

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session – Tenth Legislature
39th Day

Tuesday, March 25, 1947

The Assembly met at 11:00 o'clock a.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION – TIMBER WOLF BOUNTY

Mr. L.W. Lee (Cumberland) moved, seconded by Mr. Harris (Torch River):

That this Assembly commend the Saskatchewan Government for its policy of paying a \$25 bounty on timber wolves, and request the Government to make representations to the Government of Canada urging assistance to the Provinces in their efforts to reduce the ever increasing loss of fur, big game and domestic stock by payment throughout the Dominion of a bounty of \$25 on timber wolves, in addition to the amounts now being paid by the affected provinces for the destruction of these predators, or, in the alternative, by the payment of a uniform bounty of not less than \$25, throughout the Dominion, to be shared on a 50-50 basis by Provincial and Federal Governments.

He said: About two years ago there were complaints about the timber wolf increase but to date apparently very little has been done by the Federal Government about it. The menace since then has become more desperate. In fact, it has become so desperate that the Provincial Governments throughout the Dominion have been forced to pay bounties out of their Provincial Treasuries. As we know, the Saskatchewan Government leads the rest of the provinces in raising the bounty from \$10 to \$25 a head and other provinces have recently followed the footsteps of the province.

The situation in the North in regard to big game and fur is definitely critical today. That is, it is coming to the point where our big game as well as fur is going to become extinct unless we do something about it and do it quick. The reason for the increase in the numbers of timber wolves is quite hard to diagnose. There are a number of things that enter into it that could have a bearing on it. One thing that, no doubt, would have a bearing on the increase of timber wolves is the fact that fur in the last few years has been of very little value. At one time, about six years ago, their pelts were selling as high as \$25 or \$30 a piece. At that time when the fur was valuable the trapper made a special effort to catch and get these timber wolves for the value of their hide. However, the last three, four years, the pelts have been practically valueless, so that the initiative to trap them hasn't been there, simply because it wasn't profitable and a timber wolf is a large animal, he is not to be compared with the coyote at all. His habits are very different from the coyote. The coyote will usually have a certain area that he will stay in for months at a time, maybe for a year, where the timber wolf might be in Saskatchewan today and a week from now in Alberta. He might

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travel right across the Dominion so that they are much harder to control, they are harder to trap and we know today that they are definitely a menace right across the Dominion. We notice in our sport magazine in Quebec and Ontario, guides, a few years ago used to take 10, 15 or 20 hunters back in the bush in the fall and each hunter came out with an animal, a game animal. Today, or the last couple of years, they're coming out empty handed and they are blaming it onto the timber wolves. The timber wolf has depleted the animal down to the point where they simply aren't there. And it is not only the big game. Out in British Columbia there are thousands of dollars worth of damage caused to livestock, sheep and poultry. The British Columbia Federation of Agriculture made a survey last year in co-operation with the Beef Growers Association, the Sheep Growers Association, the Registered Trappers Association and the Fish and Game League and a number of other associations. This survey shows that the timber wolves were definitely getting to be such a menace that it was forcing ranchers to go out of business; that is, they were thinking of selling all their stock on account of the great losses from timber wolves. As a result of this survey, they sent in a resolution to their Provincial Government asking for a bounty of \$50 per head for timber wolves. To show what a menace they have become, the same resolution only asked for \$40 on cougars, and cougars have become very numerous in the last few years in British Columbia and they asked for a \$5 bounty on coyotes. Since that time, in fact quite recently, the British Columbia Government raised its bounty from \$10 to \$20 on timber wolves.

It is not only big game that suffers for the trappers are suffering all through the Dominion, in a loss of fur. A timber wolf won't pass off any animal at all. If he gets the chance to get a hold of them and tear them to pieces he'll do so and especially a fox. He delights in chasing fox and catching them and then tearing them all to ribbons. If he is hungry enough he might eat some of it but in most cases he just simply tears them all to pieces. And a timber wolf, or a pack of timber wolves will follow a trappers line and will destroy every animal that they come to in those traps that are still alive. So some of the trappers in the North lose as much to the timber wolf as they catch or are able to sell in fur. In other words, some of them lose almost half their catch to timber wolves.

Another thing that might have some bearing on the increase of timber wolves is the fact that in the last few years the rabbits have been very scarce in the North. As we know, rabbits increase and die off in cycles. They are affected with a disease about every six to seven years and they die off and at these periods you can travel for miles through the North and never see a rabbit track at all. However, after they have died off, it seems as though the disease leaves them and they start on the increase and in the matter of three or four years there are rabbits everywhere. They increase very rapidly. During the last two years rabbits have been very scarce in the North. In fact, you could travel for miles and never see a rabbit track at all. There is no doubt that because the rabbits have been so very scarce the wolves have been forced, in order to survive, to go after the big game animals; and we know that it takes more than two or three pounds of steak to satisfy a wolf's hunger. He is a large animal and we've found quite a few cases where two or three of them would kill a deer and not leave anything but the bones, the horns and a little bit of hair so we know what they can devour at one time.

Another thing in regard to the rabbits that might have a tendency to keep them scarcer than they have been in the past, the rabbit's hide up until a few years ago wasn't worth anything. Today in the North on account of the scarcity of the fur, the trappers have gone after the rabbits and are killing the rabbits for the pelt. The pelt today is worth from 25 cents up to a dollar. If a trapper can catch three, four hundred rabbits it will just about keep him over a year, that is, in food. So that might have some bearing on the scarcity of rabbits. I know it definitely has on the squirrels. We used to find that the bush in the North was full of squirrels. You could hear them chirping and running all over. But since their hide became valuable today you can travel for miles in some areas of the North and never see a squirrel at all simply because they have been trapped out by the trappers.

To prove that just what effect timber wolves have on big game, in the Banff National Park some years ago, they didn't bother to have any hunters or trappers in the park to put down the wild animals, as a result of that the timber wolves increased to the extent that the game animals within the park were almost extinct. Then they sent Government trappers and hunters in these and killed off the timber wolves and immediately the game increase began in a few years, almost to the point of being a nuisance, so that definitely shows that by controlling the timber wolves we can increase the big game animals.

Now, we are doing everything possible in the province, other provinces are doing likewise, to increase the beaver population. We've come to realize that the beaver is one of the greatest animals we have in the forest, that they serve in holding up the water levels and almost every province has passed laws to protect and preserve and increase the beaver. The beaver is a delicacy to the timber wolf and reports coming in from various provinces indicate that the timber wolves in many places are living on these beavers. The province is passing laws, putting on high penalties against men who catch the beavers and here we let the timber wolf go in and live off the beaver. It doesn't make sense to me. I noticed myself a couple of years ago while driving through the North and inspecting several beaver houses I found one beaver dam and house where the timber wolves had the mud around this pond all tracked up. Apparently they had been camping there and living off these beavers for months. There is very little game in the country. In fact we didn't see any game, so apparently that was the only source of food that they had. The beaver will usually make runways and paths, sometimes two or three hundred yards away from its pond and house into thickets where it cuts down small trees and drags them into its dam and pond. Well, these trails and paths are ideal places for the timber wolves to catch the beaver. All they have to do is lie down along side the trail and when the beaver comes along just jump on him and the beaver is practically helpless when a timber wolf gets a hold of him. So, I'm quite sure we are losing thousands of dollars every year by the timber wolf killing the beaver.

This same situation is apparently the same right across the Dominion. I have noticed in the sport magazine, complaints coming in from the hunting clubs, the guides to the trappers and wardens, so that it is not a provincial or confined to one province alone. In Quebec I have noticed a number of articles. Quebec is noted for being the province of the big moose, the biggest moose heads ever taken out of Canada were supposed to

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come from Quebec. I have noticed in the last two years that complaints from the hunters and guides that they claim that the moose is almost depleted in areas due to the increase in timber wolves. The provinces, most of them, are beginning to realize the seriousness of the situation. Just here the other day Ontario increased their bounty on timber wolves to \$25. Alaska is paying \$30 bounty on timber wolves, \$25 on coyotes. The State of Washington is paying, I think it is either \$30 or \$35 on timber wolves and other states are doing likewise. Alberta has another scheme coming up this year, they intend to hire government trappers and hunters and they are going to try to reduce the number of timber wolves by that method. I know from experience down in the United States that that method does not work out very satisfactorily. It might work out in one area, you might happen to get a good government trapper that knows his stuff and he'll really earn his money in trapping wolves; but as a general rule the bounty or that is the price for heads of timber wolves comes very high in hiring government trappers. We haven't enough expert wolf trappers in the country to make that possible. The best method is to pay so much per head in a bounty and the trappers who already are in the field, and we have them all through the North, if you pay them enough they will get out and they will catch the wolf. They'll eliminate them down to the point where they won't be the menace they are today. Once you get the numbers reduced down to a certain point this bounty then won't amount to anything. It might take two or three years to diminish them and it would no doubt cost a little money for a year or two in doing it, but after that the cost to the Government would be very little.

The fact that the timber wolf is scattered all through the Dominion, up into the North West Territories, this should be a federal proposition or at least the federal government should co-operate with the provinces to eliminate this pest, because the provinces have nothing to do with the North West Territories and we know from reports coming from there that their caribou herds are being reduced considerably the last few years due to the large increase in the number of timber wolves.

I therefore move this Resolution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. J.B. Harris (Torch River): — I believe that the Government of Saskatchewan through the Department of Natural Resources should certainly be commended for the paying of a bounty of \$25 on timber wolves, I mean four-legged ones. I feel sure that a goodly number of people have benefited from a monetary point of view as well as doing a service to the country as a whole by helping to rid our land of these pests. It is unnecessary for me to labor the point just how much loss the timber wolves caused to fur, to big game and to domestic stock. The Hon. Member for Cumberland has very concisely explained and proven the issue, at least in my mind. Therefore, I feel that it would ill behove me to add to the great superfluity of language that is so often imposed upon this Legislature. However, I might say that wolves or their pelts too at that price do not respect provincial boundaries. Wolves are a national menace. They travel from province to province when they're alive and in my opinion the pelts travel from province to province after they've been taken off the carcass as well. Therefore, I believe that it is only just and fair that a uniform bounty should be paid right across the Dominion. Certainly I would like to see a much larger bounty than that paid at present. However, you know there is that old

saying that half a loaf is better than no bread. Well, certainly you will agree with me that half a wolf would do far less harm than a whole one. I am pleased, therefore, Mr. Speaker, to second this motion.

Hon. J.L. Phelps (Minister of Natural Resources): — I wish to speak on behalf of the Government in regard to this Resolution. I think that it is quite possible that many in the House don't appreciate the destruction of the timber wolves in the North. I am sure in my own case I had no idea. I heard them talking about it but it is something that doesn't seem to take effect with us until we have seen it demonstrated and the effect of the destruction of the timber wolves in the North certainly has not been overestimated in my opinion.

At the Wild Life Conference that was held and which the Game Commissioner for the Province of Saskatchewan attended just a very short time ago, a matter of about three weeks, this matter was discussed, the destruction by timber wolves of the game of our north country. The north country is a reservoir for game for the Dominion as a whole and we are becoming keenly aware of the destruction and the depletion of our game and one of the reasons for it, not the only reason, but one of the reasons for it is the tremendous inroads on that game by timber wolves. There are some it's true that argue that you need these predators to keep nature in balance but I'll submit, Mr. Speaker, there is plenty of evidence to prove today that it is out of balance on the wrong side of the ledger. When we take into account that these predators in the North live the year round on the animals that they prey upon it gives us some idea of the tremendous inroads in game, wildlife and fur bearers that is taken every year. So therefore, the need is apparent.

The fact that interprovincial boundaries mean nothing to a timber wolf is also very apparent to anyone and the fact that no matter what we may do in Saskatchewan and that point again was driven home to me most forcibly up on the north boundaries of our province last summer. No matter what we do there, the timber wolves come in from the North and the North West Territories which is a virtual breeding ground for timber wolves and is admitted to be. So, therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is apparent that something must be done on a broader basis than simply on a provincial one. There has been some criticism in the House that we have always asked the Federal Government to do things for us but I note this Resolution, Mr. Speaker, is making provision, there are two alternatives provided here and we are making provision and asking the Federal Government to go in on this plan on a 50/50 basis. I think that would be a very fair basis on a proposition of that kind. I think, Mr. Speaker, that if an all out effort was made, I do not think we can eradicate them entirely, in fact, I don't expect anyone hopes to do that but we certainly could bring those predators to a point where they would certainly be under control. As I have said before, if we are going to protect our game there is very little use of us spending a great deal of money on conservation and development programs and have a group of predators of this kind preying on them all the time.

Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, the Government took things in its own hands a short time ago and declared a bounty of \$25 apiece. I mentioned to the House once before that so far as I'd be concerned I'd be prepared to go even further than

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that. I think that at the same time the House would recognize that the first two or three years, possibly four or five years would need an increased appropriation to take care of it but then the experience has been where countries adopted that plan that it soon begins to taper off and you get down to a fairly stable level. But I believe we've got to have something more, Mr. Speaker, than a bonus. If you are going to pay a bounty for timber wolves or coyotes it must be high enough to provide an incentive for people to go out and destroy them, to hunt them, otherwise, all you have is just a bonus, you give a person just a little bit more for a thing that he was going to get anyway. That isn't going to reach the objective. I say, you've got to make it high enough to induce people to go out and actually hunt them.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of suggestions made that the Government employ so-called professional hunters. I don't know what group of people would fall in that class but people who would be trained and on government payroll. Mr. Speaker, from my point I would not care to experiment with an idea of that kind. I would rather believe the proper people to carry on that work, assist in the eradication of predators are the residents or the people in the area concerned and certainly they are the ones that should be given encouragement to assist us in this program. I would like to say that the success attained so far has been very encouraging. It has cost quite a sum of money it's true but I certainly never have any hesitation on signing an authorization for the payment of timber wolf bounty. The method we have of paying so much for timber wolves the year round irrespective of the condition of the pelt is certainly an inducement and I might cite to the House a case when I was up North last summer visiting Stoney Rapids where we saw quite a stack of timber wolf pelts. The hides had been taken off and they were in there to get their fifty dollars. So far as we were concerned we were glad to pay fifty dollars for a timber wolf pelt before they had done any tanning than we were to pay fifty dollars for a prime skin. Therefore, as I say, it has worked out very satisfactory and governments have found that it is better business to pay the bounty and take the fur on which the bounty has been paid. There are not the opportunities then for any miscarriage in regard to the operation of a bounty under a plan of that kind. I would report to the House that our plan at the present time has worked out very satisfactory indeed. Mr. Speaker, on my part and on behalf of the Government I would certainly associate myself with the motion before the House and I would commend the Members for the North on bringing it to the attention of the House. I think they have done a service to the province and to the wildlife of Saskatchewan as a whole and I think the Members should be informed of the problems of that north country.

Motion agreed to.

RESOLUTION – PRAIRIE FARM ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. G.H. Danielson (Arm River) moved, second by Mr. Patterson (Leader of the Opposition):

That this Assembly recommends to the Government of Canada that consideration be given to amending subsection (b) of section 7 of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act to provide that farmers, resident in an ineligible township which is adjacent to an eligible township

and whose average yield of wheat is eight bushels or less per acre, shall be entitled to the benefits of the Act.

He said: I think on many occasions we have been dealing with this particular subject and just the same I make no apology for bringing it up again. The administration of the PFAA in western Canada for the application of the Act has been of tremendous benefit to the farmers in the three western provinces. Nevertheless, there are certain inconsistencies and certain difficulties in the administration of that Act which makes it practically impossible to do justice in every case and that has been apparent ever since the Act was put in the Statute Books and was applied to the three western provinces. Some amendments have been made to try to overcome these inconsistencies and these difficulties but it has never and I don't think it ever will be applied in the sense that it will be 100 per cent equal and just in every case.

A few years ago there was some amendment made to the Act which permits this where there is a bonus area, (that means a basic township included in the bonus and qualified for the bonus) but you could go into the adjoining township. If you could find there a block of one-quarter of the township or nine sections which would lend itself to block out on rectangular lines, (the outside boundaries must be straight, there couldn't be any jog in the lines) to take in any particular section and so on there must be rectangular lines through that nine section block, that was the minimum. Of course, you could have more. You can have two blocks in one township or three if you can get it on that basis which I have stated. Of course, in every case the average yield within that block must be eight bushels or less on the acre. Now, that has improved the Act to some extent. I think it has benefited the farmers to some considerable extent but nevertheless, as we go on and get more experience in the application of this provision of the Act, we find from year to year that it caused a great deal of discrimination and injustice.

Therefore this amendment has been prepared which simply asks that subsection 'b' of section 7 be amended to provide that where you have a basic township qualifying as a bonus area, the board or the inspector would be permitted to go into the adjoining township where you have an area of that particular size and adjust all farmers within that adjoining township on an individual basis. That means that you have nine sections where you might get a block. But that there are many other farmers outside that area who are in just as bad position or whose crop is eight bushels an acre or less, you could go all over that township and adjust the individual farmer on the basis of that township and adjust the individual farmer on the basis of his crop. He might qualify under the eight bushels an acre for the bonus, now that would be a remarkable advance in equalizing and giving justice to the farmers on the prairies.

I am not going to spend any more time, Mr. Speaker, I could go into many things in regard to this Act, the operation, the amounts of benefits and so on, that it brought to the farmers but I am not going to do that. I only ask the House to support this Resolution because it is a step in the right direction. It doesn't go all the way but I think if you are ever going to get that Act to operate 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker, you will have to put the whole administration of that Act on an

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individual basis. There are certain almost insurmountable difficulties in the road of doing so and therefore I have great pleasure in moving this Resolution.

Debate adjourned on the motion of Mrs. Trew.

SECOND READINGS

Hon. L.F. McIntosh (Minister of Co-operation and Co-operative Development) moved second reading of **Bill No. 88 – An Act to amend The Co-operative Associations Act.**

He said: In this Bill the amendments proposed to the consideration of the House make provisions for the setting up of certain types of a federation of –co associations. In recent months the Co-operative Wholesale Society has laid out a plan for regional lumber yards, lumber yards that will service a number of local –co associations within a given district or a given region. These will be known as a federation of local co-operative associations for the purpose of handling marketing, distributing lumber and building materials. The same principle applies to regional petroleum associations, a given number of local co-operative associations could under these amendments set up a regional distribution of petroleum products. These amendments also, this Bill rather also makes provisions for labor co-operative associations, co-operative associations for the handicapped people such as the blind and it also clarifies the position of the co-operative association in regard to the purchasing and selling on credit. It makes provisions also for the co-operative associations to take out mutual or death benefits and superannuation for their members and their employees. It makes provisions also for the dealing or handling of the distribution of unallocated surpluses in the event of a co-operative winding up business or going into liquidation. With that brief explanation, Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in moving second reading of Bill No. 88.

Mr. G.H. Danielson (Arm River): — There are a few points in this Bill that I would like to touch on and that is the one that concerns the winding up of an association. I notice that the Minister has only gone half way. He has only picked out associations which are of a benevolent or non-profit type such as community halls, other things of that sort. Proper provision is made for the taking care of any claim, any outstanding shares or any liabilities and all that sort of thing. I have no fault to find with the provision in the amendment which proposes that assets are not needed to cover all liabilities and claims against associations including the invested capital. I think its along the right line and I am sorry to say that the Minister has not gone all the way and applied it to any co-operative organization the money must be provided in the community, it is all provided in the community and the benefits and the development of that organization are tied up with the community. Anyone who put a little money in there has done so to service himself. He has, if the provisions of the Act have been complied with, received during the years a certain nominal interest on capital invested. He has received a certain over-charge more for goods than what the actual handling charges, taxes and so on, overhead of different kinds were needed to carry on. Now after all these things are taken care of, why

should not provision be made for all co-operative organizations of this type, I don't mean wholesale and producer co-operatives, but I mean consumers co-operative associations in case a winding up becomes necessary to benefit under this Act.

As a matter of fact, I don't mind telling this House that in our association in the town of Davidson, we made a provision for that four or five years, I think about four years ago, and we have had bylaws approved unanimously by all the patrons and shareholders of that association and we are quite a large institution, Mr. Speaker. The last two years we took some \$450,000 in business; \$432,000 during 1946, so we are really not a small association. We have quite an asset there, but if the day should ever come that winding up of the association should be done for some reason, provisions are made in our bylaw, approved as I said unanimously by all the shareholders, I think it is four years ago, that after the bank loans or all outstanding obligations have been taken care off, the capital invested and loaned capital paid back to the patrons and the members of that organization, the rest goes toward a community fund, or will be used for scholarships to young men and women in that particular community, taking in the boundary which that association is serving.

Now, this Bill, in this amendment here – why should it not go all the way and then, Mr. Speaker, I think we could say that we are on a really sound co-operative basis and I regret to say that hasn't been done in this Bill. I think it should be done.

Hon. L.F. McIntosh: — I share the Hon. Member's sentiments in relationship to a co-operative which is or should be a non-profit organization. The co-operative which the Hon. Member for Arm River had reference to, I think if I recall correctly was organized in 1914 and it is going and working its way towards its 35th birthday. I think possibly if all co-operatives in the province had been operating for a substantial number of years it may have been possible to have carried on all the way in respect to the distribution of any surpluses that have not been allocated. However, we have a very substantial number of new co-operative associations and they are being organized continuously and they were not agreeable to going the distance in which the Hon. Member for Arm River suggested that the co-operative organization should go in the allocation of any surpluses that are not allocated to the individual members. So we felt that this would be a step in the direction in which we hope to see all the co-operatives moving in the not too distant future.

Motion agreed to and Bill read a second time.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:00 o'clock p.m.