

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Eleventh Legislature

Thursday, February 7, 1952

This being the day appointed by Proclamation for the opening of the Fifth Session of the Eleventh Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber at 3 o'clock p.m. and took his seat upon the Throne.

The Hon. Mr. Williams, Provincial Secretary, then said:

I am commanded by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor to ask that all present stand, and remain standing in respectful silence for two minutes, as a memorial tribute to our late, beloved Sovereign King George the Sixth.

The period of silence having expired, His Honour was then pleased to open the Session with the following Speech:

Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It is my privilege to welcome you to the Fifth Session of the Eleventh Legislature of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Today, we mourn the passing of our beloved sovereign, His Majesty King George the Sixth. I meet you, therefore, under the shadow of the loss which Saskatchewan shares with all Provinces of Canada and all parts of the Commonwealth.

Only recently, after a period of grave anxiety caused by his severe illness, we rejoiced at His Majesty's apparent recovery and had hoped that, having resumed his official duties, he would long be spared to reign over us. The news of his death came, therefore, unexpectedly and as a grievous shock.

The sorrow so universally felt and expressed bears testimony to the high esteem in which his late Majesty was held throughout the world. In no part of his far-flung domains is the sense of national and personal loss more deeply felt than in Saskatchewan. His devotion to the duties of his high office, his exemplary domestic life, his broad humanity, his patience and his courage throughout a reign beset with perils and anxieties, endeared him to all his subjects and induced a keener appreciation of the Crown as the symbol of the partnership of so many great communities of people scattered throughout the world. He shall live in our memories as the gracious and kindly visitor who, in 1939, came to our Province and by his presence intensified our devotion to his throne and person.

I join with you in extending profound sympathy in their bereavement to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second and members of the Royal Family. Particularly we pray that Divine Providence may comfort and sustain our beloved Queen Elizabeth, who mourns the loss of a loving father, and Queen Mary, the sorrowing mother. Toward the new Queen, there already exists in the hearts of the people of Saskatchewan, a

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feeling of personal attachment and affection resulting from her recent visit to this province. We have implicit faith that her Majesty will preserve the traditions of humanity and service so nobly adhered to, throughout his lifetime, by her illustrious father.

Armed conflict and discord continue to plague the international scene. This has necessitated the diversion of billions of dollars worth of goods from peacetime pursuits to defence production. While recognizing the need for adequate defence against all forms of aggression, my Government believes that greater assistance to the hungry and under-privileged nations of the world would constitute a lasting contribution to world peace. In spite of the gravity of the international situation the Government is convinced that if there is firmness and good will on the part of the countries comprising the United Nations it is still possible to attain a just and enduring peace.

The steadily rising cost of living occasioned by uncontrolled inflation continues to harass the people of our province. The Government regrets that the resolution unanimously passed by this Legislature asking for the re-imposition of price controls and subsidies has brought forth no effective response from the Government of Canada.

Premature winter weather during the harvest season dealt a crippling blow to the farmers of our province who had every expectation of taking off the largest crop in their history. Of equal concern has been the ability of our national transportation systems and storage facilities to cope with the volume of grain marketed. It is hoped that the Transport Controller will be able to allocate sufficient transportation facilities to Western Canada to clear country elevators and thus provide space for immediate delivery of the remainder of the crop as it is harvested in the spring.

The low initial price of wheat at a time when inflation continues to reduce standards of living, denies to farmers their rightful share of the national income. The rise of the Canadian dollar, while generally welcomed has meant a substantial reduction in the return the farmers will receive for wheat sold under the International Wheat Agreement.

During the fall and winter months the Government of Saskatchewan has joined with the rural municipalities and farm organizations in urging that the Government of Canada make advances to farmers on undelivered and unthreshed grain. My Government regrets that loans under the Prairie Grain Producers' Interim Financing Act will meet only in part the needs of the farmers. Representations have been made to the Federal Government asking that the maximum amount of loans to individual farmers be increased to two thousand dollars.

The vast quantity of damp grain stored in the Province is cause for genuine concern. My Government has expressed its willingness to co-operate with the federal authorities in any measures which they may undertake to cope with this serious problem.

In recent years, economic factors, including rising costs of production and the mechanization of farming operations, have brought about a steady change in the farm economy of our Province. These

developments have drastically changed the social structure of our rural areas and have made it increasingly difficult for young farmers to become established in agriculture. It is deemed advisable, therefore, to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the problems that have arisen in our agricultural economy. Terms of reference for this Commission will be introduced for your approval.

While the Clearing, Breaking and Drainage programs have continued to bring more acreage under cultivation each year, my Government has long recognized that extensive irrigation is essential to complete land utilization. With this in mind, the immediate construction of the South Saskatchewan River Development Project has been urged upon the Government of Canada. As an indication of its willingness to co-operate with the federal authorities my Government has pledged itself to an expenditure of thirty-three million dollars which is approximately one-third of the estimated cost of this undertaking. Representations will be made to the Royal Commission for the immediate construction of the South Saskatchewan River Development Project.

Over a number of years agricultural prices have not kept pace with farm production costs. In an attempt to analyze one phase of the long history of rising costs of agricultural production it is deemed advisable to appoint a Legislative Committee to investigate the high price of farm implements. Terms of reference for this committee will be introduced for your consideration.

Mineral production in Saskatchewan has exceeded all records during the last year, with a forty per cent. increase in the value of minerals produced. Expenditures on exploration and development of uranium resources in the north have been the highest on record. Ore is now being mined and a refinery which is being built this year will be in operation in 1953. With the drilling of many new producing wells in Saskatchewan a steady increase in production of oil has been recorded. Last year one hundred and ninety-six wells produced one and one-quarter million barrels of oil.

The search for oil and natural gas has been conducted by exploration companies at an unprecedented rate. The discovery of two new oil fields heralds the expansion of our oil industry. Promising natural gas fields have been found and the work of proving adequate reserves is progressing rapidly. In order to insure that natural gas reserves will be made available to domestic and industrial consumers in our province, a continuous study of gas transmission and distribution is being made.

The Government is studying methods whereby farmers who do not own mineral rights may be able to benefit when oil is produced on their land.

Vast deposits of potash have been uncovered as a result of the oil exploration program. The development of this resource, which was begun during last year, will continue, and it is anticipated that Canada's first potash industry will be brought into production in the near future.

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Legislation which will insure proper conservation of Saskatchewan's oil and natural gas resources will be introduced for your approval.

The value of forest production in Saskatchewan doubled last year. Two private companies are now operating plywood factories and two others are planning the establishment of plants for the purpose of utilizing our forest products.

Adverse weather conditions seriously curtailed the highway construction program for 1951. However, the program of restoring and improving our highway system was advanced. During the past year the Saskatchewan Landing Bridge was opened for traffic.

As the present rate of construction, the Trans-Canada Highway will be completed within the period stipulated in the Trans-Canada Highway Agreement.

There will be placed before this Legislature for approval a plan of highway construction that will greatly exceed anything heretofore attempted in this province. Special consideration will be given to the municipal problem of rebuilding timber bridges and market roads.

Last year the Saskatchewan Power Corporation carried out the most extensive construction program it has yet undertaken. Power is now available to more than seventy thousand customers. The Rural Electrification Program, which has expended each year since its inception, has brought the benefits of power to eight thousand farms. Generating and transmitting facilities have been built up to the stage where a greatly accelerated program of rural electrification can be undertaken.

The expanded program of the Saskatchewan Government Telephones was carried forward through 1951. Our public telephone system at the present time is providing service to more than eighty-five thousand customers. This represents an expansion of the telephone system of nearly fifty per cent. over a four year period.

Following the last Session, agreements were entered into with the Government of Canada and a new program of Old Age Pensions is in operation in our Province. Health Services and Supplemental Allowances that were provided formerly are being continued. As an additional benefit to recipients of Old Age Assistance Pensions, free hospital care will be provided commencing January, 1953.

Additional convalescent homes have been provided for the aged during the past year and further accommodation will be made available during the current year.

You will be asked to approve an increase in the amount paid to Mothers' Allowance recipients.

The Health Survey Committee has completed its study in the provinces and the report, along with its recommendations has been forwarded to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The

Government of Saskatchewan is hopeful that these recommendations will provide the basis for a further extension of health services to the people of this province.

The remainder of the first forty-five superintendencies organized as larger school units have now completed their trial periods. The larger unit organization has been confirmed in each case. The operation of the units, resulting in their confirmation, is a tribute to the ability of the people to work together for the common good and to the wisdom of the Board members who guided their development.

In order to provide greater security in the teaching profession, legislation will be introduced to provide teachers with recourse to a conciliation board in case of dismissal.

Additional encouragement to teachers will be provided by amendments to the Teachers' Superannuation Act.

The discussion of provincial-municipal relations with representatives of rural municipal councils at meetings in various parts of the Province last summer provided a foundation for a better understanding of problems affecting both provincial and municipal governments.

As a further implementation of the recommendations of the Report on Provincial-Municipal Relations, legislation will be introduced which will provide for the appointment of a Municipal Advisory Commission. In addition, payments will be made in lieu of taxes on commercial Government property situated within municipalities.

The co-operative movement is expanding its activities into the northern areas of our province. The establishment of the first co-operative fish filleting plant at Reindeer Lake will improve the economic position of fishermen.

Amendments to the Credit Union Act to establish a mutual aid fund designed to strengthen still further the position of the credit union movement will be submitted for your consideration.

Payrolls and employment indices in Saskatchewan reached a record peak during 1951. Increased Minimum Wages during last year helped to improve the economic position of low-paid wage earners, and protect unorganized workers.

To prevent economic discrimination against female workers, legislation will be introduced which will provide equal pay for equal work as between the sexes.

During 1951 the Saskatchewan Crown Corporations had the highest business operation in their history. Financial reports to be tabled during the Session will indicate a much greater surplus than in any previous year.

The Big River Sawmill commenced production during the year. The bringing into operation of the new brick plant will permit a more efficient development of our clay resources. The capacity of

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the Sodium Sulphate Plant has been expanded but further extension may be necessary to meet the growing demand.

September 1st, 1955 is the Fiftieth Anniversary of the formation of the Province of Saskatchewan. That people from so many nations should find a home here and that such vast areas should be brought under cultivation in half a century is a notable achievement. My Government feels that plans should be made for the celebration of this event. Legislation which will authorize the Government to establish a committee to arrange for the province-wide celebration of our Golden Jubilee will be introduced for your approval.

Ever since the province was formed legal action against the Crown was possible only if a fiat were obtained. Legislation which will give to any citizen the right to sue the Government of Saskatchewan without a fiat will be introduced.

Amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act which deal with the disqualification of persons as members of the Legislative Assembly will be presented for your consideration.

A new Tax Rental Agreement with the Government of Canada will be presented to you for ratification. In the negotiations my Government has been greatly concerned at the failure of the Federal Government to recognize the principle of fiscal need. While the new agreement will provide additional revenue, this will not compensate for the increased cost of government occasioned by unparalleled inflation.

The Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, together with the estimates for the year beginning April 1st, 1952 will be submitted.

I leave you now to the business of the Session, with full confidence that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities in the best interests of the Province, and may Divine Providence continue to bless our Province and guide the Legislature in all its deliberations.

His Honour then retired from the Chamber.
The Assembly adjourned at 3.30 o'clock p.m.