

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Second Session — Eleventh Legislature**  
**35th Day**

**Tuesday, April 4, 1950.**

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

**SECOND READING**

**Bill No. 92 – An Act to amend The Housing Act**

**Hon. J.H. Sturdy (Minister of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation):** – On The Housing Act, Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out to the House that the Provincial Government has already expended on emergency housing in this province, over three-quarters of a million dollars. This is the only Provincial Government that has engaged on a fairly large scale in a housing programme in the Dominion of Canada. As I have pointed out before in the House, we have provided over seven hundred housing units, and they are a very good type of housing unit.

We had thought that, subsequent to the cessation of hostilities, the Federal Government would have provided sufficient housing to meet the requirements of the people of our province and that we might discontinue our emergency housing programme; but such has not been the case. However, in view of the fact that we have expended over three-quarters of a million dollars on housing, we did think that this was sufficient warrant to our applying to the Dominion Government for a low-interest loan.

During, and subsequent to the war, the Federal Government had assumed full responsibility for housing in the Dominion of Canada. They have controlled all supplies – building supplies and so on – and we were rather amazed that the Federal Government discontinued that policy and asked the Provincial Government and the municipalities to share in the cost of the housing programme. This is contrary, of course, to the procedure in the advanced countries of the world. I refer to Great Britain where the National Government has provided the entire cost of over a million houses in that country since the war, and the same thing has been carried out in the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and certain other countries. But it would appear here in Canada, that the Dominion Government wishes to shift the responsibility for providing houses, or housing, from the Federal Government to the provinces and the municipalities in part, at least.

We felt that we were justified in making application to the Dominion Government for a low-interest loan. This would have reduced the cost to the renter or the owner of prospective homes, and I would point out to the House that there have been so many financial responsibilities shifted to the provinces that it is difficult for the Province to carry on all the social services that it now provides and this additional responsibility.

Ever since the war, the Federal Government has kept the provinces out of the housing field. They have refused to advance to the provincial

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governments loans under The National Housing Act, which would have enabled the provincial governments to borrow up to 90 per cent of the cost of any housing project under terms that guaranteed lending institutions that entered the housing field, or gave low-dividend housing corporations a guarantee against loss. That was refused to this Province although it had made application on several occasions. Now that has been the situation. We made application to the Federal Government for a loan, a week or so ago, but I have now received a wire from the Minister of Finance, Hon. Douglas Abbott, to the following effect:

“We regret that we have no authority to make loan to Saskatchewan Government to finance the Province’s share of a Dominion-Provincial housing programme.”

So our application for the loan has been definitely turned down.

According to the Bill which is before the House, it provides, under section 11, for the Province to enter into an agreement with the Federal Government. It also provides for the Province to enter into agreements with municipalities. It provides for the setting up of a housing corporation which may construct and administer housing, if it is so decided. It provides, also, in section 12, that the municipality will share with the Province the cost of any housing project on the basis of fifty-fifty – that is, the municipality will provide 12 1/2 per cent of the total cost and the Province will provide 12 1/2 per cent of the total cost. It also provides that in any agreement, unlike National housing or Wartime housing or Veteran housing, that the municipality will be able to assess full taxes on any housing project under this agreement. The municipality, under section 12, may finance its 12 1/2 per cent in whatever way it wishes – it may provide for a portion of the cost through land assessment or through the providing of certain services, or it may interest the individual prospective home-owner in putting up a portion of the cost. The funds to be raised are dealt with in section 13, to provide for a loan not to exceed the sum of \$2,000,000 dollars. The schedule, which is in conformity with the National Housing Act, is set forth on page 3.

Now I do hope that this will result in additional housing, much-needed housing, for the people of the province. One of the things that amazed me when I was in Ottawa was the fact that, at that particular time, they were considering a vote of – I think it was \$462,000,000 for national defence. Now I would suggest, in all humility, not that I am opposed to national defence in any way whatsoever, but I do think that our people, since so many are without adequate homes or housing, should be given something worthwhile to defend. I do think that good homes for good defence in this country or any other country are synonymous. I also think that good homes for good health is also essential. We in this side of the House also believe that the rights of a free people in a democracy include freedom to enjoy health insofar as the physical buildings, such as hospitals and medical science can provide. Now, I wish to point out in this respect that the Federal Government, as far back as 1945, had in their blue book promised to pay sixty per cent of health insurance across the Dominion of Canada. That has not been forthcoming; only a miserable pittance has been forthcoming by way of hospital construction grants. I am pointing out that we may talk about improved health and improved educational services and so on, but decent homes for our people are necessary.

Now, one thing that concerns me regarding this act is the housing

insofar as this city is concerned. The city of Regina requires housing more than any other community in the province of Saskatchewan, and unless there is an adequate supply of water for the city of Regina, I do not see how, with present supplies, they could provide for an additional three or four hundred homes.

I was told in Ottawa that, at the time they undertook to build the 150 homes under National Defence, between here and the airport, it was a question as to whether they should proceed with those houses because of a lack of an adequate supply of water. Now, I do suggest this is the responsibility of Ottawa. When I was in Ottawa I spoke to Dr. McCusker and he, of course, was naturally concerned with additional homes for Regina, but I immediately wanted to know what he was doing regarding the securing for the city of Regina of an adequate water supply. He had plenty of Liberal support. I can tell you as far as I was concerned it was a very depressing sight, indeed, Mr. Speaker to see 186 Liberal members in the House of Commons, over 80 Liberal members in the Senate; Liberals in every important national board down there, such as the railway commission board and nothing done to implement election promises to bring water from the South Saskatchewan River, to Regina. Again I would suggest it was a depressing experience down there and many depressing things are coming out of Parliament during the past several months.

I think I have dealt with all the sections of this Bill, and move the second reading.

#### **Bill No. 98 – An Act to amend The Rural Electrification Act, 1949**

**Hon. J.A. Darling (Minister of Public Works):** – In moving second reading of Bill No. 98, I may say at the outset that no principle is involved, but we are proposing certain amendments which we feel are necessary and desirable. First I would refer to clause 5 of the Bill. Section 9 of the Act as it stands says that a rural power district “shall consist of all parcels of land, of an area of one-quarter section or less, any part of which lies within one-half mile of the lines constituting the rural distribution system”. As the Act does not seem just in that particular, we are asking that an amendment be passed so that only land that lies within three hundred feet of a power line be included in the rural power district. I might say that I believe this is the same distance as is used by rural telephone companies: when the rural telephone line approaches within three hundred feet of a parcel of land, that parcel is liable for taxation for rural telephone purposes.

The other clause which I feel should be mentioned on second reading is that which deals with the Section 9 of the Bill, which would repeal Section 22 of the Act and replace it in altered form, so as to overcome a difficulty which has been found to exist. This refers to the amount of money which has to be paid to the Corporation before the latter is obligated to proceed with the construction of a rural distribution system on run-offs. The allocation of costs, as between the Corporation and the farmers is provided for in Section 10 of the Act. Under paragraph 1, subsection (1) of section 10, the Corporation pays the cost of material for the rural distribution system, which as defined in paragraph 8 of section 2 of the Act, does not include “run-offs,” an expression which is defined in paragraph 7 of section 2. The cost of material for the distribution system includes freight on the same, and also includes the necessary

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meter. Under the present provision of section 22, the Corporation is not to proceed with the construction of the distribution system and run-offs until at least 75 per cent of the total amount for which the farmers are responsible under paragraphs 2 and 3 is paid, and at least 50 per cent of the amount for which each individual farmer is responsible in connection with the run-offs. The requirement that the Corporation will not proceed with construction until each farm has paid 50 per cent of his share has proved a stumbling block. It is now proposed in its redrafted form that section 22 should require payment of 75 per cent of the total for which the farmers are responsible before the distribution system is constructed, and payment of at least 50 per cent of the cost of the transformer and other materials for the run-offs, before the run-off is constructed.

It was possible under the Act, as it is now, for one individual, who might be a non-resident who might not intend to make use of the power, to prevent the whole project from proceeding, but here, under the proposed amendment, only those who were intending to make use of the power would be required to make a payment before the project could be proceeded with.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other things which are more or less minor, which do not affect the principle of the Bill, and I think they can be dealt with in Committee. I would move the second reading.

Motion agreed to.

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