

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Eleventh Legislature
32nd Day

Friday, March 31, 1950.

The House met at 3 o'clock p.m.

ON ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. J.A. Darling (Minister of Public Works): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to reports in the Leader-Post of March 30 regarding remarks which I made in the House on Second Reading of the Power Corporation Bill. If I may just read one short paragraph here with regard to the processing of oil at Prince Albert:

“Freight rates on Bunker C oil, he pointed out, were considerably higher than the rates on crude, hence it was a paying proposition for the Corporation to take over the Prince Albert refinery and process bunker oil there.”

That was followed by an editorial in today's Leader-Post:

“The proposal to purchase the refinery in Prince Albert also may indicate the entry of the C.C.F. Government into the oil business, with broader fields in mind than supplying fuel oil to this local power plant.”

Mr. Speaker, I have here the transcript of my speech, and if I may read what I said in that connection, it is as follows:

“With respect to oil, the processing of oil to provide fuel for use in the Corporation's power plants, I might say at this time that a private company — The Prince Albert Refineries — is constructing a skimming plant on the property of the Power Corporation at Prince Albert, and they are under contract to supply the Power Corporation with Bunker C fuel for use in the plant there. The contract is one which the Board of Directors of the Power Corporation regard as a very favourable one to the Corporation. One of the clauses in this contract is to provide that at any time after this skimming plant has been in operation for one year, the Power Corporation may purchase the skimming plant at cost, less five per cent depreciation.

March 31, 1950

“The skimming plant is situated, as I have stated, on the property of the Power Corporation, and the oil is piped directly from the plant to the power plant. There is no expense for transportation. The capacity of this plant will be limited, but it will, nevertheless, exceed the present needs of the power plant at Prince Albert, and it is quite pointless to have a contract which provides that in the case of an eventuality which made it necessary or desirable to do so, the Corporation can purchase this plant, unless the Act gives to the Corporation the power to dispose of the surplus production of the plant and engage in the process of oil, and, of course, to dispose of the light ends which result from the skimming.”

On orders of the Day:

Mr. J. Benson (Last Mountain): – Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with I would like to draw the attention of the House to what I consider to be a rather important matter, so far as the province of Saskatchewan is concerned. You all know that we have had a livestock exhibition in Regina here during the last few days, and I want to refer to some of the wins that have been made by some of the residents of the constituency of Last Mountain.

First of all, ten-year old Wayne Murray, of Gibbs, won the Junior Calf Club championship. Wayne also won the Aberdeen-Angus special award for junior classes, and also the Robert Sinton beef cattle trophy for the championship steer or heifer fed and exhibited by a boy or girl. He ran second for the cup presented by Burns and Company Limited, for the champion Aberdeen-Angus beef animal of the show. He sold his steer, which weighed a thousand pounds for \$560.

I want, also to refer to Neil Murray, of Gibbs, Saskatchewan, who exhibited the grand champion Aberdeen-Angus bull, “Craven Revolution Lucifer,” and this bull was sold for \$760.

I want, particularly to refer to William Harrison, of Dafoe, Saskatchewan. Dafoe happens to be in the constituency of Wadena, but Mr. Harrison lives in the constituency of Last Mountain. Mr. Harrison came to this country as a young man from Cumberland, England. He happened to be born in the same community where I was born, so I have a particular affinity towards him. Now, Mr. Harrison is a topnotch shorthorn breeder in this province. In the Regina show, 1949, he won the grand championship with his shorthorn bull, “Norse Gift”. In the present Regina show he won first in senior yearling class with his shorthorn bull, “Norse Pride”. He won first in the intermediate yearling class with his shorthorn bull, “Norse Footprint”. He won the grand championship for the shorthorn bull with this same “Norse Footprint”. He also won the Stilborn trophy for the best shorthorn at the show, and he won the Longmuir trophy for the best group of three shorthorns at the show. But this is not all. At the Royal Show at Toronto, last fall,

Mr. Harrison won first for the best shorthorn bull; he also won first for the best shorthorn female; and he also won the grand championship award for the best shorthorn at that show, and in addition to that he won the shorthorn trophy donated by the Shorthorn Society of Great Britain and Ireland. I think this is a record that has never been equalled. I suggest that we owe a great deal in this province to livestock breeders such as Mr. Harrison, who has really put Saskatchewan on the world map so far as good livestock is concerned.

Visit of

The HON. A.A. ROBERTS

High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa

Hon. T.C. Douglas (Premier): – Our province is being visited by the Hon. A.A. Roberts, High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, and I think there is a general feeling in all parts of the House that, since this is his first visit to the capital city of Saskatchewan, he should be given an opportunity of speaking to the Legislature and that the members should have an opportunity of hearing him – especially that he should have an opportunity of speaking while the proceedings are being broadcast so that the people of the province may know something about one of the fellow nations of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Therefore, with Leave of the Assembly, I should like to move, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Lloyd:

That the proceedings of this Assembly be now suspended, in order that the Assembly may welcome the Honourable A. Adrian Roberts, High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa.

The question being put, the motion was agreed to.

Speech of

The HON. A.A. ROBERTS

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, Hon. Members, I want to thank you, Sir, for this honour which you have conferred upon me and my country. I am deeply sensitive of that honour. I was touched by the fact that when I came into this magnificent building of yours, I was met by a guard of honour of Boer War veterans. There could have been no more fitting symbol of the stage at which we have arrived today, than that gesture; that those men who, fifty years ago, went to my little country to fight against my father, that they could, today, extend me the hand of friendship. That I should feel that warm feeling of friendship towards them and that I should be proud to call them my friends, is a very good sign for the future of our Commonwealth.

March 31, 1950

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I am greatly sensitive of the honour which you have conferred upon me by permitting me, by inviting me, in fact, into this sanctum sanctorum of Saskatchewan. I thank you for the opportunity of expressing my sincere appreciation to you and to hon. members and to the people of Saskatchewan for the wonderful welcome which they have given me ever since I came into this progressive province of yours. I had heard a great deal about this hospitality, this reputation for hospitality. In the Free State we also are proud of that same reputation; but I can assure you that when I go back to my own country I shall be able to point to the prairies as the home of hospitality.

I rejoice, also, Mr. Speaker, in this opportunity of conveying to you, Sir, and to this honourable House, the greetings of my Government. I am glad, also, to have the opportunity of conveying a message of goodwill from South Africa to the people of Saskatchewan.

My country is passing through dangerous and difficult times, and it is being subjected to much ill-informed criticism; but, Mr. Speaker, I want to say here and now, we in South Africa subscribe wholeheartedly to those democratic principles which are the mainspring of action and the common objective of our great Commonwealth. In spite of all that you may have heard to the contrary, there is no policy of oppression in South Africa. The effectiveness of our democracy is, in a sense, itself the cause for these disturbing reports that you, from time to time, may hear from and about my country. We have as many critics and as many differing opinions in the Union of South Africa as you will find in any country where there is freedom of thought and freedom to express thoughts. We permit not only that freedom of thought, but we, freely, permit any citizen, any person in the country, to express his opinions and to do his utmost to bring about a change in the policy or the whole of the Government, providing only that it is done by peaceable and democratic means.

I welcome this opportunity, also, Sir, of endeavouring to secure, possibly, a better understanding of those great problems with which we are faced in my country. It would not be fitting that I should go into any great detail, but I do believe that it may be of interest to you and be of value to my country if I gave you some idea of our greatest problem – the one about which you have no doubt heard most – the problem of our mixed population. The Union of South Africa, which comprises an area of some seven hundred and fifty-two thousand square miles, has a population of some 11,400,000 people. Of those, there are some 2,400,000 Europeans. Those Europeans consist, to the extent of about fifty-six per cent, of people of Dutch and French origin largely, and about forty per cent English-speaking; but if I may throw out a suggestion with the presumptuousness of one who has made only a very superficial survey of this great land of yours, I wonder whether that imaginary – I say imaginary – small racial difficulty which I have sensed in Canada between the French-speaking and the English-speaking, whether that would not readily disappear if you put forth what we in South Africa have put forth in an effort to know each other, by learning each other's language throughout the length and breadth of the land about which I have spoken. Every person is entitled to use his own language and to get service from every public servant in either of the official languages –

English or Afrikaaner. I am happy to be able to say that at least eighty per cent of the European population, and possibly more, are today bilingual; but our difficulty comes from the fact that we have, in addition to this comparatively small group which has to supply the skills, the “brains” of the country, the initiative, and which has to bear the greatest part of the tax burden; in addition to this section of the community, we have some 950,000 mixed population – that is what we call the “colours” – descendants of slaves from all over the world. They are rapidly advancing in civilization and are playing a very important role in the country, but they still remain a problem – the problem of continuing to raise them and helping them to take their appropriate niche in the economy of the country.

Then we have more than three hundred thousand Indians who came from India, and who supply, also a good deal of skilled labour, and who include among their numbers very astute business men, but whose outlook on life is very different from that of the Europeans; and they do present a problem because of the almost inevitable friction that arise owing to their feelings towards religion. The future of that section of the community is at the present moment being discussed at roundtable conferences between my Government and the Governments of India and Pakistan. But the biggest problem of all is the problem of the Bantu races and it is perhaps appropriate that I should, even at the risk of boring those of you who have read, possibly, a considerable amount about this subject; it is worthwhile for me to tell you something of the Bantu.

The Bantu consists of 8,100,000 dark-skinned people who were not the original inhabitants of the Union, but who came down in invading hordes, one wave behind the other destroying the wave in front. They are not a homogeneous group; they speak at least ten different, distinctly different, languages apart from many dialects. They have traditional hostilities which prompt them, whenever the opportunity presents itself, of hitting at each other’s throats, even today. For the most part they are completely primitive and illiterate. It is impossible to say how many of them there are, because they come and go into and from the European areas. They supply the unskilled labour. Now that mass presents our great difficulty and we have, for at least a hundred and fifty years, been doing our utmost to raise them to their proper place, which we know they will eventually take in the setup of South Africa.

The present Government is, at the moment, investigating the best means of more positive action in assisting these Bantu races in South Africa, to develop within the thirty million acres of the native reserves which have been set aside for their exclusive use. Consideration of allowing the Bantu and the Europeans to mingle all over the country and becoming inextricably mixed geographically and economically, has been the tendency in recent times. They are now encouraging the educated among the Bantu to take their legitimate place as leaders among their own people instead of being tacked on to the end of the queue of the Europeans. History has demonstrated to us clearly, in other countries and in our own country, the inevitability of dangerous frictions when you have races who are, in their physical makeup, in their cultural background, and above all, in their way of living and thinking, so widely different.

But, Sir, I would like to impress one more thought on you,

March 31, 1950

and that is that, in spite of the somewhat gloomy picture, our country is full of sunshine, and although there are many things that we would like to do, certain laws that we would like to write, still there are duties that we must and shall, in the future, perform; but at the same time the Bantu, taken by and large, are happy people, undoubtedly better-off than they were before we came. There is no doubt about that. That may be accounted for by the success of our frantic endeavours to check soil erosion, to introduce methods of agriculture into the country, to prevent them from lapsing back to their old habits of thought, to get them away from the hold of the witch doctor whose hand is always stretched out like an evil shadow over the country. The Bantu have a capacity for happiness, and the struggle that we have is not to prevent these people, who are alleged by some to be oppressed, from leaving the Union; the difficulty is to prevent others from the neighbouring territories from coming in. It is estimated there are at least two hundred thousand who have no right to be there, who come from outside. And the same with the Indians. We cannot buy their departure, they will not go; they are prepared to pay large sums of money to come into the country.

On the question of our position in the Commonwealth let me say this. Speaking as one, as I have indicated, who was born in the Free State of a family that, for three generations, devoted all its energies to building up this little model State, as we then regarded it, I can claim that we have built a nation which has proved in two great wars, its right and its ability to take its legitimate place in this brotherhood of nations which we call the Commonwealth. We shall also endeavour to continue to discharge our duty towards these people who have been placed in our care. I do not want to burden you with figures but I would like to mention just one figure. Since 1920 to this current financial year, there has been an increase in expenditure, directly from State funds in education of the Bantu from the figure of £377,102 to £5,300,000 in this current financial year.

Finally, Sir, I would like to point out that we elected, of our own free will to remain in the brotherhood of the Commonwealth, and whatever we may call ourselves in the future, we shall continue to remain in that Commonwealth. Our lot is bound up with yours and we shall be proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our elder brother, Canada, in the long struggle for freedom and prosperity that lies ahead; for that peace on earth and goodwill among men which, I believe, we shall achieve and shall achieve much sooner than most of us fear.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier Douglas: – Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all hon. members will want to join with you, Sir, in extending a very hearty welcome to the High Commissioner from the Union of South Africa, and to thank him very much for the very splendid message which he has brought to this Assembly.

In these troubled times throughout the world, the peoples of the British Commonwealth of Nations have been brought closer together because so many of our problems are similar; the ideals we hold in common have to be defended and have to be extended. One of the things that impressed me when I had the privilege of attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

at Westminster, a year ago last fall, was the fact that we had gathered there the representatives of thirty-eight parliaments, representing over 525,000,000 people in the world, bound together, not by force, not held together by bayonets, but bound together by common ideals, a common loyalty to the Crown, and a common objective for world peace and world security. Because of that common idealism we are always glad to welcome any representative of any part of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

When we sometimes tend to become pessimistic, as we often are, about the possibility of building world peace out of all the warring nations of the world, it is a good thing to think of countries like South Africa and of Canada where people who formerly were at war today are living together in harmony and in peace. As the High Commissioner has pointed out, it is a fine gesture that, today, on the floor of the House, we have some of the South African veterans who reside here in the city of Regina. My own father fought in the South African war, marched into Pretoria with the Argyle and Sutherland highlanders; and yet men like him and thousands of others throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations today have nothing but the highest admiration for the people of South Africa. In our own country of Canada, with the French-speaking and the English-speaking, we have demonstrated over a long period of years that, in spite of differences that may have existed in the past, in spite of antagonisms that there may have been, we are working out together a common idealism and a community of interests.

I should like, Sir, on behalf of all who are here, to extend our thanks to the Hon. A.A. Roberts for the fine address that he has given us. I am sure we are pleased to hear something of the problems which his great country has to face. Most of us are not as familiar with these problems as we ought to be, although I would like to tell the High Commissioner that I think one of the books that has been probably most widely read in this province in the last twelve or eighteen months has been Alan Paton's book, "Cry the Beloved Country." It may, of course, only be giving one side of the picture, but it has familiarized many of our people with South Africa through the eyes of a very splendid writer and a very fine humanitarian, and I hope, and I am sure, that the remarks which the High Commissioner has made today to this House, and through this House to the people who are listening in on the radio, will do much to further a better understanding of the problems of South Africa, will give to us a more sympathetic understanding of what they are trying to do. I would like through you, Sir, on behalf of the members of the House, to extend to the High Commissioner and to Mrs. Roberts who is with him here today, our very best wishes for a happy stay here in the Dominion of Canada and an earnest hope that, at their earliest possible convenience, they will come back to visit us in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. W.A. Tucker (Leader of the Opposition): – Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the Premier in extending a very hearty welcome to the Hon. Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Roberts on their visit to our province and to our Legislature.

I think that probably there is as warm a feeling of friendship and comradeship towards South Africa on the part of Canada, as may be found any place in the whole world, because we felt that you have had somewhat

March 31, 1950

similar problems to ourselves in regard to having your country based upon two great races as we have, and just as we have tried to build a nation on the basis of those two great races, preserving their language and the rights which they hold dear, so you have tried to do the same in South Africa. We have watched your work in that regard and the success that has accompanied it with a great deal of interest and a great deal of admiration.

Of course, too, there has been the feeling that we had to admire the chivalry with which you responded to what happened following the ending of the South African War. It was a moving demonstration of great chivalry. The people of South Africa had been at war with the rest of the British Empire (as it was at that time), and they had fought bravely for three years against almost impossible odds. In that connection, I think it was a very happy thought that the grand old Canadian veterans who took part in that war on behalf of Canada should have turned out and demonstrated the good will that we all feel towards your great country, by coming to welcome you today, and sitting on the floor of our Legislature. I certainly want to say that we are very glad to have them with us here today.

To continue in regard to events following the South African War, the final arrangement was a model, I think, of enlightened statesmanship on the part of the great leaders of Great Britain at that time. Their attitude and their feeling that your great leaders would respond to what was proposed to be done was a great demonstration of the wisdom of trusting the goodwill, the higher instincts in human beings, if you are ready to trust them and not place reliance upon force. It was fully realized that when the Union of South Africa Act was passed you were only a few years away from a war which you had fought for three years, as I say, with great gallantry and courage, against almost impossible odds; but yet, such was the faith of the great leaders of Great Britain at that time in your great leaders that it was felt that more could be achieved towards the better interests of both countries if they continued to work together. The great venture of faith, as you might call it, in one another, has borne rich fruit, not only in your country, but in its example to the rest of the world.

When the first great war came, your great Prime Minister as he was then – General Smuts, later Field Marshal Smuts – went over to England and took a very important part in regard to the conduct of the war on the part of the British Empire and Commonwealth. Later he took a great part in the laying down of the first attempt to establish a world organization devoted to the preservation of peace – the League of Nations. There was in Canada the greatest possible admiration for the work that was done by him, and also the great part played by your people, such a short time after being at odds with the other parts of the Commonwealth, in throwing your lot in so unhesitatingly with that of the other members of the British Commonwealth. On this account there has been the greatest possible amount of admiration for your country and for its leaders.

When the Second World War descended upon us and when the time came that the British Empire and Commonwealth had to stand alone for some considerable period, we admired the way in which South Africa, which was menaced perhaps more than any other country except Great Britain herself, with her more or less limited resources, showed that her people were ready

to defend their country and to stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the Commonwealth. They proved they were worthy descendants of the people who were ready so bravely to defend themselves in what they thought right back in the days of what we call the "Boer War". And so there is the greatest possible admiration for your country in the hearts of all Canadians, and we welcome you very sincerely today.

I would like to make one reference to this family of nations that we all belong to; I think that you have had quite a part in helping to preserve that family. The fact that you, so shortly after being engaged in war with other parts of the Commonwealth, decided that you would go along with them as part of the family, I think may have had quite an effect a few months ago when the question arose whether or not India would choose to remain in the family – the Commonwealth family – because I think those people felt that if you felt it was a good thing to stay within the family, then perhaps they should not leave it too readily. Who can tell, when this whole issue was trembling in the balance, whether the example of South Africa may not have been decisive as to whether India and Pakistan should remain in the family of the Commonwealth.

Those of us who now realize the part that family can play in promoting the cause of world peace and so on, cannot help but realize the part that the Far East must play, cannot help but feel that the decision of India and Pakistan to remain in the Commonwealth may have been a decision fraught with great good to the future of mankind. So perhaps the decision of your great men to stay within the Commonwealth of their own free will, may have had a great effect upon the future of mankind. Therefore, your country in so many different ways, in the time of the first war playing your part, sending your men to take part in the formation of the League of Nations, and then again taking our part, a very splendid and gallant part – in the second war, and then again, the example that you set in regard to staying within the family – in all of those things your country has perhaps had an effect on world affairs far beyond what one might expect from a nation of your relatively small population.

We do welcome you, and I think I can say this. I happened to be a Canadian delegate at the United Nations Assembly in 1947. You will remember, at that time, there was a great deal of criticism of South Africa in regard to her attitude towards German Southwest Africa. The attitude of the Canadian delegation and the attitude of other delegations within the family of nations known as the Commonwealth, was this: that, whether or not they might be in complete agreement with the views of your statesmen, if there was criticism to come it should not come from within the family; that within the family there should be the greatest possible attempt to understand your viewpoint and to try to appreciate it and, at all costs, not to make your path more difficult.

I felt proud of the great family that we belong to when I saw the attitude towards your great country at that time, and you can rest assured, Sir, as we go along down through the years together, working for the things that we both believe in – the improvement of the lot of mankind, the preservation and promotion of the peace of the world, and those great ideals which your great leader Smuts and your present great leader Malan all so heartily believe in – that in that work you will find that Canadian leaders

March 31, 1950

will be marching by your side, happy to belong to the same family. We do most heartily welcome you. We hope that you and Mrs. Roberts will enjoy your stay in our country and that you will take back to your own homeland with the happiest of memories.

Mr. Speaker: – Mr. Roberts, on behalf of the Legislature, I wish to say that the short address you have given us this afternoon, which went over the air, will bring about a clarity in the minds of many people whose only source of information has been from the press, which as you say, and I am sure from your remarks, have not always correctly interpreted the situation that exists in your country. I hope that when you and your good lady go back, you will take back the message from Saskatchewan that we are very pleased at, and very grateful for your visit, and we hope some day it will be repeated.

The business of the Assembly then was resumed.

The Assembly adjourned at 11 o'clock p.m. without question put.