using the boundaries of the different hospital boards, the different home care boards, the various medical services, the ambulances within the areas, as being the reason for part of this need to amalgamate into super health districts.

The same thing, Mr. Speaker, will happen in education where there will be forced amalgamations of school units. The same thing will happen with municipal districts where they will be forced to amalgamate into a county system.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this may happen some point down the road, but it should happen on the people's agenda, not on the agenda of the government opposite.

The people in their own good time, if they wish to do this, Mr. Speaker, should be given that opportunity, but it should not be forced on them by the government opposite. If the people wish to form into a larger ambulance district, well then they should be encouraged to do so. But they should not have it forced on them, as the government is doing.

If the people want to form larger education districts, they should be allowed to do so; but the government should not use closure to force it. And the same, Mr. Speaker, with the municipal districts.

But the habit of this government, Mr. Speaker, is

becoming a situation where any time a piece of legislation is the least bit controversial, they use closure. And then if the opposition raises a fuss about it, they use closure again so that the opposition cannot speak on it and so that the public will not get an opportunity to find out what is going on in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to read a quote to you from the member from Regina Albert North, and this is from *Hansard* in 1989, and it says:

Here we are, 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.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think there's only one word that needs to be changed in that, and that's Conservative to New Democratic Party within that quote to make it totally appropriate to what is taking place in this House today.

And I think we can run down a list of issues on which the flame-thrower and the scorched earth policy that the member from Regina Albert North was talking about can be used for this government. Health care today. Last session it was GRIP. Earlier it was diabetics, the drug plan, dental health care, and the downloading onto the municipal taxpayers. That's the scorched earth policy that this government is following.

It seems to be an attempt, Mr. Speaker, to depopulate the province of Saskatchewan, the rural areas of Saskatchewan, move the people out. The government's already been talking about the elimination of a number of rural constituencies. If the government can eliminate a number of people within the rural areas of this province, that means that they can increase the number of rural constituencies which will be eliminated.

That seems to be what the ulterior motive is, Mr. Speaker, for this government. And that's why they're using closure, closure on closure, to implement their program, to stifle debate in this province.

Again, Mr. Speaker, from the member from Regina Albert North, of August 7, 1989, in *Hansard*:

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.

And that's what the member from Regina Albert North had to say in 1989.

Again, Mr. Speaker, that direct quote can be attributed to what the government is doing today. They refuse to let democracy and free speech interfere with their

agenda. They will pass this Bill no matter what, Mr. Speaker. That's the attitude. If it means they have to trample on the rights of every citizen in this province, so be it, they will do so, irregardless of the consequences. They will stifle the debate and they will ignore the wishes of the people.

Mr. Speaker, I think that when the time comes, the people of this province will have their say and they will be heard. And that time will come, Mr. Speaker, the next time the ballots are counted. And, Mr. Speaker, I know that the people of this province would rather that happen sooner than later.

They wish to have that debate, the debate on Bill 3 take place, Mr. Speaker. They wish to have their voices heard. Mr. Speaker, they need to have their voices heard because it's their livelihood and the livelihoods of their children, and the well-being of their parents and grandparents that are at stake here.

When you move people out of their home communities, they suffer. The well-being of those individuals suffer, Mr. Speaker, and the well-being of those communities suffer.

Under the government's proposal you're looking at 120 to 140 long-term care beds per thousand people — per thousand people, Mr. Speaker, over the age of 75. Not per thousand people living in the area, but per thousand people over the age of 75. Well that takes in a fairly large area, Mr. Speaker. And there are economies of scale, efficiencies to be had by having more than three or four beds in a particular location.

So when the decisions are made, Mr. Speaker, as to where these beds will be placed, people are going to be moved from their home communities. They're not going to be allowed to stay with their friends and neighbours and their families in the community that they were raised in, that they lived in most of their life; they're going to be moved. And where are they going to be moved to, Mr. Speaker? That's a good question. Are they going to be moved into the cities? Because they will have the economies of scale with the large seniors' complexes and the nursing homes.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that the seniors in my area want to stay in that area. They don't want to be moved into Regina. And they're not being given the opportunity to transmit that message to this government because the government is putting closure on this issue right now. They're not being given the opportunity to send a message to the government because the government is completely ignoring what is happening in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, all 56 of them, should be listening to what is going on in their own constituencies. And I say 56, Mr. Speaker, because there are 55 government members voting to allow closure to take place in this House and there is the independent member, Mr. Speaker, who was voting to allow closure to take place in this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, each and every one of them should go out into their communities. And if they happen to live in

Regina or Saskatoon, they should go out and visit one of the rural constituencies that is having its hospitals closed.

Perhaps they should go and visit with the member from Bengough-Milestone because every one of the hospitals in that constituency are being closed, Mr. Speaker — every one of them. Not a single hospital left in that constituency when the Minister of Health gets her way.

Perhaps they should go and visit with the member from Assiniboia-Gravelbourg.

An Hon. Member: — The guy that was going to build hospitals.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Yes, that's right, the man who was promising to build hospitals in his constituency. Mr. Speaker, there are three hospitals being closed in that constituency — three hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, closure is wrong. The use of double closure is doubly so, Mr. Speaker. There are not words to properly express the indignation that the people of Saskatchewan feel with what this government has done today. It's a condemnation on the democratic process, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Neudorf: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Like other members before me, I rise with no great sense of happiness or excitement to participate in the limited amount of time that we have in debate on this particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is well for citizens of this province to note that in the short period of one and a half years, this government has already seen fit to bring forward some form of closure and superclosure on no fewer than six separate incidents, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm sure that many people would agree with me when I would say that the jackboots of authoritarianism are ringing louder in these halls than even that of the bells, Mr. Speaker. Dictatorship, authoritarianism — whatever you want to call it — democracy is in jeopardy in this institution.

Now I could, as some of my colleagues have already done . . . we have a booklet here of quotes of many, many, many pages — dozens of pages — from members' opposite eloquent speeches when they were on this side as government members, and now are doing as the Premier does on a consistent basis, do exactly the opposite of what they always said that they would do.

And, Mr. Speaker, I predict, and I tell members opposite, that these days will go down in infamy and their record will be one of dismay when they read back in times in the future, when they harken back to the past, to see the legacy that they have left.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is obvious to people in this province the reason why this government, in a panicky type of mode, decided that they had to put

closure on; that they had to muzzle, muzzle this legislature — muzzle the members in opposition and thereby, Mr. Speaker, muzzle the people of this province so that their voice could not be heard.

And there's a reason for that, Mr. Speaker, and the reason is simply this. They could not afford to let the people of this province speak out. They could not afford to waste any more time. Because, Mr. Speaker, they full well know the momentum that is building in this province — the momentum that began in rural Saskatchewan and is, even as I speak, spilling over into urban Saskatchewan — the momentum of opposition where people are crying out for that opportunity for their voice to be heard. And, Mr. Speaker, that voice has been stilled. That voice has been muzzled.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon during the presenting of petitions I read into the record rather a unique petition, Mr. Speaker. That petition being that from the city of Nipawin — the town of Nipawin — where the mayor, simply in frustration, wrote on behalf of the citizens of Nipawin a letter to us as the opposition to pass on to the legislature, through the petition route, their objection to the mode operandum, the way which this government has decreed they want to get this legislation jammed through; the mode that this government has used, pardon me, in order to get their way stilled.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to assure the people of Saskatchewan, to assure the people of Saskatchewan that this battle is not over. We may have . . . or the war is not over, Mr. Speaker. We may have lost a battle; we may have lost a skirmish in this particular incident, Mr. Speaker, but the war that the people . . . that this government is waging upon the people of Saskatchewan is not over.

(1715)

And I will take this opportunity also, Mr. Speaker, to urge the people of Saskatchewan that while the voice of the opposition may have been stilled in this legislature, that the jackboots have won momentarily, that they still have the opportunity to make their voice heard. The people of the province still have the opportunity to come into Regina, to come into the steps of the legislature, to come into this legislature and personally deliver a message to Mr. Premier, to the Premier of this province, to the Minister of Health, personally come on Wednesday of this week — the day after tomorrow — to deliver a message to these unhearing, uncaring people.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, that they can deliver that message personally because a message has to be delivered. We see the hypocrisy of this government, Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy where we have just had the Minister of Health announce that the children's dental plan, as an example, is history.

Oh, but not complete history, not complete history, Mr. Speaker, because there has been an exception made. There has been an exception made for the

Premier. There has been an exception made for cabinet. There has been an exception made for government members, and all, in fact, members of this legislature, Mr. Speaker, where we all of a sudden are of special stature in this province. We will have our families protected in the new dental plan, but not the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

The people of the province are going to be asked to foot the bill. I am now a person of special stature. I am an MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) and the Premier says all MLAs and their families will be covered, and we're going to ask the rest of the people of this province to pay for that dental.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's double standard. That's a double standard, and that is also a multi-tiered health system right there. And I don't see and I don't think that the people of this province are going to stand for that. I think their voices will be heard. I don't think they're going to be muzzled. And I'm proud to stand in my place today, Mr. Speaker, and announce to you that this official opposition, the official opposition and our official opposition caucus staff, have unanimously agreed that we will not participate in a plan like that. We are not going to participate in double standards. We are going to refuse to participate in that stand, in that plan, Mr. Speaker.

And I hope that the Government House Leader will see upon it himself, and the Premier, to persuade his Minister of Finance, to persuade the Minister of Health to do away with such an ill-conceived plan. Because, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly, we will certainly not participate in that. And by leading the way, we hope the government will follow suit, Mr. Speaker.

I had an interesting weekend, Mr. Speaker. As you may be aware, I had an early exit on Friday from this legislature because I stood up for what I believed at the time. Now what happened to me when I got home around 4 o'clock or 4:30, I had a phone call waiting for me. And this phone call, Mr. Speaker, came from my party, my constituency president, as a matter of fact, and the message was this — listen: we the executive would like to see you at our meeting hall for breakfast on Saturday morning.

By the time I got there on Saturday morning the meeting was almost ready to start and there were 22 of my inner executive, what we call, at the meeting already, and of course I didn't know what to expect. And when I walked into the door, Mr. Speaker, they started to clap.

An Hon. Member: — Standing ovation.

Mr. Neudorf: — Well I don't want to exaggerate. It was not a standing ovation, but they did clap.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm a political animal, as most of these people are here, so it did me some good to know that my efforts were appreciated. But then I said to myself: but this group of men and women here are also politically inclined so maybe their reasoning is a

little bit off . . .

An Hon. Member: — I think so.

Mr. Neudorf: — Ah, the Government House Leader says he thinks so.

When I went out into the constituency, Mr. Speaker, I can say to you that not one individual that I met said, you shouldn't have done that. Not one. Not one. That was basically the message that was delivered to me. Somebody's got to stand up to these guys and gals. Somebody has to stand up to them.

And that, Mr. Speaker, makes me all the more sure. And if that happens in my constituency . . . and the Minister of Education is there, she knows what my constituency is like — like many of the others, but maybe a little bit more so on the soft side, and why they have ever elected me . . . Sometimes I wonder too if that's the case, Mr. Speaker.

But that was the reaction of the people that I met. And that convinces me more than ever that what we are doing as an opposition here is the right thing — delivering a message that the people of this province have asked us to deliver. Slow walk this they're telling us. Get the government to realize that they're moving too quickly, that they're offloading funding, they're offloading responsibility, and the people don't like that. They've asked us to deliver that message. We have done our best. We have done our best.

And I am sure that when Wednesday rolls around, when Wednesday rolls around, I say to the Government House Leader, the people will do the rest. The people will speak. They wanted that opportunity. They will get that opportunity. And this Bill will not, Mr. Speaker, and I say this again, this Bill will not be voiced, talked about in any manner, until the people have spoken on Wednesday.

This Bill is history until next week Thursday . . . or this week Thursday. Because at this time, Mr. Speaker, I request, pursuant to rule 55(1), that Bill 3, An Act respecting Health Districts, be hoisted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member from . . . at the request of the official opposition, under rule 55(1), proceedings on Bill No. 3, An Act respecting Health Districts, are hereby suspended for three days' sitting, beginning immediately.

The debate will continue on the motion before us.

The division bells rang from 5:22 p.m. until 5:26 p.m.

Motion agreed to on the following recorded division.

Yeas — 20

Thompson	Lyons
Lingenfelter	Murray
Teichrob	Hamilton

Solomon	Johnson
Kowalsky	Whitmore
Mitchell	Sonntag
Upshall	Roy
Hagel	Crofford
Bradley	Stanger
Lorje	Knezacek

Nays — 5

Swenson	Boyd
Devine	Haverstock
Neudorf	

The Assembly adjourned at 5:28 p.m.