

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session – Eleventh Legislature

Friday, March 25, 1949

The Assembly met at 3:00 o'clock p.m.

EXPRESSIONS OF SYMPATHY

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, two of our members have recently been bereaved and I thought I would just like to say a word about it, and I am sure the House would like to join with me in offering to them our deepest sympathy.

The mother of Mr. J.W. Horsman, the member for Wilkie, as most members know, just recently passed away. She was born in 1858, was married to Mr. David Horsman in 1880, and came to Saskatchewan in 1907. She is survived by five daughters, 40 grandchildren and 31 great-grandchildren. Not many people have the pride of looking back on a record such as this. Her husband died in 1939, and Mrs. Horsman just died recently. I felt, Mr. Speaker, you might, on behalf of the House, write to the hon. member expressing the sympathy of the House and offering our condolences.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Hon. L.F. McIntosh, also has lost his father-in-law, Mr. Robert Jones, who came to Canada from Ireland in 1890, and who worked on a farm in the Brandon district, and later joined the Canadian North West Mounted Police. In 1897 he was chosen to be with one of the detachments of the Canadian North West Mounted Police going to England to the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. He spent some time in the Yukon with the force. He was a veteran of World War I, member of the Prince Albert police force, and later employed by the dominion government in the Excise and Customs Branch, and retired about ten years ago. He was active in the Masonic Lodge, and he, too, passed away this week. His funeral will also be held tomorrow. I thought the members would want to join in expressing to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the member for Wilkie, our deepest sympathy at their bereavement.

Mr. W.A. Tucker (Rosthern): — On behalf of those on this side of the House, we would like to be associated with the words of the Premier in expressing sympathy to these colleagues of ours who have been bereaved.

As the Premier said, in regard to our colleague, Mr. Horsman, his mother certainly has, in her lifetime, made a real contribution, as so many of our pioneers have done, to the building up of our province. Although she was over the age of 91 I understand she was in full possession of her faculties right until the time of her death. Certainly, we do extend our sincere sympathy to her son who is one of our colleagues.

We also wish to join with the Premier in extending our sympathy to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Mr. Jones, obviously, was another great pioneer in this province of ours. It seems to bad that these pioneers, who

joined in laying foundation must pass on. At a time like this we realize that only those who are bereaved know the extent of their bereavement and sorrow, but we do try to share with the, and extend to them our sympathy.

SECOND READINGS

Hon. Mr. Nollet moved second reading of Bill No. 107 – **An Act to assist Conservation and Development of the Agricultural Resources of Saskatchewan.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, I believe that this particular Bill warrants taking up a bit of time to, first of all, point up the need for this type of legislation, as well as to point out some of the principles contained within the Bill itself.

In my opinion, the Bill before the House is a most opportune and noteworthy step forward in dealing with the basic problems of agriculture in Saskatchewan. This type of Bill, I believe, is even of prior importance to the rural electrification Bill which was passed two days ago. In that, reference was made, as you all recall, by the hon. Minister of Public Works, in charge of the Power Commission, that the density of rural populations and the productivity of soil had a very important bearing and relationship to power development in the rural areas of Saskatchewan. As a matter of fact, when one views the entire problem, particularly with reference to our own province, one can readily understand the fundamental importance that the economy plays in the permanency of the social services that are being made available to our people in increasing quantities and of increasing quality. In my opinion, the expansion of many services, not only power, but highway construction and social services generally, are going to depend to a large extent upon the success and stability of our agricultural industry in Saskatchewan.

First of all I want to say that all of this goes back to the soil itself. I should, therefore, like to draw the attention of this House to the great need for people to pay more attention to the fertility of our soil. In other words, to become more soil-minded. The people in the United States have been brought up with a very sudden start, and a rude awakening, to the fact that much of their land resource has gone down the great Mississippi drainage basin to the Gulf of Mexico. Agriculturalists from the great country to the south of us tell us that three inches of the topsoil of such outstanding wheat-producing states as Nebraska and Kansas have already been lost. In order to point that up, I believe the best way possible would be to quote an outstanding botanist at Oberlin College of Agriculture in Ohio. This particular state, I believe has a more serious problem of soil depletion than perhaps any other state in the Union. At one time this state did enjoy great soil fertility. It is most remarkable, in spite of the fact that this continent is still a young continent, our soil depletion and erosion problems are so marked and so far advanced due, I presume, to the fact that we were mechanized at a more early date than any other country in the world, which, in turn, due to bad agricultural practices, has resulted in a whole lot of soil erosion. I would like to quote to the House what Dr. Paul B. Seres of Oberlin College, Ohio, has to say with reference to the relationship of soil fertility, not only to human health, but to the health

March 25, 1949

of animals as well. I would like to put in this plug for agriculture, pointing out to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Public Health, the important part that soil does play in the health of our people. Dr. Seres has this to say, and he begins by talking about the quality of the race horses in the blue grass region of Kentucky:

I don't care to talk about race horses, only to point out the important part that soil has played in that region in developing quality livestock. More and more, agriculturalists are beginning to realize that nutrition plays a more important part in quality livestock than breeding itself. Many place it on a ratio of 75:25; 25 percent breeding and 75 percent nutrition.

No doubt a goodly number of Ohio doctors have attended the Kentucky Derby at one time or another. If so they have been impressed by the beautiful pastures, homes and farm buildings of the bluegrass region. The quality of horses bred there speaks for itself, but the secret of the bluegrass region lies neither in the fine breeding stock, nor in the skill and wealth of the owners; it is to be found instead in the abundant calcium and phosphorus of the soil. Where these have been exhausted, as sometimes happens, the best pedigrees and trainers fail to produce winners.

The situation repeats itself in the phosphate basin of Tennessee, the limestone regions of Missouri and Texas, and the Osage Hills of Oklahoma. In these places livestock is vigorous and people are prosperous. People, too. Yet every one of these favourable areas is surrounded by mineral-deficient soil, and there the contrast is startling. In less than 100 feet one may move from a thriving well-to-do region to the other extreme. Livestock grown on poor soil, just outside the bluegrass, or the other rich areas I have mentioned, is inferior. It exhibits defects in posture development and figures that are unmistakable. The people who live on these inferior soils are poor, a situation often, but unjustly, attributed to the lack of enterprise. The late Carl Blackwell, then Dean of Agriculture at Stillwater, Oklahoma, a man thoroughly familiar with the south, told me that he had repeatedly observed the same defects of posture development and figure in human beings that are found in animals growing in these deficient areas. While Dean Blackwell was not a physician, he was a competent scientist. I may add my own observations support this.

Several years ago I was driven through the region around Spartanburg, South Carolina by a quarry operator. The soils there are derived from granite and are now heavily eroded. Aside from potassium, few of the mineral nutrients are present in any large amounts, even in the topsoil. The low economic status of the eroded land was evident' my guide remarked: 'We have to keep a special table to feed up the workmen who come to us from this territory, otherwise they are physically unable to do a good day's work.' Presently we reached an area that had escaped erosion, and the topsoil, although far from perfect, was still in place. Buildings and fences were well kept. I was told that men who came from these homes were vigorous and satisfactory workmen.

Other indications of the influence of soil that may be noted are as follows: the bone weight of livestock of identical age and breeding may be only one-half of normal in those raised in deficient soils. The calcium content of vegetables and the iron content of milk respond definitely to soil composition. Vitamin C content in tomatoes can be tripled by a trace of added manganese, and vitamin A in apples increased by the addition of needed boron.

I do not feel that it is necessary for me to quote any further to point up the importance of soil fertility to the relationship of the well-being of people who till the soil. I presume while I was reading the remarks of Dr. Seres many of us could cast our minds to many areas of Saskatchewan where we find poor soils, there you find poor people. The soil will only produce as much as the fertility and moisture conditions will permit.

To move a little bit closer to our own problem in Saskatchewan, and to endeavour, first of all, to give you some indication of the area of our province, and some indication of the soil classification of the province on an acreage basis: I think perhaps this is the best way, and the best possible background to provide in order to point out, first of all, the magnitude of the problem we have, and then the great necessity for an expenditure of public money on soil conservation within our own province before it is too late.

I wish to point out that the total land area of Saskatchewan, from north to south, amounts to approximately 161 million acres. It is worthy of note that there are only about 9 million of water in the entire area of Saskatchewan. That is quite striking, particularly when one flies north of Prince Albert, as one immediately gets the conception that at least two-thirds of that country is covered with water. Statistics state that there are only 9 million acres of water out of the 160 million acres of the land area of the province. That points up one important factor very forcibly: that we are living in a moisture-deficient area of the Dominion of Canada. I should mention that there are, out of that 161 million acres of land, about 60 million presently occupied by farmers. When you break down that 60 million acres once again, you find that there are approximately 33 million of the occupied area of the province presently being cultivated. Breaking down again that 33 million acres of cultivated land, we find that there are only about 8 million acres of that soil that can be classified as very good to good wheat land, the rest being moderately good to fair wheat land, which means that we have about 8 million acres of land that we don't need to worry too much about in the immediate future: the type of soil that you have in the Regina plains area. But that means that we have another 25 million acres of cultivated land that is certainly subjected to deterioration of fertility or the lack of restoration of fibre in the soil. That is one reason why we have inaugurated a forage crop programme, in the hope that we can overcome some of the tendencies towards exploiting the soil.

I believe that this tendency towards land exploitation has been aggravated to a large extent because of the type of economy under which our farmers operate in a mechanized way; not only has the operation of the mechanized equipment, under present conditions where you see an ever-increasing price for the implements of production, for the tractors, the combines, the harvesters, the reapers, and at the same time we have an economic situation

March 25, 1949

where there is no positive assurance that the agricultural commodity prices will correspond to the increased capital outlay for our farmers must pay in added cost for farm equipment. This has certainly been the main factor in contributing to the depopulation of our rural areas. There is not use to try to blame this on either the C.C.F. government, a Liberal or a Tory government, or anyone else. I have watched these tendencies and looked over the figures very carefully. It might be of interest to the hon. members to know that at the outbreak of World War II we had a farm population in Saskatchewan of 141,000 farm units; today we have less than 125,000 farm units in Saskatchewan, both being operated by the owner and by absentee owners. So we can see the tendency going on. We can see the spectacle of the more fortunate man enlarging his farm unit, forced to do so because of the increased capital outlay for equipment, and if that process is continued towards larger operational units, certainly it is going to bring in its wake exploitation of the soil. I have always stated that as long as our farmers are exploited, they must, and have no choice but to exploit the soil. If for no other reason, I think that would be sufficient that we ought to think very seriously about a different type of economy in general.

These factors, and other factors too, of human injustice have compelled me to take up the fight, not on an ideological basis so much, but on the basis of facing up to practical problems that we cannot evade, and no administration, whether it calls itself free enterprise or what it is, can much longer ignore the basic agricultural problems, particularly in this province of ours where we have larger operating units than any other province in the Dominion, with the tendency toward every-increasing, larger operational farm units.

A good deal was said yesterday in respect to co-operative farming. In my opinion, this is not a matter of ideologies at all; this is a matter of trying to face up squarely with a practical situation. How are we going to get scientific farm operations on the land? How are we going to enable our farmers to operate more successfully under present conditions and at the same time bring scientific and good agricultural practices and good soil husbandry into the lives of our farmers: I believe that the co-operative method certainly affords an opportunity to do exactly that.

I want to say to the hon. members that in my own department we have all kinds of problems in connection with weed control, soil erosion and all of those things, but I want to say, quite frankly, that if we have more co-operative farms established, such as the matador, we would not have any worries in that regard because here you have a group of people who are organized in perpetuity, and they know that at the end of their lives this unit will still go on and remain intact. They immediately began to think in long-term policies of cultural practices that will retain the fertility of that soil. They are not in a position, to the same degree as an individual farmer, where they are driven to exploit and get just as much out of the soil as possible without something being put back into it. I think it is a very logical answer. After all, the principle of co-operation has been well accepted and recognized by all our farm people in Saskatchewan. We have banded ourselves together for mutual protection against monopoly in a commercial way, and I do think that if this principle of co-operation is good, then it should be like charity and begin at home.

I would like to refer to other problems that are on our doorstep. Before doing so, I would like to point up in the best manner that I think possible the need for spending money on long-term policies and laying the emphasis there instead of expenditures of money on emergency relief. After all, when one thinks of the amount of money that has been spent over the years in this province for relief, that is not solving the problem. The problem has been and is being continuously aggravated. We are always exposed to the hazard of having again to pay out millions of dollars in relief, and it seems to me that we are racing against time in bringing to fruition long-term policies that will obviate the necessity of sending in relief in the form of feed or fodder to deficiency areas. I want to say that the Department of Agriculture is directing its attention more and more to long-term policies, and I intend to deal a little bit more specifically with both the emergency phase of our policies and the long-term policies a little later on, and then, of course, in greater detail, when we are in committee of supply on estimates.

I would like to mention that over the years we have spent in Saskatchewan \$186 million for relief. Now, that is a \$186 million lesson. We should not have to go through that experience again, and expose ourselves to the danger of again paying money for relief. I would like to point out that my own department has been largely a relief department in the past. I just mention, for instance, that in 1931-32 the Department of Agriculture spent \$802,000 on relief; 1934-35, \$4.5 million on relief; 1935-36, \$9,689,000 on relief; 1936-37, \$2,798,000 on relief; 1937-38, \$12,223,000; and so it goes. Even during the war years we spent as high as \$105,000 on relief, mostly for feed and fodder. Now, we just simply cannot go on doing that, and we have been endeavouring, because of all of this experience, to place the emphasis on expenditure of money in policies that we hope will, in the final analysis, do away with the necessity of this type of expenditure.

I mentioned a moment ago that I would try to bring the problem we have in Saskatchewan home in a little more striking manner. I have here a map that has been supplied to me by the Prairie Farm Assistance office, and it is a most revealing map, and I believe that just taking one look at it will save me about an hour of talking. This map will indicate to the hon. members the numbers of times that the dried-out bonus has been paid in Saskatchewan, and in the neighbouring provinces of Alberta and Manitoba. If the hon. members will look at this space here, that is Saskatchewan in the centre, and then when you look over here you will see Manitoba. The average crop failure payments that were made in Manitoba, for instance, in the period 1939 to 1947 – eight years – amount, on the average, from one to two payments in the townships in Manitoba. I think there are two or three townships in Manitoba that have received three and four payments; but then when you look at the centre province of Saskatchewan, it certainly is a striking picture. I have said before, it looks like we have a bad case of red measles. We find areas in here where they have had eight crop failures, a crop failure every year, in that whole period of time. We can move right up here to Turtleford, for instance and see seven crop failures out of eight years. I might say that you can see the soil map of Saskatchewan in these figures right here. The hon. member for Turtleford (Mr. Trippe) will know, for instance, that were they have had seven crop failures, just south of Turtleford, I will bet my bottom dollar that that soil is a light nature. When you look down in the southwest of Saskatchewan, around Fox Valley, Maple Creek, you find the same conditions. What does that

March 25, 1949

mean? It certainly means that we are going to have to make a real expenditure of money, first of all in moisture conservation work conserving all of the spring run-off that we can possibly conserve, and in the way of retaining moisture in the soil through good, sound agricultural practice. The experiments that have taken place at the government Experimental Farm at Swift Current indicate that much can be done in retaining moisture in the soil through agricultural practice and summerfallow methods.

I have had rather discouraging references made in this House in regard to our Agricultural Representative Service. I do not appreciate that too much. Surely the people of this province, and I should think that the hon. members of this Legislature, would recognize the importance of bringing scientific research knowledge to our farmers through an adequate field staff. In our department we intend to emphasize soil work above everything else, and conservation work. We are endeavouring to place great responsibility upon the agricultural societies and other organizations for quality improvement. I would like to see our staff's attention directed more and more to soil conservation, storage of water, the development of small irrigation projects, and most of all, to raising adequate fodder supplies, particularly in those areas that are so exposed. Those are things that we have got to do, and many of these small projects, when developed, will certainly be of the greatest values, possibly of far greater value, in giving agricultural stability than some of the larger ones that we are speaking of. It is primarily the small project, I believe, that will be invaluable in building up reserves of feed, for there is one thing very certain when you think in terms of fodder, that fodder is a commodity, as everyone knows, that is perishable. It is very bulky to handle and to ship. It is our thinking that we should build up these reserves as close as possible to the point of need, in the deficiency areas themselves. Surely the department itself cannot be expected to do all of that work. I would like to inaugurate programmes in which every farmer in the province will be given an opportunity to play a part. The problem is so big and immense that it will take thousands of hands, all working together, to give us a solution. In other words, we have based our policies, as far as possible, on a self-help basis, both the emergency policy and the long-term policy, and we have tried to be consistent by placing the emphasis on self-help. It is only in that direction that we can finally find a solution. In the last two years of operation in our self-help policy, in the emergency end of our programme, we have had very outstanding results, in spite of what has been said in this Legislature. For the benefit of the hon. members, and I don't want to be too critical of the new members, because they perhaps don't understand our policy. You will recall that it has previously been the practice to purchase hay in Manitoba, or wherever we could get it, and then pay some freight and charge some freight to the individual. That certainly led to tremendous cost, not only to the government, but to the individual farmer himself. In order to get over that situation, here is the simple policy we have devised: first of all, we have told our people that in the event of a crop failure to try and scrounge every bit of feed they could lay their hands on within their own district. That is the cheapest feed that they could get. We said to them, and pointed out to them, that often it would be far more economical to cut some of their green cereal crops for feed rather than have it to on and ripen for harvest. This particular extension campaign has brought very beneficial results, particularly this year after the experience of last spring when the winter was prolonged. We have, this year, more surplus hay in Saskatchewan, in this particular crop

failure year, than we have ever had before. We have hay listed with us constantly now, surplus hay that can be resold.

Here is the policy: we state to farmers – first of all, garner every bit of feed you can in your own district, and your next cheapest feed is to take your equipment and move out to feed surplus areas and put up your own feed, and we will pay the freight on the movement of your machinery to the area, and then we will pay half the freight, up to \$3 per ton, on that feed you ship back home again. Many of our farmers have taken advantage of that policy, particularly this year, and they were able to bring home much cheaper feed. Some of them, indeed, have moved feed from the southeast of the province right up to the North Battleford area at a very minimum cost under that particular policy.

The department takes the responsibility of trying to locate the surplus feed areas, and we periodically make up lists and send them out to the deficiency municipalities, listing hay for sale, either standing or that can be put on shares or any other way. We assist the people in the deficiency and surplus areas in getting together, and then we assist them in the moving of their equipment, and then we assist them by way of freight on the fodder brought home. Another policy is, if a particular farmer cannot get away from home to go and out up his own feed, if he will make his transportation direct with any of these people we have listed, we will pay \$2 per ton on the hay he makes all the arrangements for.

Regarding feed grain, we have continued a policy of freight assistance there, too. But I should say, before we leave the fodder, we cut off the assistance in November 1, for a very obvious reason. If you did not have that cut-off date, then you are certainly going to get into difficulties later on if you leave it wide open for the entire winter. We feel a farmer ought to have his hay in his barnyard on November 1, before the winter comes, because when the winter comes, then the seller of hay is in the driver's seat and you are going to pay extremely high prices for it. That is the reason we have chosen that cut-off date.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that there was a reference made, which was possibly made without knowing the facts, by the hon. member for Turtleford (Mr. Trippe). I would like to discourage any statements being made in this House without being able to back them up with facts. It was with reference to starvation of stock last spring in the Turtleford area. I want to point out that we had a similar emergency situation in the states of Nebraska, Wyoming, to the south of us. When heavy snowfalls came, unprecedented climatic conditions came, finally to the extent that the air force, the army and everyone else was called in to bring some measure of relief to cattle starving in that area. According to press reports, millions of dollars worth of livestock perished in spite of the tremendously expensive effort made to try and save many of these livestock from starvation. Last spring, a year ago, we had a somewhat similar situation. To be sure, it was a deficient year as far as feed was concerned, but we have moved tremendous quantities of feed, and we all felt we were in pretty good shape to meet an ordinary winter, but when spring was prolonged, we had the exact situation that developed when you begin to pay freight assistance all winter – you get orders coming in all winter long. Once the snow is deep and the weather is cold, people do not like to go out and bale hay, the roads are blocked and everything else. But I want to say that this statement that was made in this House, like some of the rumours and

March 25, 1949

statements that were being made last spring, were grossly exaggerated, and grew as they travelled. I noticed that the hon. member said in the House that 25 percent of the stock starved in his area. I was reading an article in the St. Walburg Enterprise that said 75 percent of the stock had starved to death. Now, I know that the hon. member for Turtleford (Mr. Trippe) is an honourable gentleman, and I know and hope that he will correct that statement made in the St. Walburg Enterprise. We heard those rumours before, last spring, and we asked the R.C.M.P. to investigate every such report that we received, and we found that although there were some losses of livestock, to be sure, all of the statements were grossly exaggerated. One or two animals perished, in some instances due to illness on the part of the individual, and in more cases due to some disease amongst the animals, right up on his own territory. I have the file of the R.C.M.P. report because we are worried and concerned about those things. I want to say that if ever feed reserves justified itself, it was justified last spring when we were able to throw into the breach 2,000 tons of provincial feed reserves that we had built up ourselves.

In connection with these provincial reserves, this is not the sum total of our programme at all. Here is what we are saying: in the short-term policy, and in the interim period until we overcome some of the re-occurring deficiency, the provincial government is willing to be the third line of defence – mark that – we of the province will build up some reserves too, but we are giving assistance to municipalities to do likewise, in an organized way, and we are telling individuals to play their part by building up reserves in good years to take care of deficient years. We feel that is a good sound programme all the way through. One can readily understand that if the provincial government took full responsibility for supplying all the feed to the livestock in Saskatchewan, it would be a super-human task, an impossible task. For instance, this year we have had some 2,800 tons of feed in reserve from our summer operations. That amounts to an investment of around \$51,000. If we were to build up a feed reserve of 100,000, it could easily run up into \$1 million of a most perishable product, and then we would still have to ship this product to the point of need, and thereby incur heavy expenditures on the recipient. So we are laying the emphasis on building up reserves close to the point of need. In the meantime, we will build up some reserves too, just in case something extraordinary happens. Something extraordinary did happen a year ago this spring, and we were able to fill the breach. Just to show the difficulties in moving fodder, do you know that it took exactly two days to break our way into the Halbrite hangar because of the heavy snow banks? The Department of Highways put their rotary and pushplows there, and we finally had to put out bulldozers before we could actually get through to the hangar to get the hay out some 2½ miles to the railroad. That shows the problem. There is only one place for feed reserve – on the farm, and on a municipal basis, by all means close to the point of need.

I want to go on and say a bit more regarding the long-term policy. It has been inferred that about all we had to show for our efforts to date was some 2,800 tons of hay. We have a lot more to show for our efforts besides that. A lot of this will come out in the course of my estimates, but I would like to point out that we have developed very many projects in community pasture work, land reclamation work, irrigation development, in various parts of the province. I want to point out, too, that last year was the first year that we began this type of operation, when an irrigation and development division was

set up. This year, the estimates provide for a Conservation and Development Branch, an entirely new branch that will have an adequate sum of money allocated to it to do the job necessary to implement a long-term conservation and development programme.

I would like to point out, also, the steps that were taken, leading up to the establishment of the Conservation and Development Branch. You don't do these things overnight. First of all, it was necessary and essential to build up a field staff. As you all know, we now have 36 Agricultural Representative Districts, with an agricultural representative assigned to each district. We now have practically every municipality and L.I.D. organized by way of local agricultural committees to assist the agricultural representative, and to promote and develop projects in the particular rural municipality or L.I.D. concerned. That took a whole lot of organization, and a whole lot of work. The next step was the transfer of the agricultural land from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture. That was accomplished, and that, I think, was a very outstanding step. I don't think there is any other province in the Dominion of Canada where the agricultural lands are all in the Department of Agriculture. Naturally, we felt they should be there as we have the necessary field staff; we are the people who are more vitally concerned with agricultural development than any other department and, therefore, it was deemed essential that the land should go to the Department of Agriculture.

The next step was the transfer of water right to the Department of Agriculture. Since about 96 percent of the water rights work has to do with agricultural development, it was felt that the rightful place for the Water Rights Branch was with the Department of Agriculture.

In addition to that, we have endeavoured to co-ordinate policies throughout the entire department. In other words, we did not want to work at cross purposes. We would like to see all of our branches, and all of our people, headed in the same general direction, directing their activities towards specific objectives, and I think I can summarize our objectives very simply: first of all, we are directing our efforts, through soil conservation work and working with the soil, better soil management, water conservation and all the rest of it, towards obtaining agricultural stability, and then to increase production from our soil resources. It is really in the direction of the latter that I think we can make phenomenal gains in Saskatchewan in increasing our overall agricultural production here. Some time ago I had occasion to read a little back history on the development of agricultural services, and I discovered, lo and behold, that a lawyer actually gave the first impetus towards the establishment of an agricultural representative service in the United States. That is the first time that I know of, on record, when a lawyer actually gave an outstanding contribution to agriculture, but it was only because this lawyer was in ill health he spent a good deal of his time in the country. Going about in the country – in the state of Pennsylvania – he discovered that the farmers were receiving very small returns from their cultivated acreages. I think in his particular area they were only getting, at that particular period of American history, eight bushel to the acre of corn, and he chose this work as a hobby, and by working with the farmers and carrying on research and experimental work he was gradually able to increase the production of these farmers. He finally brought his case to the Department

March 25, 1949

of Agriculture in Washington, where he was received favourably, and that was the origination of the Agriculture Representative Service in the United States. Since then, when one begins to trace the progress of increased agricultural production, it certainly is a phenomenal story. I would certainly love to have more time to trace the tremendous increases that have taken place in agricultural production through the application of science to farm practice. I know my hon. friend for Arm River (Mr. Danielson) sometimes thinks we are wasting time and money on these Agriculture Representatives, but surely he must have a pretty keen appreciation of the scientific benefits that agriculture has received. My big worry is to farm out the knowledge and research that is available at the university, and in the experimental stations, and make that knowledge available to John Farmer himself. Once we get our people soil conscious, once we can begin to have them adopt agricultural practices that will retain moisture and fertility, surely this province will double its agricultural production.

I mentioned at the outset of my remarks that we had 33 million acres of cultivated land. There are 27 million that will never be cultivated. These lands are a tremendous available potential for increased livestock production through re-grassing and otherwise, and I am more concerned with land utilization with reference to these areas than I am to the better soil areas that naturally produce up to the optimum. So we have, Mr. Speaker, a tremendous job ahead of us, and I believe that the added expenditures in my own department for conservation will receive the approval of every member of this House. I know that the policies of the department will also meet with the approval of every member of this House because I believe that the policies are a more practical approach to solving the basic problems of agriculture in Saskatchewan.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some brief reference to the Bill itself. That is the Conservation and Development Act: the purpose of this Bill is to provide an Act which will enable a positive public programme to effectively meet the challenge of conservation. Major tasks in the immediate future of the conservation of our soil and water resources can only be carried out through measures that will allow an organized attack, and the development of an activity which will permit the integration of local interests into a sound action programme, a worthwhile work in protecting our soil from wind and water erosion and promoting irrigation farming, construction and maintaining drainage work, saving the tree coverings of the settled portion of the province from wanton destruction, reclaiming misused land for farming, and for the economic improvement of our agricultural industry, guiding settlement and establishment of sound farm units, can only be fully expected when the responsibility for the introduction of such programmes is assumed by local representatives of the settlers chiefly concerned, and the means provided whereby works which may be required may be undertaken and maintained. In recent years there has been a strong public demand for a course of action which will enable the public to undertake conservation of water and soil resources and provide for the maintenance of works which have that or may be undertaken as a responsibility but does not provide an authority requiring the execution of this responsibility. The Drainage Act: The Drainage Act maintenance was deemed to be the responsibility of the municipality in which the drainage work was located. The Act requires that the drainage installation shall be maintained and kept in repair by the municipality. The municipalities, however, are not responsible to any authority for maintenance and repair of such work, with the result that they are generally not maintained and not kept in repair. That, Mr. Speaker, has been our experience as far as drainage work is concerned.

During the past two years the province has suffered a loss from one small drainage district alone of approximately \$1.5 million worth of agricultural production. This loss was occasioned by the flooding, during the past two years, of roughly 20,000 acres of good to excellent wheat land. The flooding was the result of drainage installations, on which approximately \$200,000 had been spent over the past 40 years, being neglected and unable to serve the purpose for which they were installed, when climatic conditions required effective drainage in order that the land could be farmed. Organization under the proposed Conservation Development Act will permit a responsibility for maintenance and repair being removed from municipalities to a local authority. The authority will, under the recommendation and direction of the Department of Agriculture, undertake the maintenance of drainage installation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that will suffice to outline the main principles of the Act before us, and with this brief explanation and the details of the Act can be more adequately dealt with in committee, and I again hail this Act as being one great stride forward in agricultural development in Saskatchewan and backed up with the money to do the job. The big kick I get out of the hon. members opposite is that they can never see a fact. They keep saying over and over: "but you are not spending anything for agriculture." When my estimates are down, and I think they have them on their desks now, they should see that we are actually spending 350 percent more for agriculture now than we did in 1944 when the present government replaced the Liberal government in administration.

With these explanations, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 107, An Act to assist Conservation and Development of Agricultural Resources in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. W.A. Tucker (Rosthern): — Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to delay the House very much on this matter, but this whole question is of sufficient importance that I don't think it should pass without at least a word from someone on this side of the House.

With a great deal of what the hon. Minister of Agriculture has stated about the necessity of soil conservation, I am in very hearty agreement. I have read and heard a great deal from experts in this particular line about what has happened in the United States, as he has referred to, in the way of depletion of the soil in the Mississippi Valley due to wind and water erosion. When one considers that the scene of some of the desert areas of North Africa once were the sites of thriving civilizations, and where they once had populous areas the sand now blows and there is nothing but desert with the odd oasis, then it makes one realize the importance of soil to human welfare.

I can assure the Minister that, to the extent that he shows any desire to sincerely work along the lines he has indicated today, in the way of promoting soil conservation and assisting our farmers to help themselves along those lines, he will get the wholehearted support of everyone on this side of the House. I regret that in this, in many ways, good speech he made, he saw fit to bring in something to do with a very controversial question as to whether this can be better promoted by individuals who are hoping to improve their own homes and pass them on to their children, or whether it would be

March 25, 1949

better done by people who are living on a farm owned by a group of people and where they cannot be sure that any of it will be passed on to their children. I am sorry he brought that in because other than that particular thing, I agree with him.

I think that the greatest development comes where people feel they own the property themselves and, if they spend a great deal of work in improving it, they will own it and will be able to pass it on to their children. I have to disagree with him on that, the suggestion that you will get better results if you have your agriculture organized as you have it in the Soviet Union where nobody owns any land. I think the record indicates that the productiveness of our land per farmer is much higher in Canada and the United States than it is in the Soviet Union; and the productiveness per acres is much higher than it is in the Soviet Union. So on that I don't agree with him. I think his speech would have been much more effective if he had left that particular reference out of it.

In regard to the Bill itself, I must confess, because the objectives are so worthy and worthwhile, I certainly was waiting to hear some indication from the Minister as to how those objectives were going to be promoted by the passage of this Bill. That, I think, was what the whole House was waiting on. I think we all appreciated the Minister's speech. He referred to the necessity for soil conservation and the necessity for bringing scientific knowledge to the individual, and I don't think that those things can be repeated too often, and I do not find any fault with the Minister in what he said about that; but I do wish he had gone on and indicated what their programme really is under this Bill. I listened as carefully as I could, and I must say when he got through I was not very much wiser as to what he intends to do when he gets this Bill passed than I was at the start of his speech. And so, I say, I hope when we get into committee he will enlighten us as to what they are going to do.

There is one thing that I thought of the situation in Saskatchewan, that he should have done, and something that must be done by any government that happens to be in power in this province, and that is they must be prepared to give adequate recognition and adequate appreciation of anything done in regard to these important matters, by the parliament of Canada and the people of Canada. There is no doubt in the world that we in Saskatchewan have to have a tremendous amount of help from the rest of Canada in this important matter. P.F.A.A., I think, to us in Saskatchewan has been not only a God-send, but without it I don't see how we would have carried on at all during the last seven or eight years. As the hon. Minister pointed out, in these districts where they have had these payments, seven or eight years in succession, when one thinks of the problem that would have been thrown upon the province and the municipalities if it has not been for those payments going into those districts, one wonders what would have been the state of affairs in those districts. I am not raising this matter in any partisan way.

Mr. Kuziak: — Oh, no.

Mr. Tucker: — Well, I know my friend from Canora (Mr. Kuziak) cannot think of anything else but partisanship, but in this particular thing it is that very thing that

I deplore. This has to be paid by the people of Canada regardless of their political parties. If the government does it, and it is going to be the object of continual sniping and attacks because in some way the Act does not go quite as far as they would like it to go, and so on, there is a tendency for the people in the rest of the country to lose a great deal of their enthusiasm for it. I have heard many people — I can probably speak with a little more feeling in this matter because I sat in the federal House for 13 years and I saw the effect of this continual sniping, by the willingness of other people to vote money that is going to be expended in Saskatchewan in large measure — say, well, you people get into more trouble over P.F.A.A. because you have it and because of the fault that is found here and there with it than if you did not have it at all. I don't say that we should not try to get P.F.A.A. improved. I am in entire agreement with that. We have got as close to putting it on an individual basis as we possibly can, subject to the constitution which says that the Dominion has the power to engage in crop insurance. I do say, in all of these things, regardless of party, we should be ready to work together, to give credit to the rest of the country if they help us out in these measures and we should be very careful not to drive these things too much in the realm of partisan politics. If a government is doing a good job, it does not matter what government it is; we should be ready to give it credit in this particular field.

In Saskatchewan, since the P.R.A.A. was established, there has been somewhere around \$4 paid out for every \$1 paid in by the farmer. It does not help, in regard to getting this Act extended and perhaps the payments increased by having people in the Government of Canada and members of the House of Commons in other provinces here, the people run around the province of Saskatchewan and try to tell the farmers: "You are paying the entire cost of it. Don't give any credit to the government for it, because you are paying the entire cost." Well, that sort of thing, in the long run, like any other form of dishonesty, is not in the best interest of the people who promote it, a provincial or anybody else. I think the Minister is inclined to give credit to the federal government for what has been done along these lines, and I ask him to continue along that line in order that we may get the fullest possible measure of support from the rest of the country for these great agricultural projects which we want them to put through. I try to be always very careful, in speaking about the great P.F.F.A. administration to say it was inaugurated by the government of Mr. Bennett so that it will not be thought, in some way, in speaking about it that there is an attempt being made to claim too much credit for any political party. This thing must have the support of all political parties in order to get the support that we must have for the great programme we should have under the P.F.R.A.

I remember when I was not long a member I had a chance to talk to the late Lord Tweedsmuir who had been through Saskatchewan, over the area that was being reclaimed under P.F.R.A. He had had experience in India and Egypt in that sort of work in building canals in the irrigation and reclamation of the soils. He told me: "You people in Canada don't realize yourselves what wonderful work you are doing under that P.F.R.A. administration." He seemed to be absolutely enthusiastic about the work of re-grassing this land that was blowing around, and stopping it from blowing and the topsoil from being eroded and blown away entirely.

March 25, 1949

Under that programme of the P.F.R.A., great work has been done, and we know that in this province we have got the resources to begin to do otherwise than co-operate with a real programme that we must ask the federal government to put on in regard to the things that the Minister mentioned: irrigation projects, small water conservation projects, re-grassing projects and soil conservation. Those are tremendous projects that require the expenditure of large sums of money, and I think, regardless of politics, we must be prepared to indicate to the rest of the country our appreciation of anything that they may do, and resolve to join together in asking the members of our respective parties in the federal field to realize our special position, and go as far as possible along those lines.

Under the P.F.R.A., I have the report of the Dominion Minister of Agriculture for the year ended March 31, 1948. I have a more recent report, but I could not lay my hands on it at the moment, and I did not want to rely on my memory. I just wish to give some figures to the House as to the great amount of work that has been going on under that Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act. This report says that the water development branch of the P.F.R.A. constructed during 1947-48 some 2,109 projects. This number was made up of 1,804 dugouts, 63 small irrigation projects, and 202 stock watering and community projects. When one realizes that every one of those mean so much in improving the conditions in that one particular area and around it, that is really a great deal to do in one year. It goes on to say: "these projects were distributed through the three prairie provinces as follows: Saskatchewan got 1,465, Manitoba 359, Alberta 285." As the Minister indicated by his map, the extra need of Saskatchewan is being recognized by the amount of work done under this P.F.R.A. work. The total up to the end of last March was over 36,000 projects, both large and small have now been constructed by P.F.R.A. since its inception under the last year of Mr. Bennett's government. There was a grant made at that time, realizing the special problem we have got in the triangle of more or less drought areas, and that work, with the support of all parties, has been extended and pressed forward in the years since. Every advance made is an advance more or less something where we can make that advance and hold it. Each step we take ahead, we make a further step ahead. I think myself that we can feel a great measure of satisfaction in what is done in regard to these projects.

Now, with the new idea of irrigation, where you don't have to level your land, where you have aluminium pipes which are reasonably cheap and one man can handle, carry it, lay it down and connect it up with a pumping unit, we are really going to make much greater use of the water that we preserve and keep from running off than we have ever done before. I talked to farmer who lived alongside small lakes and large sloughs and so on, who are figuring, if they can get help from the P.F.R.A. to buy these irrigation engines and systems, on using the water that is laying on their land without being of any use to them very much ever since they have been farming, and they are going to be able to water considerable areas of land right from the sloughs and lakes that they formerly could not use at all. That is a great thing.

Then of course, I think we are going to get more benefits out of irrigation projects, with this new system, than when we had to level the land and ditch it. I am very enthusiastic about this great development in regard to irrigating by the use of pipes, because it does not mean trying to level your land, particularly in some of the rolling part of the country. The small irrigation outfits, which can be bought now without too great an expenditure of money, if there is a good big dugout constructed and the water preserved, they can be used to make sure that the farmer has a splendid garden, the he never needs to be short of vegetables; it can be used to water a certain number of hardy fruit trees, and there again I think there should be the greatest distribution of the hardy fruit trees that will grow in Saskatchewan. I have taken a great deal of pleasure myself out of planting plums, cherries and hardy apples. It certainly will promote a greater appreciation of our province if children get used to a nice garden in which there are beautiful fruit trees with blossoms in the spring, and later on bearing their fruit. That will be a very worthwhile work, and it is something in which we may very well co-operate together in bringing that amenity to as many of our people as possible. That is why I am so enthusiastic about the question of rural electrification, because if you have a good dugout then, of course, it is even easier to supply the necessary pressure to make use of that water. But you don't need to have rural electrification to have water used like that because a gasoline engine very inexpensively can be used to provide the necessary pressure.

It goes on to say that 23 community projects, having a total storage capacity of 16,000 acre feet, were constructed during the fiscal year, with a possibility of some 3,000 acres being irrigated. Those are distributed over several smaller projects. Then, of course, it goes on to speak of the larger irrigation projects. I notice that the Minister, speaking yesterday on the Matador farm, spoke about the irrigation project and I thought to myself when he was speaking, why could he not have brought himself to give credit to the dominion government, the P.F.R.A. administration, for bringing that assistance to the veterans on that farm; but he coupled the fact that they had a tremendous advantage of the irrigation project, which was put in there as a result of assistance from the dominion government, with an attack upon people who had some part in supporting that programme almost from its inception. I think that it would have been better, and that it would be better in all of this work, to give all the credit you can to people in other parts of Canada who are being asked to vote this money.

In regard to land utilization, the community pasture idea has worked out, I think, even better than most people expected it to do. It reports on this that in the year under review a total of no less than 67,121 head of stock was handled on these community pastures. It says: "The number of patrons who made use of this service was over 5,000. The number of cattle that were pastured were over 58,000." I don't wish to belabour this point, but I do say that a great start has been made in western Canada, and considerable headway has been made along the lines that were spoken about by the Minister. When one thinks of the situation in this southwester part of our province, back in 1938 and 1938, with so much of our area drifting, and the soil blowing around, when one thinks of the community pastures that have been set up, and the amount of land that has been seeded down to grass, and the great progress that has been made in the different water projects, stock watering dams, small dugouts, then I

March 25, 1949

think that we can at any rate have made a good start on this project. I hope and I believe, that the Minister has some very good men in his department, and some very good men in the Ag. Rep Service, and they have got at the heart of the necessity and the importance of going ahead with carrying along this work. The man who has been appointed in charge of P.F.R.A., Mr. L.B. Thompson, is an outstanding man in that sort of work; he is a very able man in public relations, and I am sure he will do all that he can do to see that his department co-operates in the fullest possible measure with the provincial employees in promoting this work. I saw the report of a speech made by Mr. Thompson to the Agriculture Representative Service outlining the work he wanted to do, and indicating to them that he wanted the greatest possible measure of co-operation between the provincial officials and the Dominion officials in extending this great and important work of land conservation, moisture conservation, and dams, and dugouts, and the conservation of our land resources.

I hop when the Minister comes to speak he will indicate in considerable detail, at least give us some substantial idea of what the province feels it can do to make its contribution in regard to forwarding this great work of conserving out great heritage of the rich land we have in our province, and such water as providence has vouchsafed to give to us. If we make use of every bit of it, we have in it a priceless heritage of land and water that providence has given to our province, he can rely on the very ultimate degree of co-operation from everyone on this side of the House.

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a very few brief references before taking my seat again.

I regret very much if I left the impression that I was for taking land away from individuals and incorporating individuals in any type of co-operative farming. I certainly want to disabuse anyone's mind in that regard. This matter of development of co-operative farms is absolutely a voluntary matter, and I was merely point out that I think we should give every encouragement to people to engage in that voluntary type of co-operative association. It is all to the good. I am not so particularly concerned that this would take land ownership from people as individuals; they would have their individual holdings and their individual ownership would be guaranteed to a far greater extent under a co-operative workable arrangement than under the old basis. In fact I argue for the co-operative type of set up to give security of tenure to a far greater degree than the old system, because the records indicate that in 1901, 96.0 percent of the farmers in Saskatchewan owned their farms, whereas today, in 1946, only 56.6 percent of the farmers own their own farms. I am very much alarmed over this tendency towards tenant farming. It means that when you get a tenant farmer, two people are trying to life off the same land that only one family lived off previously. The thing is not economically sound.

I do regret, Mr. Speaker, as I had it in my notes to make reference to the relationship, and the happy relationship, between P.F.R.A. and the new Conservation and Development Branch. This branch is something that the P.F.R.A. has been praying for for a long time because there are certain provincial

responsibilities applied in the Order in Council passed by both governments in June, 1947, that places the responsibility on each. One cannot move without the other. I wanted especially to pay a tribute to the new director of P.F.R.A., L.B. Thompson. If there ever was a man who appreciated the need for soil conservation, or one who almost made a religion of it, it is L.B. Thompson. Our department and other departments are working in a most happy relationship and in co-operation. We are almost working as one staff, each understanding the responsibility of the other. So that relationship is very well established.

I would like to point out, too, that on a lot of these public projects, as the hon. members will know, where governments spend money in order to set land aside either for community pasture or irrigation development, we do have to get some protection against speculation on land values. That is going to be a real problem in connection with irrigation. It is not too pronounced at the moment, but it will become of growing importance.

I would also like to point out – I don't like to say this – in connection with community pastures, that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is very much concerned about the private ownership of land, but that land was formerly owned by private individuals who, unfortunately, settled on sub-marginal lands. To guarantee that that land would be put to the proper use, and as many people as possible would gain benefits from it in perpetuity, it was formed into community pastures, and the individual goes not own it any more, but all of these same individuals are getting greater benefits from it than they ever did before. I, as an individual holder, envy people who put their cattle into a community pasture. They can operate their ranches and their livestock proposition far easier than I can. Sometimes this question of ownership – I don't know if it is so real. We come into the world without any land and without any resources of any kind, and we come from the soil and we go back to the soil, and about all we get out of it when we are all through with it is three feet one way and six feet the other. So there it is.

I think we should be thinking more in terms of good soil husbandry, and get away from the idea of taking as much out of the land as we possibly can. After all, I think life and living consists almost entirely of giving a contribution to society while we are here. We ought to think in terms of the generations still to come, and the things that we do in life are the things that remain after us. The property we own we cannot take, but the actual things we do and contribute do live on forever. So maybe there is going to be a change of philosophy of a whole lot of these things, and I do not think we need to be too disturbed about it.

There is something about the Act, too, that I regret, as I probably did not make it too clear. The importance of this Act lies in the fact that we can apply this Act to almost any type of agricultural development, or any different type in contemplation. For instance, we had a real problem here, and some reference was made to the loss of crops in the Lajord area and on the Scott Rural Municipality, southeast of Regain. We were not able to do anything about it because it involved drainage, water storage, and all of those things. Under The Drainage Districts Act only a municipality is involved. In this case, several municipalities were involved, and we did our best to be of some assistance to them. Under the new Conservation and Development Act we can set up a district and all municipalities concerned can participate in the benefits

March 25, 1949

derived in that particular agricultural development area. It means that we can drain the waters from Lajord and Riceton, carry them down to Weyburn where they can be put to beneficial use, and then below Weyburn we can start them again and use the waters again, possibly in the Souris Valley. That is the purpose of this Act.

It could be applied to a reclamation project such as at Mortlach, and a variety of agricultural projects. It gives us broader scope than existed previously under The Private Ditches Act., The Irrigation districts Act or The Water Users Associations Act. It does give us broad scope, and that is the main purpose, and the main benefits, we expect to derive from this Act.

The motion was carried.

Hon. Mr. Fines moved second reading of Bill No. 114 – **An Act to amend the Hotel Keepers Act.**

He said: Mr. Speaker, in moving the second reading of this Bill to amend The Hotel Keepers Act, I would like to make reference to another Bill which is before the House. The hon. members will recall that in the Bill to amend The Liquor Act there is a section which would have the effect of removing from that Act two sections which prevent the drinking of liquor in hotel rooms except by registered guests. At the time I pointed out that these sections were being violated every day and that it was impossible to enforce them. I pointed out, also, that then intention of the amendment was not to make it easier for drinking parties to be held, but to make it possible for the police to require hotel keepers to follow the regulations of the Act. I regret, however, that, in the publicity which followed, the impression was gained that we were loosening up the Act, whereas the real purpose was to establish a sensible law in order that we could control the consumption of liquor in the hotels.

Since introducing the amendments to The Liquor Act, I have had representations made by the temperance people and by the Hotels Association, both of whom are afraid that the removal of these two sections would take away any control over people engaging hotel rooms in which to conduct drinking parties. I am quite in agreement that there is some foundation for their fears and, consequently, when considering the amendments to The Liquor Act, I shall introduce a House amendment restoring these two sections, but amending them to enable the bona fide guest to use his room as he would use his own home. In other words, the amendment which I shall propose will prohibit drinking in hotel rooms unless they are occupied by a bona fide guest. It will be illegal, under penalty of losing their licence, for hotels to rent rooms for the purpose of drinking parties.

This Bill today, to amend The Hotel Keepers Act, introduces an amendment which should be considered along with the amendments to The Liquor Act. It will make it illegal for anyone to cause a disturbance which will affect the comfort of other guests in the hotel. I also places the responsibility upon

the hotel keeper to see that there is no noise in the hotels, and it will also make the hotel keeper liable to a penalty if he does not take immediate steps to halt any disturbance. These amendments have been discussed with the temperance people, and with the hotel keepers. They both agree that they will give a much greater measure of control than was proposed in the original Bill. It is believed that these proposals will eliminate many of the drinking parties which are taking place in our hotels today. If experience proves otherwise, I shall not hesitate to bring in other legislation at a later date.

I am confident that this Bill, along with the amendments I am proposing to The Liquor Act, will have the support of a vast majority of people who believe in true temperance without destroying individual rights. I would move second reading of this Bill.

The motion was carried.

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