

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Eleventh Legislature
27th Day

Friday, March 9, 1951

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

SECOND READING

REDISTRIBUTION BILL

**Bill No. 23 – an Act to amend
the Legislative Assembly Act.**

Hon. C. M. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — In moving second reading of this Bill I wish first to refer to certain minor changes, not connected with the re-distribution part of the Bill.

Clause 3 of this Bill makes it possible for a member to do certain things and enter into certain types of dealings with agencies of the Government without vacating his seat as he would ordinarily do under section 14 of The Legislative Assembly Act. Section 15 of the Act gives certain exemptions to the operation of clause 14, and clause 3 of this Bill will add certain additional exemptions to clause 15. For example, after these amendments are passed it will be possible for a member to receive benefits from the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office. Previously he was able to enter into a contract of insurance with the Office but was not able to receive benefits without risking the vacating of his seat.

The other clauses, Nos. 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 all have to do with the redistribution.

I would like to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that redistribution is something which takes place at regular intervals with every government in Canada. For your information I would point out that the first redistribution was made in 1906, at which time the province had 25 members; then in 1908, two years later, when it went up to 41 members; then in 1912, when the province had 54 members; then in 1916, when it was increased to 59; then in 1920, when it went up to 63 members; then in 1932, down to 55 members; and in 1938, it was reduced still further to 52 members. Thus in the 46 years since 1905, when the province was formed, we have had seven redistributions, an average of one approximately every 6 1/2 years. The longest period the province has ever gone with a Redistribution Bill in the past is 12 years – from 1920 to 1932; so that, today, on moving this Bill for second reading, we have now gone a longer time than any period in the history of the province, for it is now 13 years since there has been a redistribution.

May I say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that, as far as the Government is concerned, and as far as the members on this side of the

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House are concerned, we were quite happy with the seats as they were. Any distribution of seats which can give a party 47 out of 52 members, as we got in 1944, naturally, should be quite satisfactory to the party that gets them. So I want to say at the outset, to avoid any talk there may be that the Government is doing this because we feel that it is going to be of political advantage to us, that that has not been a factor at all. The situation is that, in the last election, we had some rural constituencies with as many as 16,300 names on the voters' list, while other rural constituencies had as few as 6,600, and in the far north we had two constituencies with 1,134 and 1,221 voters respectively.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in Britain a few years ago – in fact it goes away back to the time of the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867 and so on, when we had, at that time, many what were called “rotten boroughs” where just a handful of people elected a representative to parliament. They were done away with in Britain. Here, in Saskatchewan, we have a situation which is not exactly the same, but is similar to a certain extent, where 1,100 people vote for one member, while, on the other hand, we have another constituency, Prince Albert, where there were 16,300; in other words, 15 times as many people. The hon. member for Prince Albert (Hon. Mr. McIntosh) represents 15 persons for every one person that the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Blanchard) represents.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I recognize at the outset that there are definite principles that must be used in redistribution. First of all, there is this question of rural representation against urban representation. I think there is a great deal to be said for the fact that a member in a rural constituency has a greater area to cover; it takes him longer to get to see the people within his constituency. He has to go to several points in order to meet all the people whom he represents, whereas in cities like Regina, Saskatoon, or Moose Jaw, we can have one meeting in a city at which all of the people could be present. So, naturally, there has to be a different basis of representation in the urban centres than in the rural centres, and we have tried to follow that principle in this Bill.

I should like to say, right away, that the present Bill is not perfect. We had no intention of trying to go over the whole province and make every rural seat of exactly the same number of members. There are certain jogs in it that cannot be avoided. I think when the hon. members see the map though, they will agree that the jogs are less frequent than they were in the map of 1938. We have tried, too, not to change the constituencies of hon. members where those constituencies could be left alone, and where no part was required to make up another area. What we have tried to do . . .

Mr. A. Loftson (Saltcoats): — I would just like to suggest that it would be very much easier to discuss this if we had a map on our desk, to follow the argument. At the present time we don't know just what you are talking about.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I appreciate what my hon. friend says, and it is customary to have a map when we are in Committee of the Whole, but not in discussing the general principle of the Bill, which is what we are doing on second reading. I will refer to a map a little later, however, and let my hon. friend see just what a lovely little constituency he has now in Saltcoats.

Mr. Loftson: — It doesn't make any difference to me . . .

Hon. Mr. Fines: — What we have tried to do, Mr. Speaker, is to wipe out the most glaring inequalities which occur largely because of shifts of population. We all recognize that there have been shifts of population in the last 13 years. We recognize that population trends are changing constantly, and so we must make provision for that. Then, too, we are trying to correct what we think are the most glaring mistakes which were made in 1938. There is one with which I am sure all hon. members will agree and that is the situation that existed in the southwest corner of the province where the constituency of Maple Creek extended from Saskatchewan River right to the American border — a total of 23 townships, or 138 miles, north and south, and where there were five railways running east and west across the constituency. We have in that particular case tried to change that by restoring the old constituency of Shaunavon which was in existence for many years, a constituency which borders the United States' border on the south, and which goes north, taking in the territory along the southern-most line of C. P. R. Then, the other parts of Swift Current and Maple Creek and Gull Lake, we have run the boundary north and south and made the three constituencies approximately the same as we had before.

As I said earlier, one of the principal things was to try to wipe out the greatest inequalities, so we have had to make changes in certain seats, such as Prince Albert where we had a population of 16,300. Ironically enough, Prince Albert had 16,300, while Moose Jaw with two members had 15,879 names on the voters' list. In Prince Albert there were normally more names on the voters' list than in Moose Jaw, and yet Moose Jaw is represented by two members.

I would like at this time Mr. Speaker, with the consent of the members of the House to lay on the Table and to have included in this address, a table setting up the constituencies and the number of names on the voters' list, by order, if the hon. members will accept that, without me reading it. (AGREED)

Mr. Tucker: — Have you got an extra copy?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I shall get one for you. I have one in my office.

<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Number of Names on Voters' Lists</u>	<u>Total Number Of Votes Recorded</u>
Regina	45,239	76,307
Saskatoon	34,709	56,150
Prince Albert	16,300	13,575
Moose Jaw	15,879	25,060
Tisdale	13,188	10,393
Melville	12,998	11,006
Swift Current	12,581	10,364
Weyburn	12,465	11,139
Qu'Appelle-Wolseley	11,862	9,626
Souris-Estevan	11,582	10,082
Yorkton	11,018	8,843

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<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Number of Names on Voters' Lists</u>	<u>Total Number Of Votes Recorded</u>
Wadena	10,360	7,877
Moosomin	10,281	8,693
Cannington	10,108	8,609
Melfort	10,107	8,100
Maple Creek	9,881	8,001
Humboldt	9,643	7,861
Gull Lake	9,628	8,170
Saltcoats	9,572	8,372
Pelly	9,486	7,443
Last Mountain	9,361	7,975
Watrous	9,070	6,889
Notuksu-Willowbunch	8,965	7,531
Canora	8,885	7,358
The Battlefords	8,821	7,544
Elrose	8,783	7,452
Kelvington	8,711	6,855
Kerrobert-Kindersley	8,706	7,551
Bengough	8,376	6,931
Hanley	8,286	6,320
Wilkie	8,253	7,148
Meadow Lake	8,219	7,023
Biggar	8,131	6,682
Lumsden	8,099	6,843
Shellbrook	7,990	6,746
Rosetown	7,989	6,865
Kinistino	7,984	6,072
Cutknife	7,968	6,200
Touchwood	7,919	6,183
Morse	7,800	6,709
Rosthern	7,705	5,659
Arm River	7,485	6,352
Turtleford	7,336	6,099
Milestone	7,310	6,186
Redberry	6,763	5,571
Torch River	6,732	5,487
Gravelbourg	6,653	5,864
Athabasca	1,221	1,194
Cumberland	1,134	1,121
TOTALS	<u>507,542</u>	<u>498,081</u>

Then we find other constituencies again, like Tisdale in the northeast with a population of approximately 13,188. When I refer to populations I mean the number of names on the last voters' list, Mr. Speaker.

In determining the basis of change that we did was to determine the number of people there would be for all the rural constituencies and then we divided that by certain figures. We used a great many numbers – in this particular case we finally decided upon 45 – 45 rural members; and we found the unit of representation was approximately 9,100. For round figures let us say that 9,000 is the unit of representation. For the cities, Regina had

45,000, Saskatoon, 34,000 and Moose Jaw approximately 16,000. What we have done there is to take a larger unit of representation: let us use the figure, say, of 14,000. That would mean that Regina would be entitled to more than three members; and Saskatoon to just over two members; the city of Moose Jaw, on its population basis, would not be entitled to more than one number. However, we did not feel that hon. members of the House would want us to reduce the representation of the city of Moose Jaw. This was given to the city of Moose Jaw in 1921, at which time that city had 19,000 population, or 2.5 per cent of the entire provincial population. At that time Saskatoon had 25,000 population, or 3.3 per cent. Regina had 34,000, or 4.5 per cent of the population. In other words, Mr. Speaker, those three cities had 10.3 per cent of the provincial population, but were given six members. What is the situation today? Today Regina has 8 per cent of the provincial population, Saskatoon 5.9 per cent and Moose Jaw 3.2 per cent – or the three together, 17.1 per cent of the population.

Now, in 1951 these three cities were given six members, or 9 1/2 per cent of the representation with approximately 10 per cent of the population; they were given 9 1/2 per cent of the representation for the province. On a similar basis today, with 17 per cent of the population, the cities should actually get 16 per cent of the representation; but we are not doing that. We are not proposing to give the cities that. We are proposing that Regina should have one additional member; that Regina, because of the fact that it now has 8 per cent of the population should be entitled to three members, which is just about 6 per cent of the total membership. So, today, the three cities have a representation equal to 11.5 per cent of the membership of the House. In other words, if the basis of representation of 1921 was Saskatoon should be entitled to 3 members and the City of Moose Jaw should be entitled to two members as an absolute minimum. But, as I indicated, we had felt that the people in the cities are not entitled to as great representation as the rural areas because of the fact that they can meet their people more easily.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say here that the editorials and the news reports that have been put out by the Liberal headquarters in Regina have been far from correct. And I do want to say that there has been no change made in the decision of the Government because of any editorials or any decision of the Liberal Association. This decision to have seven members for the three cities is a decision that was made by the Cabinet and recommended to the members on this side of the House a year ago, and has been accepted. It is wonderful that we have been able to keep a secret from the “Leader-Post” and the members opposite for that long a time. I think it is a great tribute to all the members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that they have been able to keep that information from getting out in that time.

Listen to this, Mr. Speaker, this is what the “Weekly Bulletin” of the Liberal Information Service said. I want to read this so that the people will know how completely unreliable this bulletin is:

“Rumors current in Regina are that the redistribution will at least double the representation from Regina, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. The boundaries of constituencies containing the five smaller cities may be changed to give the pre-

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ponderance of voting strength to urban communities. In this way the C. C. F. hope that pro-C. C. F. urban labour elements could deliver 17 sure seats, leaving only 19 to be picked up from the remaining 35 ridings to give them a majority of one in addition to the Speaker. The C. C. F. is said to hope that by switching boundaries it can consolidate its remaining rural support and ensure the return of the requisite additional ten members.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, what is the truth? The truth of the situation is that in the city of Moose Jaw there will be no change; in the constituency of Souris-Estevan there will be no change; in the constituency of Moosomin there will be no change; in the constituency of Cannington there will be no change; in the constituency of Last Mountain there will be no change; in the constituency of Elrose there will be no change; Rosetown, no change; Morse, no change. That wouldn't indicate that we are trying to steal any of the seats from the hon. gentlemen opposite.

May I say that in addition to that list of constituencies that I have read of in which there is no change, there are a number where there is only a very slight change. For instance, to the constituency of Wilkie, has been added one row of townships to the south. My hon. friend from Wilkie (Mr. Horsman) I am sure, will agree that that row of constituencies will not hurt him in any way. The constituency of Rosthern – we have been very generous here to my hon. friend. He had one of the smallest constituencies in the province before, only 7,700 names and I don't think a small constituency is befitting the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. I think that he is entitled to have a big constituency.

Premier Douglas: — A big seat!

Hon. Mr. Fines: — And so, we have not taken away any of his friends – well I shouldn't say any; there is a slight change in the northeast. I am sure he won't object because it is away from the centre, from his home. But what we have done is to add the neighbouring people from the constituency of Hanley and the constituency of Watrous and one township from the constituency of Biggar, making a very lovely constituency for the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

You know, a few years ago in the House of Commons a theory was advanced by a former Prime Minister that leaders of political parties should be given safe seats. That hon. gentleman passed away, last year. I suppose there is something to be said for it. I suppose we all feel that in the heat of an election campaign we should have the leaders of political parties in fairly safe seats so that they can devote their time, spread their talents out among the people throughout the whole province. I want to assure the hon. Leader of the Opposition, however, it wasn't with a view of giving him a safe seat that we added these other polls, but merely to give him a more evenly balanced constituency. And now, we come to my friend from Humboldt (Mr. Loehr). We treated him very kindly. His constituency is approximately the same as it was before. We took out two or three townships in order that it might be balanced more evenly with the general average.

I might say, Mr. Speaker, that the province divides itself naturally into approximately five areas. There are certain natural

geographical boundaries which cannot be overlooked. For instance, there is one area here which is made up of the constituencies north of the South Saskatchewan River and south of the North Saskatchewan River and west of the South Saskatchewan. That group of constituencies cannot very well be considered except as a unit. At the present time we have six constituencies there, and, frankly, the population of that area does not justify six members. They would be entitled to about $5\frac{1}{4}$ members. But it was felt that rather than try to make the constituencies too large we would be better to leave it alone. The same thing is true in the north. Up in the north country here we have the constituency of Athabasca, Turtleford, Meadow Lake, The Battlefords, Redberry and Shellbrook. There in those six constituencies the population does not justify more than only slightly over four members, so what we did there was to make five constituencies. Even with cutting it down to five, however, we still find that the constituency of Turtleford, the constituency of Redberry and the constituency of Meadow Lake are all less than the average by a considerable amount.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table another document. This is a report showing the population of the constituencies under the redistribution plan.

	<u>Redistribution</u>	<u>1948</u>
REGINA	45239	45239
X SASKATOON	34709	34709
X MOOSE JAW	15879	15879
PRINCE ALBERT	12003	16300
SWIFT CURRENT	11686	12581
X SOURIS-ESTEVAN	11582	11582
MELVILLE	11369	12998
WEYBURN	11323	12465
QU'APPELLE-WOLSELEY	11152	11862
YORKTON	10870	11018
MELFORT-TISDALE	10355	10107
X MOOSOMIN	10281	10281
MAPLE CREEK	10115	9881
X CANNINGTON	10108	10108
ROSTHERN	9815	7705
CANORA	9761	8885
KELSEY	9759	13188
WADENA	9702	10360
PELLY	9698	9486
WILKIE	9622	8253
TOUCHWOOD	9515	7919
KELVINGTON	9369	8711
HUMBOLDT	9368	9643
X LAST MOUNTAIN	9361	9361

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	<u>Redistribution</u>	<u>1948</u>
THE BATTLEFORDS	9137	8821
NIPAWIN	9022	6732
SHAUNAVON	9013	9628
MILESTONE	8939	7310
KINISTINO	8796	7984
X ELROSE	8783	8783
SHELLBROOK	8755	7990
SALTCOATS	8665	9572
CUTKNIFE	8541	7968
NOTUKEU-WILLOWBUNCH	8470	8965
BENGOUGH	8347	8376
BIGGAR	8224	8131
WATROUS	8054	9070
X ROSETOWN	7989	7989
HANLEY	7830	8286
LUMSDEN	7810	8099
X MORSE	7800	7800
GRAVELBOURG	7761	6653
REDBERRY	7722	6763
MEADOW LAKE	7611	8219
ARM RIVER	7608	7485
KERROBERT-KINDERSLEY	7514	8706
TURTLEFORD	7400	7336
NORTHLAND	6136	—

There is no change in the first three (that is, Regina, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw) except for the fact that Regina will have one additional member. Then we go to what we call the rural seats. Prince Albert, which formerly had 16,300, will be the largest of the constituencies on the basis of population with 12,000 members. You will say that is more than the average of 9,000. Yes, it is; but in that 9,000 is the urban centre of Prince Albert, and so it should be worked out on the basis of a 14,000 or 15,000 unit that you take for the cities. The result is that the new constituency of Prince Albert just takes in the city together with that small amount of territory which lies between the two rivers. It makes a very small constituency in area, but the largest of all the constituencies in population, outside, of course, of the three major cities. The next largest is Swift Current. And, again it has 11,686. Swift Current has a large centre of population: this thriving city of Swift Current which was so well described by the hon. member the other day. He is not much interested right now.

Now we come to the constituency of Souris-Estevan. In that constituency you have another which is larger than average, but in this particular case you have the second largest town in the province of Saskatchewan, second only to Melville, and so the population there is naturally

greater than the average. Then we come to Melville with the largest town in the province, with 11,369. Then we come to Weyburn, the thriving city in the south with its large urban population, with 11,300. Then we come to Qu'Appelle-Wolseley with 11,100. Some people might wonder why we left that as large, but because of the concentration of urban votes there, Mr. Speaker – you have in the constituency of Qu'Appelle-Wolseley a number of very large towns, Indian Head, Qu'Appelle, Sintaluta, Wolseley, Odessa, Montmartre, Tyvan, Francis, Sedley and so on. These are the reasons why we were able to leave my hon. friend's constituency as large as it is. I am sorry that we had to take away those good friends of his off the west end. We had to do that in order to see that the member for Lumsden had enough people to retain his seat; so we took just a few off the west end of my friend's seat.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that brings us down to Yorkton, and over in Yorkton we have a population of approximately 10,070. What we have done there is to change this constituency and have it run east and west. I am sure that my hon. friend from Saltcoats will see the validity of this. These people in the north end, have difficulty getting down to the centre of their constituency; the distance is very great. On the other hand they have a good highway right into the city of Yorkton from which they are just a few miles. And so we have a good constituency of Yorkton. When I say "good", I mean good on the basis of being easy to work, and a nice population of some 10,870.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to the north-west again. This is the only part of the province that I don't just like the look of on the map. At first sight it looks as though we have too many jogs there. What we have done is to try to make The Battlefords constituency a constituency which will take in all that territory along the North Saskatchewan River, right up to and adjoining the constituency of Rosthern. In other words the member for The Battlefords will be able to get on that nice new blacktop highway, leave home at 8 o'clock in the morning to go out campaigning and he will be able to go right down to the end of his constituency by 9 o'clock. He'll have a wonderful constituency to work. In fact I think he has probably got the choice one for the whole province. Or if he can't take his own car there is good bus service on that road and there is good train service. He will have no difficulty getting along at all.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go through all the constituencies but I think we can do that much better in Committee of the Whole. I want to say that we have been anxious to get this Bill into the House and get the Budget debate wound up so we could get along with this. We wanted to give the members lots of time to look it over. We don't want to do what was done before. I might say that in 1912, the second reading was on March 12th the Bill was passed on March 13th and the House prorogued on March 15th. Or in 1916 – the second reading was March 7th, the Bill was passed on the 11th and the House prorogued on the 14th. Here's a good one. This is 1920, Attorney-General Turgeon introduced the Bill. And, incidentally, Mr. Speaker, I think this is the first time a Provincial Treasurer has ever introduced a redistribution Bill. It has been done by the Minister of Highways; it has been done by the Minister of Natural Resources; it has been done by the Attorney-General so that it is doubtless spreading the honour around. Attorney-General Turgeon introduced this Bill on December 14th, it was passed on December 15th and the House prorogued the same day. Or in 1932; the Redistribution Bill was introduced on April 7th, passed on April 13th and

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the House prorogued the same day, April 13th. Or the last time when the Liberal Party, led by Mr. Patterson introduced a Bill – the Bill was given a second reading on March 18th passed on March 23rd and the House prorogued later that same day. So that we are bringing this Bill down two or three or four weeks before we hope the House will prorogue in order that the hon. members opposite will have ample time to discuss the Bill in Committee and in order that they will have an opportunity to study it.

I might just say to members of the House that I have arranged to get some maps printed. I got the first one earlier this afternoon, but the names had not been printed on it – it takes a little time for him to get the names; but they will be ready and if some come up later this afternoon I will be glad to send a few copies over to hon. friends. We will have them all for distribution in the House on Monday when I hope we can consider the Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take any more time. There are a number of things one could say about redistribution generally. I have taken the trouble to read all the debates that have taken place in this Chamber on all the Redistribution Bills that have been introduced from the time the province was formed. I have also read the debates in Ottawa, including the famous redistribution of 1882, and I hope that we don't have the experience in this House say in the next couple of weeks that other Houses have had in the past. I think we can leave the rest of what there is to say until we are in Committee. I do hope that I have said enough and have given the House enough information to prove to the satisfaction of all that this Bill cannot merit the terms that have been applied to Bills on previous occasions. In case my hon. friends do wish, however, to use any of those terms I would like to tell them of some of the terms Mr. T.C. Davis, who is now one of our ambassadors and a former Justice of the province, used in 1932, when he said it was "robbery", "deliberate attempt to steal", "legalized theft", "political crime", "fraud", "gerrymander" – in fact he was so overcome with the whole Bill he couldn't find adjectives to express it – and thus save the proceedings from getting monotonous.

I am confident that all members are going to be so happy with the redistribution that none of those terms will be applied, but rather that the members will agree that this has been a sincere attempt on the part of the government to bring in a redistribution which is based upon principles of justice, principles of equality, principles of equity. We have tried to do that and I do hope that this Bill will be treated in that way and receive the consideration it deserves. I would move the Bill No. 73 be now read the second time.

Mr. Tucker: — Mr. Speaker, as I have not yet had the opportunity of seeing the map giving the boundaries of the proposed new constituencies, I would not want to undertake to say very much in the way of general observations at the present time. I would like to have a good look at the map and also at the figures which have been tabled by the hon. Provincial Treasurer. But I have no doubt at all in my mind, from long experience with the Provincial Treasurer, that nothing would be quite as good as he makes it out to be. I am forced to make that observation because of past experience and because of the very fact that he launched this Bill with such panegyrics of high ideals and the fact of the low motives of previous administrations and so on, I am more inclined than ever to look into it very carefully because I don't think that,

unless there was something very bitter in this thing, it would require such a sugar-coating as the Provincial Treasurer has seen fit to give it. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I must move the adjournment of the debate to have a chance to look into the matter.

(Debate adjourned)

.RESTORATION OF PRICE CONTROLS

Moved by Mr. A.P. Swallow (Yorkton, seconded by Mr. R.T. Stone (Saskatoon City):

“THAT this Assembly urge the Dominion Government to take effective measures to combat inflation and the rapidly rising cost of living, such as the immediate reimposition of price controls, and the payment of subsidies where necessary, so as to protect the health and living standards of the Canadian people.”

Mr. Swallow: — Mr. Speaker, in introducing this motion asking the Federal Government to reimpose price controls I feel it will need the approval of all the members of this House who are sincerely interested in the welfare of the people of their constituency. I think that we should remember that in Federal election of 1945 we were promised price controls by the Liberal Party at the time of that election. They even promised that they would “roll back” the prices. In some of the election literature in the Dominion of Canada they even stated that we would be able to purchase goods at 1941 price levels. But that promise was not kept. Instead, they immediately commenced to remove all the controls, although that time 75 per cent of the people of Canada indicated through the Gallup Poll that they favoured price controls.

The result as we know it is that prices have increased in Canada more than in any other countries, including England and the United States. I have the latest cost-of-living index which was in the press this last week and it states here that the increase from January 2 to February 2, 1951, has been the greatest increase of any month since 1939 with the exception of one month back in 1947. It would indicate that as the time goes on the price increases become very much accelerated. It shows us here that the price of feed in this one month has increased over 4 points. Men’s wear, piece goods and footwear have increased over 5 points in one month. Furniture, floor coverings and other house furnishings have increased over 5 points. So it would indicate to us that there is no end to this continuous rise in prices.

I am sure every housewife in Canada is asking herself the question, “How long can this go on?” Some with small incomes, who have children to feed and clothe and educate state that they cannot make ends meet. It doesn’t matter where you go today, you talk to people in the different salary brackets and all state the same thing – they can’t make ends meet. So what must it mean to the people on small incomes? And as you go around you find there are a lot of people today on small incomes, in our villages and towns and even in the cities. There are not so many farmers on the Opposition side of the House, so they will not possibly appreciate the conditions the farmers are faced with.

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I am surrounded here by a lot of farmers and I know they will; but the farmers too, are wondering where this is going to stop. Some of them are left with frozen grain this year. They cannot sell it; they cannot market it – shortage of storage, shortage of boxcars. Some of them have not even sold their first quota yet, and they are faced with this increasing price. For instance, a common commodity like bolts which every farmer buys. If you bought bolts in 1945 you would pay 20 cents a pound, today you would pay 40 to 43 cents a pound. Fertilizer has increased greatly – I think 27 per ton in the last week or two. Spray has gone up. Machinery has increased greatly.

The Leader of the Opposition made the statement in this House: “Of course, everyone in Saskatchewan knows that this increased cost of living is due to the war effort”. I do not believe that the people of Saskatchewan believe that this increased cost of living that we have shown in this index has all gone into war effort. I think they are more apt to believe that a lot of this increase has gone into the pockets of large monopolies.

We have one group especially that has been mentioned in this House many times, and that is a group that has fixed incomes – our old-age pensioners. They have no control over their income, they cannot increase it, and if they are getting the maximum today of \$42.50, it still only has a purchasing power of \$25 roughly. Now can these people live on that amount? We have the blind pensioners in the same category; their income is set. We have mothers receiving mothers’ allowance. There is one bright side in this province though, Mr. Speaker, and it is that these people are getting complete health services. I wonder what it must mean to those in other provinces who are not receiving these services.

There are other people who are not getting pensions, who are today reaching old age, who intended to be independent in their old age. They have saved and scrimped; some have bought bonds, some have paid into annuities, some have even sold their property, possibly the old farm, and they felt the proceeds would give them enough to live on in their old age. Now they are finding themselves with that cut almost in half, finding that they will possibly be destitute in their old age.

When the war was on, we know that we were all asked to save. Children were asked to save; asked to buy “War Certificates”, I believe they called them. I think they were told that if they paid \$4.00 they would receive \$5.00 in seven years, I believe it was. Actually, they will be worth \$2.90, Mr. Speaker, when it comes due. They intended to save this money for future education; their parents encouraged them to do so. Those in the Armed Forces were encouraged to save, asked to assign pay to go into bonds; and many of them did with the hopes that when they came home they could re-establish themselves with that money. And it is very much decreased. It seems as if there has almost been an organized plan since the last war to drain off from the people of Canada the surplus cash that came into circulation through the War.

I do not know whether you will remember, Mr. Speaker, I think it was in 1945, when the boys were returning from overseas, some of them had cash gratuities coming to them. They had hopes of being married and establishing

homes, and some had \$800 or \$1000, that would be coming to them in cash, and there were thousands of them returning at that time with these hopes. And I do not know whether you will remember that at that time we had the Prices and Trade Board, and a notice came out that furniture and bedding manufacturers would be allowed to increase their price 25 per cent – just at the time that these boys were coming home. It meant that if a young man had a thousand dollars that he hoped to put into a home, that was immediately decreased by \$250. It would seem that this was an odd way to repay our sons who fought for this country. And that has been continuing ever since.

We are concerned today about the rise in taxation. We have heard it mentioned in this Chamber many times. Some of the people would like to lead the people of this province to believe that this Government is responsible for those increases. Last year we had figures in this House showing that the increase in the cost of supplies that a municipality has to purchase was at least 60 per cent up. Now we know it has increased in this last year. The Minister of Highways just recently stated in the House that some types of bridge material had increased 200 per cent. Now, people who think – and there are a lot of people who are thinking in this province regardless of what some people think of them – know that taxation has increased because of the increased cost of living. That is the direct cause of the increased taxation.

We are also very much alarmed and concerned about the cost of operating our hospitals – the total cost of hospitalization; and I have a chart here showing the increase in one year 1949-50. It shows that salaries have increased 8.7, depreciation has increased 8.1. I think we should realize that the increase in labour costs and salaries has indirectly been caused by the increase in the cost of living, naturally. Depreciation has increased because of the replacement price costs. But drugs and medical supplies, in one year, increased 13.3. Other operating expenditures have increased 13.9 in one year. I think we will all remember that when the Minister of Public Health was speaking the other day, he gave us instances of such things as x-rays and operating tables, and there was a drastic increase in those. I have one item here that will give you an example of that. For instance, bedding has increased, and that is a major item especially in new hospitals. A nationally-advertised spring-filled mattress that retailed at \$42.50 in 1945, if you wanted to buy that mattress today in the city of Regina you would pay \$99.50. Now that gives you an idea of the tremendous increase in costs, and that again is one of the factors in raising our hospital costs. Here are some other comparisons: the operating cost per patient day in 1939 was \$2.95, the operating cost per patient day in 1945 was \$4.10, and in 1950 it had increased to \$7.70. In other words, it has increased about 90 per cent since 1945, a time when we were promised price controls.

We have had many suggestions of how we can cope with this increased cost of operating hospitals. We have the suggestion from the Liberal Opposition that we put a per-day charge on every patient who goes in the hospital. But that does not seem a fair way to cope with it. The people who do not use the hospitals will not be affected at all, but for those who are unfortunate and have to go into a hospital, in many cases it would mean that they would not be able to go to hospitals. It seems to me that there is a better way that we can try at least first. It seems to me that the logical thing to do is to do something about this increased cost of living.

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Now, the retail merchants, on the average, have not any control over these increased costs of living. The retail merchant knows that if he can sell goods cheaper he will sell more goods; and if you go into a store today, Mr. Speaker, in practically any store, they will advise you to buy what you need today. If you happen to be interested in a new shirt they will tell you that if you buy it next spring you will pay 50 cents or a dollar more. If you are interested in an overcoat they will tell you you will pay over 30 per cent more next summer. So it is to their advantage to sell cheaply. I met a merchant a few weeks ago in the city. He was in here placing his orders for spring goods. He told me that the goods he was buying at the present time cost him wholesale as much as the goods that he was retailing at home at the present time. That is what we are facing.

This Government cannot do anything about it. If they could, I know they would have done anything that is within our jurisdiction. Take in rental controls, Mr. Speaker. I am advised that if it were not for the rental control of this province, the average rentals would be up 15 per cent today, and I am told that other provinces are taking this matter up with this Government, with the authorities, realizing they have to do something about it. That has kept down the cost of living in Saskatchewan. There is only one source that we can go to now, and that is the Dominion Government in Ottawa. So I am going to move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by Mr. Stone, that this Assembly urge the Dominion Government to take effective measures to combat inflation and the rapidly rising cost of living, such as the immediate reimposition of price controls, and payment of subsidies where necessary, so as to protect the health and living standards of the Canadian people.

Mr. Stone: — Mr. Speaker, I am indeed very happy to second this Motion and to have the opportunity of saying a few words about a problem which undoubtedly is affecting the great majority of our Canadian people – and is bringing a great deal of suffering, grief and hardship to, I would say, at least 90 per cent of the Canadian people. I have noticed whenever the words “inflation” and “price controls” are mentioned in this House, the Opposition are quick to jump to their feet in loud and long protest, defending the policy of their Liberal Government in Ottawa. But I do appeal to them, on this occasion, that if they cannot support this Motion that they do bring in some constructive amendment that will do something to stop this chaotic condition which is facing our nation today, and to do something more than merely defend the policy of the Government at Ottawa.

I think everyone will agree that at least those in Ottawa claim, “Well, the horse has now got out of the barn; there is not much use in closing the door now the horse has escaped.” But, who allowed that horse to escape, Mr. Speaker? I think that blame can be placed squarely on the shoulders of the Liberal Government in Ottawa, aided and abetted by the Progressive-Conservative Party who pushed them conveniently into that spot. I think we must all agree, Mr. Speaker, that the late Prime Minister, the Hon. Mackenzie King; had wonderful ability as a leader, and, also, his ability to stay close to the people and to assess the economy of the nation. And I think we would have been very well advised to take some notice of what he had to say on the system of price control. He had this to say, in “Maclean’s Magazine” of February 1, 1945;

“Immediately after the war, the dangers of inflation may be even greater than they are now. The Canadian people cannot afford to sacrifice the benefits of wartime stabilization by relaxing controls too suddenly.”

Mr. Speaker, if that was merely an emotional statement in the heat of an election, we could even to go a more practical argument based on facts, by the Hon. Mr. Ilsley, and I quote from Hansard, page 1925, of April 1, 1947. Mr. Ilsley said this:

“It is estimated that Government expenditures averaged \$4 billion a year between 1942 and 1948. Without price controls, this cost might have been at least 25 per cent higher. I think that 25 per cent is based upon the other figures which I have given with regard to the additional percentages which the consumers would have been obliged to pay, and the stabilization programme has thus meant a saving of another billion dollars a year. From these estimates, it is possible to see that the cost of the control programme was under \$200 million a year, while the savings to the consumer-purchasers and the Government as a buyer were, on these hypotheses, possibly \$2½ billion a year. The figures are tentative but do give some idea of the relative magnitude of the cost of, and the savings effected by, the Government price control programme.”

In other words, Mr. Speaker, if you divide the \$2½ billion that were saved to the consumers of this country by the \$200 million which was price control programme cost, you come to the conclusion that for every dollar spent the people were saved \$12½. That ought to be a pretty fair indication of the price control programme during the last war.

Now, in 1945, as the mover has intimated, we had an election, and the Liberal Party were quite elated on the good job they had done – and they had done a good job during the War – and they were satisfied at the same time, too, that the people were satisfied that they had received benefits from that programme. And, on June 5th, all the dailies across Canada had advertising from the Liberal Party. Here is one: “Consumer Goods soon to be available at 1941 Prices”. Another: “Price Ceiling – The purchasing power of your dollar is maintained by the price ceiling under careful Liberal Management.” Still another: “New, low-cost housing. Instalments are as low as \$9.58 per month under the new National Housing programme.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is why I say definitely that we can place the blame right on the Liberal Government. As you know, the election of 1945 was less than about six or seven months old before there was a beginning of decontrol – not on the necessities of life; but that slight decontrol gradually broke down to the whole system of price control, until we are today in the mess that the mover of the motion has mentioned.

I would like to deal just a little with wage control, because whenever you talk about price controls the members across the other side say, “Do you want wage controls?” I would like them in this debate to tell me just what they mean by wage controls. It is a sort of threat, I believe. I would suggest to them that the workers of this country at least, have wage controls now. Certainly those white-collar workers, those in offices and stores, who have to rely on the generosity of their employers and are not organized, can do nothing about it, certainly they are under wage control; and the control is very substantially below the high cost of living of the present day. Certainly our teachers – and we have done considerable for our

teachers; but even at \$1,400 to \$1,500, Mr. Speaker, I really do not know how these teachers of ours get along on that wage. They surely cannot be much better off than when they were earning \$800 or \$900 a year.

I think the threats of my opponents over there must be towards organized labour. Well, organized labour, if anybody knows much about it, usually bargain collectively on a yearly basis, sometimes a two-year basis; very seldom is it less than one year. Usually these contracts go in at the beginning of the year, in the spring. Those who would go in for an increase in, we will say, May of 1950, found then the cost-of-living index was 164, and by the last figure (that is today) it is 174 and the cost-of-living index has gone up 11 points in that time, and still we have a few months to go before we can ask for another round of wage increases. I would if the members on the other side believe that the 125,000 railroad workers, last fall, are not under wage control, when a special session of Parliament was called and a special Bill brought down giving those workers four cents an hour, which was adjusted to seven by the arbitrator. Now, Mr. Speaker, that runs for two years, and that is not the whole of the story, because the workers applied for a change in contract on July 1st, 1949, and the index then was 162; and they were asking at that time for a 7-cent increase, which they thought was in fair relationship to the cost-of-living index. As you know, they had to negotiate for one year and two months and then, finally, go on strike. They got the four cents by the Bill and finally the seven cents, after waiting one year and two months. The arbitrator suggested that it would not be unfair at that time to give them 10 cents. That would bring them up in relationship to the cost-of-living index. But those workers have two years to go, Mr. Speaker, before they can go back for another round of increases. So I would like the members on the other side just to state specifically what they mean by wage control. I think they mean "wage freeze". They would like to "freeze" wages at the present substandard level. That is my belief of what they mean, and certainly the workers will not tolerate a wage-freeze on the existing conditions. We do believe that a wage stabilization programme can be brought into effect. We believe a wage stabilization board, with proper labour representation (something we never had during the war) could be brought into effect, and I think the Government will find labour quite ready and willing to go along with them in a fair-wage programme.

Another point came up the other day – I am not sure whether it came up in this House, Mr. Speaker, or in the Committee. The Leader of the Opposition said, "Well, this is a world-wide affair; there is nothing we can do about it; every country in the globe is facing this situation."

Mr. Tucker: — Mr. Speaker, I did not say anything of the sort. I said every country is having difficulty in controlling it; but I did not say they could not do anything about it.

Mr. Stone: — I will accept the explanation, Mr. Speaker. I hope that during this debate the Leader of the Opposition will tell us exactly what he does mean.

I do not want to bore the House with a lot of figures but I would like to submit a table of some of the conditions. This was taken from the "Canadian Statistical Review", the "United Kingdom Ministry of Labour Gazette" and the "International Labour Review" for July, 1950. The cost-of-living index is taken to equal 100 as of 1945 and, on that basis we have the following results: France, 484; Canada, 137; Australia, 136; The Netherlands, 135; United States, 131; New Zealand, 119; United Kingdom, 114; Sweden, 112;

Denmark, 110 and Norway, 107. With all our enormous productive capabilities, Mr. Speaker, we are second on the list.

It appears that our friends in Ottawa are waiting for the United States to do something in this matter. We cannot make a move, apparently, until they do. I maintain, Mr. Speaker, we made the move in 1941 and we did such a good job that the United States were forced to follow our lead. And so, Mr. Speaker, I feel that there should be a good round of debate on this motion. I feel that there will be lots of members who will have plenty to contribute to this debate.

I do not know that I have a great deal more to say. I feel that the value of price control legislation has been proven by experience. The need for price control legislation is obvious and urgent. The demand for price control legislation, without question, is overwhelming. So, Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in seconding and supporting the motion.

The question being put, it was agreed to unanimously.

.SECOND READING

Bill No. 72 – An Act respecting Elections of Members of the Legislative Assembly

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the members that this is a Bill of considerable size and that they will have a bit of homework to do over the week-end. There are, in this Bill now, I think, some 218 different sections and I do not think there is any point in my discussing it in any detail except to point out what is the major change in the legislation.

The major changes in the legislation is to provide for the absentee vote, something which has been experimented with in British Columbia over quite a period of years. They brought it in there to allow fishermen and loggers and others who will be away from home, to vote wherever they happen to be and have their vote counted back in the constituency where they resided.

We have not quite the same problem as the province of British Columbia. Our population is not quite as nomadic in their pursuits, but we do have people who are away from home a great deal. That would be particularly true if you hold an election in July or August when people are at the beaches or that sort of thing. Then you have people working on crews and construction gangs and so on, who are away quite a bit from their constituencies at the time of voting. Most of those people are completely disfranchised by virtue of the fact that they cannot get back to their home constituency, which may be a distance of 100 or 150 miles.

For that reason, we have copied not all but most of the features of the British Columbia legislation, with a view to allowing people who are absent from the constituency in which they reside to vote and to have that vote counted in the constituency from which they come. That is a new principle, and it is a principle that we introduce with some tenacity, because it does complicate the election machinery. There may be suggestions that the members will

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want to make in Committee; we are certainly amenable to making this experience work, and if the procedure which we are suggesting here is not perfect, then we will be glad to change it in order that it might work. I think all members will agree that if it is possible, without making our election machinery too cumbersome, we ought to try to facilitate voting by people who, because of their occupation or for some other reason, are far from home, but who should have the privilege of casting their vote for the candidate of their choice. Provision is hereby made for it, and we can discuss the details of it while the Bill is in Committee.

I would, therefore, like to move, Mr. Speaker, that Bill No. 72 be now read the second time.

Mr. Tucker: — Mr. Speaker, as the hon. members know, we have been going at quite a pace for the last week, sitting in Committee starting at 10.30 in the morning and sitting in the Legislature here from 3 until 11 at night; and, in order to keep up with all the necessary work it makes a very full day, and I must confess that I have not yet had time to study this Bill.

I was waiting to hear the Premier indicate whether there are any other changes in it, and I take it from what he said that the major change is the one he mentioned – to make sure that people whose business takes them away from their place of abode are not disenfranchised. That, of course is a principle with which we are very much in agreement; and the only question is as to the limit to which you can go in that regard. In other words, while you want to give everybody a chance to vote, it is necessary not to complicate The Election Act or make it too difficult to operate in all its provisions to assure the vote being taken properly. So that, in regard to what he has said, we are in agreement with the principle of making sure that everybody has a right to vote if it is possible to give it to them and should have a chance to exercise that right even if their business takes them away from their ordinary place of abode. And, of course, the question of how that is carried out is a matter that we can go into in Committee.

There is another question that I had expected the Premier to refer to, that I more or less expected to be in this Bill. I should not say that I expected it too much, because I realize many promises have been made by the C.C.F. which they have not carried out; so that on this question of a transferable ballot, I was wondering if this would be another promise that would be ignored and broken, along with so many others. I take from what the Premier said that the transferable ballot is not included in this Bill.

Now, of course, it is an amazing thing how a party like the C.C.F. Party that starts out with promises on all fronts and pretends that it is going to be so much more honest than every other party and is going to make sure that it upholds democracy in its purest form, and so on, comes to the point where its main defence is, as has been the case with the C.C.F. Party all this Session, trying to prove that in the days that are past, going back sometimes as long as 40 years, somebody else was just as bad. Now, of course, that is an amazing attitude, Mr. Speaker, from people who have worn a halo for so long. I have been thinking for some time and I am sure many people have wondered why there has not been a new style set for the C.C.F. leaders in this province. We know that the time came when all the statues of saints in various parts of Europe had halos placed upon them and the C.C.F. Party now have so long made the claim that they were more honest in their approach to

public affairs, much more concerned about the underdog and so much more humanitarian than everybody else, it is very interesting now that their main claim is to go back into history and prove that other parties were just as bad as they are. It is very interesting that that should be the case; but I hope that now they have more or less admitted that they are not so much better than other people, they will not go out in the country and pretend that they are, to the same extent.

On this particular matter of the transferable ballot, there has always been a great deal of doubt as to whether it was a good thing or not. There has been a great deal of difference of opinion on it. But it is a very strange state of affairs that a party that had it in its platform now introduces an election Bill, with an election coming some time within the next two years (and, as I have said before, the sooner the better for the province); but it is a strange thing there is no provision for that in this Bill. I had thought that the hon. Premier, who introduced the Bill, at least would have taken the Legislature into his confidence and indicated to them why there were not carrying out their own platform. Of course, people can change their minds. They can promise a great many things and then when they get into office sometimes find that it is not as easy to carry out the things they promised as when they were out of office. At any rate, ordinary fairness and frankness with the electorate, I think, would require that they would say that they have changed their minds, if they have changed them, and, if so, why.

I understand the hon. Premier endeavoured to explain the matter out in Alberta and the impression I got (and I was hoping he would deal with it today) from newspaper clippings (and I am speaking from memory now) was that in some way he thought that the average elector in Saskatchewan was not able to understand the system of voting and, therefore, it was not wise to introduce it. Well, I was not very much impressed with that argument, because, as I understand it, they have had that system in Alberta for some time, and people could. I think that our people are every bit as able to exercise their democratic functions intelligently as in any part of Canada, so I do not think there is anything in that argument. I believe that in Manitoba they had have the transferable ballot and I think that they have managed to make it work. I am not sure about that – the Premier shakes his head; it may be that they have not.

Premier Douglas: — They have proportional representation but not the single transferable ballot.

Mr. Tucker: — Yes, I know they had proportional representation in the city of Winnipeg and I know the transferable ballot was talked about in Manitoba; but, at any rate, they have had it in Alberta for several years.

I do not know why the C.C.F. Party has changed its attitude in this regard. I suppose that some time in the debate in Committee there will be an opportunity to tell us why they have changed their attitude in that regard. Proportional representation has been mentioned by the Premier. It only applies where you have several members in a seat and, of course, our scattered population does not lend itself to having several members in a seat. For that reason I do not think proportional representation really comes in question in Saskatchewan. The only place where we could have possibly have it would be in the city of Regina where you have three members.

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There comes a time, of course, Mr. Speaker, where you have a bloc of members elected at large, where it is probably not fair to have that done in that way. I do not think there is very much objection to two members being elected at large, and three is probably not quite as sound; but there certainly comes a time when it is very unfair because, as one can see, if you carried it right to extremes and had the whole province one constituency and all 52 members elected at large, then a very small majority, say in one city, might elect the whole Legislature as one party, and it might be just a very strong bloc of votes in one part of the province. The same objection would be made to even a three-member seat, I think, but it really would be sounder to have each of those members elected to represent a particular area, because the three members might be elected by a very small margin either way and then, of course, the whole three members would be thrown one way or the other, and I doubt very much if that is really sound. But still, I doubt very much also whether proportional representation would work with three members.

Personally, I have no fault to find with the Government in regard to proportional representation, but in regard to the other matter, it is intertwined with this Bill of having three members in one constituency. Personally, I had hoped that the Government would have seen fit to have at least one of those members elected from some particular area and, if they wanted to have two members sitting at large for part of the city, have two seats in Regina with one member representing one part and the other two representing the other part if they did not want to divide it in three. However, that is really under the other Bill, but I mention it because I personally do not think proportional representation has worked out very well in the continent of Europe.

On this other question however, the transferable ballot, I am very anxious to see it adopted if it is going to improve the situation and make sure the members elected do represent the people better than by having members elected by a bare majority; and I am wondering, and I intend to move the adjournment of the debate so that some consideration can be given by the Premier to the possibility of perhaps referring this to a Committee, not for any delay, but in order that we might hear witness from some people who advocate this transferable ballot, as to why they think it would work better, and perhaps have witness from somebody who has administered it in Alberta to find out whether they think that it has worked better than their old system. I am not going to definitely press that now, but with leave of the House I would like to move the adjournment of this debate at this time and it, I presume, can be called on Monday to give a chance to everybody to more or less make up their minds on whether we are going to give some consideration to this proposal or not.

I got a letter - probably the other hon. members did too - from the president of the Social Credit Association urging that this be introduced, and I think that there is a great deal of feeling in different parts of the province that it would be an improvement on our present system. Frankly, I have not made up my mind one way or the other, and I would welcome the chance to hear a couple of expert witnesses on it who have really studied the question, how it is operated in other places, in an endeavour to decide whether it is preferable to our present system. I think there is plenty of work to go on with between now and six o'clock, I do not think it will hold up proceedings at all if I move the adjournment of this debate, Mr. Speaker.

(Debate adjourned)

The Assembly adjourned at 6 o'clock p.m.

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