

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
First Session — Twelfth Legislature
3rd Day

Monday, February 16, 1953.

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

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Motion for Address-in-Reply

Mrs. Marjorie Cooper (Regina City): — I rise to move the Address-in-Reply to the Speech from the Throne with a full consciousness of the very great honour that has been given to me and to the constituency which I represent by the hon. Premier of this province.

I am very proud to be one of the representatives of Regina constituency in this Legislature. I have lived in Regina since I was a very small child and I have come to feel that Regina is very much a part of me. I have seen Regina grow from a very small city to assume the important place it now has as a key centre in the economy of this province. I think Regina has grown into a clean and very beautiful city and we are all the more proud of the beauty when we realize that we had no natural advantages here but the beauty we have has been created by a fine group of men and women with a keen sense of civic pride and civic responsibility. Regina is in a period of great expansion; in fact this city is literally bursting at the seams. There is no stagnation here, Mr. Speaker, and with the rapid development taking place throughout the province we are looking forward with a great deal of optimism to our future.

I am very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has given recognition to the growing importance of this capital city by giving us a third member in the Legislature.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the citizens of Regina for giving me the opportunity for sitting as a member of this Legislature. It is a privilege that is given to very few women in this country or in this province, and I am keenly aware of the responsibility in a manner which will be acceptable to the people of Regina who have placed so great a trust in me and in the Party which I represent. I have felt for many years, Mr. Speaker, that there should be more women in our Legislature. Canada's record in this respect is not too good. Women make up half our population and we have just as much at stake in this business of government as have men. Any government is strengthened by having a variety of points of view represented in the House. Just as a farmer or a business man or labour man has a special contribution to make, so women have certain viewpoints and experiences that are needed. Men trust women with the most

important things in their lives — the handling of their money, the running of their homes and the rearing of their children. Surely then, women can be trusted to work for the kind of legislation that will protect those homes and make life a safer and happier place for the children that we bring into this world. Who could be more concerned than women in seeing that every child has a decent home to live in, enough to eat, adequate medical care and all the education they have the desire and the ability to obtain. It is because we are so concerned with these things that women are becoming increasingly active in politics. I think perhaps every member of this Legislature, whatever his Party, will tell you that women are key workers in his constituency, and is it not true that in all organizations, church or otherwise, we find the women in there carrying their share of the load! This, in itself, is good, but not good enough. Women should not only be concerned with the formation of party policies, but they should sit in the legislatures at the level where that party policy is carried out. Without wishing any ill-fortune to any of the hon. members present it would be my hope that in future legislatures, both provincial and federal, we will find more of the seats occupied by women.

So much for women in politics. I would like, at the outset of this address, to congratulate the hon. Premier of this province and the members of this Government on their overwhelming success in the recent election, and, at the same time, to congratulate the thousands of C.C.F. supporters who gave of their time and their money and their enthusiasm in achieving so great a victory. It must be a deep source of satisfaction to the members of this Government to feel that after eight years in office they retained the loyalty and the confidence and trust of the people of this province to such an extent that they were re-elected with the largest popular vote in history. I think, Mr. Speaker, that our success was due to the fact that this Government has kept faith with the people of this province and has legislated for the benefit of the many, rather than for the privilege of the few. Another factor I think, for the great and contagious enthusiasm so prevalent among C.C.F. supporters all over this country is the fact that our programme is formed in co-operation with the members of our Party and our members all feel that they have a real stake in the future development of this province and that they were, shall I say, virtually co-authors in the ten-point programme which this Party presented as our election platform and which we hope to carry out in the next five years. The Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, indicates that we are proceeding, step by step in an orderly manner, to carry out our promises during the next year and the years to follow. It is refreshing, Mr. Speaker, to find a government that not only plans ahead with great care, but starts the first year after an election to carry out its programme, rather than waiting until just before a new election.

In evaluating the programme and the progress of any government it is important to look at the basic philosophies that underline the actions of that government. This is an age of slogans. Any party or any group may take unto itself a variety of slogans and, particularly at election time, may make all kinds of promises that dictate the actual performance of a government; any government will only act in accordance with its basic motivating philosophy. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" was never truer than in the field of politics.

The slogan adopted by the C.C.F. Party from its inception has been “Humanity First” and its programme has been dictated by a belief in equality of opportunity for all and economic security for all. At the beginning of a new term of office it is well to look at the record of this Government to see if we have been moving in the direction of our professed beliefs. First – financial position; not because I think money is the most important, but because the amount of revenue we have and the way it is handled determines, of necessity, the extent of our programme. Revenues in this province, in 1952, were the highest in our history. Our bonds have reached ‘A’ standing by rating companies, and this is no mean achievement because it gives us more favourable rates of interest and a wider market for borrowing. There has been a surplus of revenues over expenditures for every year that this C.C.F. Government has been in office. Now this shows capable and careful handling of our money and we are proud of it; but financial position alone is not the criterion of good government; it should merely be the means of providing security for our people. The test is not how much money, but how that money is spent.

Now what have we been doing with our money? First – for one thing, we have been trying to bring more comforts and more of the amenities of life to the people in the rural areas of Saskatchewan, and I would like to congratulate this Government on the energy with which they are proceeding with the rural electrification programme. Our target of electrifying 40,000 farms in the next five years is a very ambitious one, but I like to think what it means to the people of this province and to the women in particular – women who have for years been struggling along with coal oil lamps and looking longingly at electric washing machines, refrigerators, electric irons and vacuum cleaners. Believe me, to them rural electrification is a great blessing.

Then in the Department of Highways, our target here is equally ambitious – a \$75 million programme over the next five years. We are one of the few provinces that will complete its share of the Trans-Canada Highway in the allotted time. The improved highways will not only be a blessing to our own people, both rural and urban, but it also should do a great deal to encourage tourist traffic and bring added prosperity to this country.

Now, all areas stand to profit greatly by our expanded programme for the development of our natural resources. The production of oil and gas is proceeding in this province at a rate that is arousing interest in all parts of the world, and risk capital is just pouring in. I notice in the ‘Leader-Post’ that Socony Vacuum alone are planning to spend \$10 million in exploration in the Fosterton area. The major find of light oil in the Forget area is most encouraging. Saskatoon now has a prospect of natural gas in the near future, and we have good reason to hope that natural gas will be available in many other towns and cities, and I certainly hope Regina will be one of them. In fact, the mineral development in this Province is proceeding at such a rate, that the Speech from the Throne indicates that this Legislature is going to be asked to provide legislation for the establishment of a new Department of Mineral Resources. So much for stagnation, Mr. Speaker.

Now, turning to agriculture, I am really not going to deal with this as the seconder of the Motion is going to deal with it; but I would like to congratulate the Government on the appointment of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and rural Life. As the economy of this country is directly

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dependent on the prosperity of our farms, the report of this Commission may well be the most important ever tabled in this House. The calibre of the members of the Commission is of the very highest, and I was delighted to see that a very outstanding woman, Mrs. Nancy Adams, was appointed as one of the commissioners, and we may thus be assured that the needs of rural women will not be neglected.

Now coming back to what I said at the start, about the relationship between our philosophy and our legislation, there is evidence that this C.C.F. Government believes in the democracy it preaches. It is opposed to discrimination on grounds of race, sex, politics or religious beliefs, and it enacted its beliefs in the well-known Bill of rights, and has since further strengthened that Charter of Human Rights by admitting women as jurors and, last year, by passing legislation to guarantee equal pay for women doing the same jobs as men.

The right of labour to organize in unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively with their employers has been protected by The Trade Union Act. The standard of living for the people in this province has been protected by one of the highest minimum wages in Canada. We are the only province to give two-weeks' holiday with pay during the first year of employment. And I notice the Speech from the Throne forecasts amendments to The Workmen's Compensation Act, which will raise certain benefits here. Labour may rest assured that this Government will continue to work for a rising standard of living for our labouring people.

Now what about our children? What are we doing for them? We say we believe in equality of education for all, but what have we done about it? Well first, and I think most important, was the organization of larger school units wherein the strong areas may help the weak, and working together they can provide better schools, better libraries, better nursing and dental facilities and more equitable salaries for teachers, and more security for our teachers.

Then second, but of course equally important, by tripling school grants since 1944, and third, by our system of equalization grants. This Government believes in the system of equalization grants and, last year, returned \$1,600,000 in the form of equalization grants to our school districts. And even though the Public Revenue Tax is now to be returned to the municipalities, these grants will continue.

Fourth, by the creation of a million-dollar revolving loan fund from which students who need help to get through University and Normal School can get that help. Last year, \$116,000 was loaned to students in this province. Regarding this programme, Dr. Thomson, the President of the University, had this to say, and I quote:

“Saskatchewan has made the greatest forward step on this Continent, by providing a million-dollar loan fund to help students through University and Normal School.”

Then in our Adult Education Branch, and particularly through the Arts board, this Government is helping and encouraging students to

develop their talents in music, in art and in drama.

Sixth, by bringing educational opportunities to the people in the sparsely-settled districts of the north. Thirteen schools have been built and eight new teacherages. The Department of Health and Social Welfare are also doing an excellent job in this area. I do not think we can over-estimate the value of these services to those people in the north who were for so long neglected.

One more thing I wanted to mention. I also was delighted to see, in the Speech from the Throne, that legislation is to be introduced to provide for improving our libraries, and that there is to be an increase in library grants. All these things are steps by which we are succeeding in bringing equality of education to all the young people in this province.

Now what about Social Welfare? Well, I don't think I need to go into a great deal of detail there, because I think the work of this Department is very well known and it is recognized by social workers all over this country as a pattern from which to copy.

Our Child Care Programme is second to none. Our adoption programme is sound and skilfully administered. Our work with unmarried mothers is not only a fine piece of humanitarian legislation, but it also has been successful in rehabilitating many girls into useful and happy lives.

Our record in penology is well known and has attracted the attention of penologists from all over this world. When we know of the conditions in some of the gaols and penitentiaries in the country, we realize just how much we have to be thankful for here.

Then what about our older citizens? What are we doing for them? Well, besides providing our share of old-age pension and free hospital services and medical services for needy pensioners, we have homes for elderly people in Wolseley, Saskatoon and Regina. We are working in close co-operation with churches who take on care for the aged people. And I would like to congratulate this Government on the near completion of its new home for elderly people at Melfort. A great deal more still needs to be done in this area, Mr. Speaker. Additional homes would relieve congestion in our hospitals and mental institutions, and remove that burden of care for chronic cases, where old-age rather than illness is confining these people to hospital. I know the Government is well aware of this problem and is moving in this direction as rapidly as the necessary funds are available. I was pleased to see, in the Speech from the Throne, mention made of an expanding programme of nursing care for the aged, and I was hoping, when I saw that, Mr. Speaker, that we might soon have a new nursing home in Regina, because the need is very great here.

I would also like to commend the Government on its decision to expand their programme for rehabilitating handicapped civilians, and in this connection I would like to suggest that there is one group, the deaf people, that should receive consideration. I feel that hearing aids and batteries for hearing aids should be exempted from Education Tax. It seems to me they should be in the same category as glasses and drugs and so on, and this is just a suggestion I would like to make at this time.

Let us look, next, at the achievements of this Government in the field of public health. The C.C.F. Government believes that every citizen

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has the right to health care, regardless of ability to pay and they gave us the finest hospitalization plan on this Continent, as well as free treatment for Cancer and Polio and Venereal Disease.

Regarding our Cancer programme, the Editor of "The Ottawa Citizen" had this to say, and I quote:

"Even the Liberals admit that Saskatchewan had perhaps the finest Cancer control programme in the world."

The achievements of this Government in the field of mental health are well known and have earned tributes from such men as Dr. Meninger, who said that Saskatchewan had the most advanced training courses in Mental Hygiene in North America, and that experts would be coming to this province to study.

Our Air Ambulance has had its seventh birthday on February 8, and since that time the service has been responsible for the safety of 5,000 patients and has travelled a distance equal to approximately fifty trips around the world. What a godsend that Air Ambulance was during the recent polio epidemic, because, with polio, speed of access to doctors and hospitals means just the difference between life and death, or between being crippled for life or recovery. I think this Air Ambulance is one of the best examples of what I mean when I say we believe that every citizen has a right to health care, whether they live in a city or in one of the most remote areas of this province.

Hospital construction has proceeded at such a pace we now have a bed capacity of 7.1 per thousand, almost double what we had in 1944, and the City of Regina has a bed capacity of 17 per thousand, which is the highest in the Dominion of Canada. We have build a medical college at Saskatoon and we are constructing a hospital in connection with it, so that we can train our own doctors and hope to keep them in this province.

We have now set up eight of the health regions, and we hope to set up more soon. This was one step that was suggested by the Health Services Planning Committees in the amazingly comprehensive report that they presented, which step they said was necessary before we implemented Health Insurance.

This Government is now ready to proceed with a National Health Insurance Plan, and we view with great concern the probability that the Federal Government may not now be prepared to carry out its promise, made 33 years ago, for health insurance, and reiterated at every election since that time.

Reading from a speech of the Hon. Paul Martin, he said this: "The time is not yet ripe." Not ripe after 33 years! When will it be ripe, Mr. Speaker? Of course it will cost money. We know that; but health care is costing us money now. \$671 million was spent in this country on health care, last year, but yet health care still depends on ability to pay.

In a recent Gallup Poll, eight out of ten people interviewed expressed a desire for health insurance. No individual or family should be crippled for life by doctor bills, or denied care because they cannot pay for it. Of course there are privately-owned and co-operative schemes, but they cover a very, very small proportion of our people — 25 per cent partially covered, and only 5 per cent fully covered. There is no question but that the administrative cost of these many schemes is greatly in excess of what it would be with an overall Health Insurance Plan. Certainly there are some shortages of personnel. There were certain shortages when we implemented our Hospitalization Plan, but we met them. I can remember the dire predictions of the opponents of this Government when we brought in hospitalization. Dr. Samuel Johnston one said, “Nothing will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must first be overcome.” People can always find excuses for things that they do not want to do. This again is a point that I think very well establishes what I have been trying to show you — the difference between a slogan and a basic principle. We believe that all people have a right to health care regardless of ability to pay, and we implemented that hospitalization scheme in our first year of office. The Federal Government say they believe in Health Insurance — they have promised it for 33 years and now — “The time is not ripe.”

Saskatchewan is ready and anxious to proceed with its Health Insurance Plan, and I feel it will be a serious breach of trust, in view of the promises of the Federal Government if they do not implement Health Insurance at this Session. If some other provinces are not ready, why should Saskatchewan suffer? We are ready here, and we have a right to expect adequate help from Ottawa, to carry out our plans.

But hand in hand, Mr. Speaker, with public health measures must go a vigorous attack on what I consider Canada's No. 1 welfare problem — housing. There is no social evil in this or any other country that causes more ill health, is the cause of more mental illness, juvenile delinquency, broken homes, and other social evils too numerous to mention, than that of substandard housing or slums; and we are living in a false paradise if we do not think that slums exist in Canada, in this province, and in this city.

Now we may not have large areas of dilapidated houses gathered together that we call a slum area, but we do have many dilapidated houses, quite unfit to live in, being occupied by thousands of Canadian people. We have whole families living in one or two rooms, and maybe several such families in one house. We have families living in trailers, in emergency shelters that were built just to tide people over an emergency, but they are still in use because there is no place for people to go. We have families separated. I could tell you of a family where the Government had to take the children in care, not because they did not want to live as a family but because there was no place to house them as a family. I have people coming to me constantly, in desperation over the terrible housing conditions under which they are living. I am going to cite just two or three examples — and I choose Regina, not because I think we are the only place that has problems, but because I do know the situation here.

I was called the other day by a woman, and when she told me the conditions they were living under, I thought she must be exaggerating so I went to her home to see if it was true. This, Mr. Speaker, is what I found: A family of eight, mother and father and six children, living in a house (children ranged, by the way, from two months to fifteen years of age) that

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consisted of one room and a lean-to kitchen. The house was in very bad repair and, of course, it was non-modern. Now, in that one room there was a double bed, and in that bed the four oldest children had to sleep. Beside the bed was a crib and in that crib the next child slept. Beside the crib was a little bassinette, right against the heater, the only place there was to put it, and in that little bassinette was a two months-old baby. In the same room, a day-bed had to be made up at night, where the father and mother slept – all in the same room. There was no clothes' closet. The floor was in terrible condition; the cracks had come right through the linoleum and the draft came through. It was perfectly dreadful.

The children had been ill. One little girl had been in hospital twice. Do you wonder? Could you expect anything else? The mother was at the breaking point and she felt that if she could not get out of that place, she was really going to be ill. She told me that when she had to do the washing – for a family of eight, mind you – the only place to hang the clothes in the winter was in the house. You can imagine that. And due to the general dampness in the house it took two or three days for those clothes to dry. Do you wonder that the mother was at the breaking point? Conditions like this, Mr. Speaker, are absolutely intolerable, yet we are putting up with them.

I could tell you of the case of a young mother who came to see me. She was almost a nervous wreck trying to keep the children quiet. They were living in a couple of rooms in a house and they had two little children, and every time the little three-year-old boy ran across the floor, somebody was banging on the door – the landlady – too much noise. The family just lived in terror that the baby would waken and cry in the night. Surely it should be a God-given right for any family with children, to have a home of their own.

Just one more case. This one distressed me very greatly and I just cannot forget it. It was the case of a young couple with two children, who were living in an attic. The husband was away a good deal. It was a drafty attic, and the windows were so high that you had to stand on a chair to see out. The husband was told that if they did not move out of there, his wife was due for a mental breakdown. Well, they tried, but they could not find a place. You might as well have smallpox as children, if you are looking for a place to live. The inevitable happened. That mother had to be taken to a mental hospital and those children were left without a mother.

Conditions like this, in a so-called Christian country, are pretty hard to understand, and in my opinion, a great deal harder to condone. They say that the home is the foundation of society, and certainly it is the most sacred institution we have, but all the health programmes, welfare programmes, and recreation programmes we have will fail to produce healthy, well adjusted, stable homes unless we can solve our housing problem.

Canada lags far behind many other countries in this respect. The January 15th issue of "MacLean's Magazine" contains an article entitled "Our Sorry Record in Housing", written by a social economist. He made a study of housing, since the war, in Britain, the United States, Sweden, Australia, and Canada, and he states that Canada rates last.

Dr. J.O. Firestone, one of the top Federal housing officials said, in 1949, “There are 475,000 families, or 36 per thousand, without homes.” The number has grown greatly since then, and we are not keeping up with the housing needs of new families, let alone catching up on the backlog. No country that has made an honest, realistic attempt to house its people, has been able to do so without a programme of public housing, without low-rental housing and subsidized where necessary.

In studying the report of the Royal Commission on Housing, known as the Curtis report, presented in 1944 to the Federal Government (i.e. nine years ago), it was recommended that the Government start a large-scale programme of public housing with emphasis on low rental housing, subsidized where necessary. The same recommendation was made by the Canadian Welfare Council and made after a great deal of study by a group of people that contains not only economists and social workers but businessmen, bankers, insurance men, labour representatives and representatives of building trades. The Canadian Council of Churches also made the same recommendation may they couched their recommendation in very strong terms.

Now, economists have stated that no family should purchase a home at more than two and one-half times their yearly salary, or rent a home at more than 20 per cent of their monthly pay cheque. Yet, what is the situation? Three-quarters of the homes built by private enterprise since the war have been within the means of only the top income third of our people. Practically none have been built for the moderate income group and virtually nothing for the low income group; and, of course, practically no rental housing. Quoting from Nathan Strauss, the former administrator of housing in the United States and a man who probably knows more than anyone on this continent about housing – this is what he says:

“It is easier to make people believe the pleasant myth that private enterprise can and will build dwellings within the means of low-income families than to face the unpleasant fact that the goal is not achieved nor even in sight.”

Private enterprise must build at a profit. This is not a criticism of private enterprise; it is merely a statement of fact. Experience has shown that low rental housing cannot be provided for low income people unless we forget about profit. The only sensible proven permanent solution for the housing question is public housing subsidized where necessary. And why not subsidies for housing? Subsidies are not new. Grants in aid of education are a form of subsidies. Family allowances certainly are subsidies. Recently the Federal Government gave a sizable subsidy to gold mines. Tariffs are one of the oldest forms of subsidies and, if my memory serves me correctly, it is not so many years since the families in the west were subsidized for not growing grain. Subsidies, properly allocated, are one of the finest methods known to distribute the national income more fairly, and in the light of the distressing circumstances such as I have outlined today, surely no one could conscientiously oppose subsidies to give our people decent homes to live in.

In Britain, New Zealand, Sweden, Holland, the United States and Newfoundland, public enterprises have provided hundreds of thousands of

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homes for working people at rents that they can afford to pay. Surely a young vigorous country like Canada can do the same. It should not be a question of can we afford to house our people decently, Mr. Speaker, but in view of the social implications of bad housing, can we afford not to house our people decently!

I would like to quote from a speech made by the late King George V on April 11, 1919:

“It is not too much to say that an adequate solution of the housing question is the foundation of all social progress. If this country is to become the country we wish to see it become a great offensive must be undertaken against disease and crime and the first point at which the attack must be delivered is the unhealthy, ugly, overcrowded housing which all of us know too well.”

Now, any action designed to eradicate the evils of bad housing must begin where the worst housing is, not where the best housing is. It must start with the lowest income group. Senator Wagner, another expert on American housing, said: “To ignore the needs of this group is like curing a cold and ignoring a cancer.” Thus, we must make a vigorous attack on this at all levels of government, and before we can accomplish a great deal we have got to have lower interest rates. Much of the housing that has been done by housing authorities in the United States – they have borrowed money from the Government at 2 per cent. We need longer terms of payment, lower down payments, and we need a great deal of research into cheaper methods of building.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government is to be commended on including Section 35 in its Housing Act under which for housing projects loans are available to be financed 75 per cent by the Federal Government and 25 per cent by the municipalities and the province together – and where subsidies are necessary, those subsidies will be paid at the same rate. Now, while all authorities agree that the chief responsibility for housing is with the Federal Government, because they are the only government that have the money to launch a housing programme, still there must be close co-operation with the provinces and the municipalities. I would like to congratulate this Government on its willingness – in fact, its eagerness – to enter into an agreement with municipalities who will build houses under Section 35 of the Act. I am very pleased to see, in the Speech from the Throne, that this co-operation is to continue.

I would also like to congratulate the Government on making available very fine large tracts of very desirable land for housing projects in Regina. This is going to help the situation here a great deal and we are very grateful, but I would like to point out that it still does not meet the needs of the low income group.

I would like to commend the Hon. Minister of Social Welfare for his considerable share in persuading private enterprise to build these houses and apartments on this land, and also to commend the Minister on the very active part that he has taken in urging municipalities to build houses under Section 235 of the Act. The fact that so few municipalities have taken advantage of this shows that there is need for a great educational campaign

to acquaint municipalities with the provisions of the Act and to persuade them of the very dire consequences of bad housing in their communities.

While poor housing attracts more attention in cities, it is not confined to cities. As much needs to be done in rural areas and in towns and villages, and I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the subject of housing will be given a good deal of consideration by the Commission on Agriculture and rural Life.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have tried to show that this C.C.F. Government, within its legal and financial limitations, has succeeded in its policy of the greatest good to the greatest number. but Saskatchewan can only go so far. We need more help from the Federal Government for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Housing. Thirty-three years of promises to implement a health insurance plan are not good enough. We believe in action, not promises. But neither can this province or this dominion continue to provide the social services that we need, if we should find ourselves in a world at war. Therefore, while our responsibility as a legislature is of course to Saskatchewan, we must work unceasingly for a world at peace. In our lifetime we have seen two wars, a devastating depression and we now face the possibility of a third world war that could mean the end of civilization as we know it. These things did not just happen, Mr. Speaker. They are the result of a basic philosophy that has neglected the needs of the masses of our people. In Europe, Asia, Africa the people are rising and demanding a better standard of living and our answer to these movements will settle our own future. We may suppress these movements by force, and we will lose the future if we do that. Or we may dedicate ourselves, as democratic socialist movements the world over are dedicating themselves, to pursue unceasingly the war on poverty and human misery and, by this positive approach, root out the seeds of war. Our answer to the needs of others will determine our own right to peace and security. I am proud, Mr. Speaker, to be a member of a government which places humanity first.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the hon. member for Melfort-Tisdale (Mr. C.G. Willis) that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor as follows:

TO HIS HONOUR THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM JOHN PATTERSON,

Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Saskatchewan

May it Please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan, in Session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present Session.

Mr. C.G. Willis (Melfort-Tisdale): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to second the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne, I wish first to commend the mover on her fine speech. I would also congratulate the junior member for Regina on her election to this Legislature. I would sympathize with her though in being the only woman member elected last June 11, but I am certain, after having listened to her address today, you will agree that the viewpoint of the women of this province will be ably presented in this Assembly. My congratulations, too, are extended to the members for Canora and Humboldt. I am certain they will justify the confidence shown in them.

This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I wish to take a few minutes before going into my main speech to say a few words about my Constituency of Melfort-Tisdale. As mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, work on the Melfort Nursing Home is progressing favourably. The Minister of Social Welfare and the Government are to be congratulated on their decision to proceed with the construction of this three-quarter million dollar undertaking. The Home, besides filling a need for the older people of the north-eastern part of the province, will be an asset to the town of Melfort as well as a credit to the province of Saskatchewan.

I would like to refer to the booklets which have been placed on the desks of the members of this Assembly. This booklet has been prepared by the Melfort Board of Trade in order to publicize the town of Melfort and the Carrot River Valley in which it is situated. It is a fine pictorial record of Melfort and District. The Board of Trade, which is distributing it free of charge to interested persons, is to be commended in doing a fine publicity job.

Congratulations are due to the town of Tisdale which, last year completed the installation of a waterworks and sewage disposal system. This marks a forward step in the history of that progressive community. The Tisdale School Unit was organized in 1952, following the second vote in that area. The Melfort School unit, which has been functioning since 1952, completed last year, in co-operation with the Melfort Collegiate District, a composite school with a capacity of 240 pupils, bringing to that area technical as well as academic training comparable to that obtainable anywhere in the province.

The recent formation of the Melfort Union Hospital district resulted, in 1952, in enlarging the former hospital into a 72-bed structure with most modern equipment. Of interest to farmers is the Melfort Pig Hatchery Co-operative, which has been in operation for more than a year. The Hatchery, which, I am informed, is the only one of its kind now operating in western Canada, has 70 sows at its headquarters about five miles west of Melfort. When I visited it about two weeks ago there were already more than 130 piglets which will be available soon for distribution among the co-op membership.

To finish this section of my address I will mention the part taken by the Melfort Agricultural Society in encouraging junior club work among the farm youth in north-eastern Saskatchewan. Members of three 4-House Clubs in that area won provincial honours and represented Saskatchewan at last winter's Royal Winter Fair at Toronto. Margaret England and Dorothy Gilmour, of the Jordan River Clothing Club, placed fifth at Toronto in the clothing competition. Faith Elliott and her sister, Iris Elliott, of the Eastman

Food Club, were third in their event at the Royal Winter Fair. Jack Levring and Harvey Dahl of the Melfort Dairy Club also finished third in the dairy cattle competition.

Turning to the provincial scene, it would be no over-statement to say that the years since 1944 have been the most eventful in Saskatchewan's history. The first socialist government on the North American continent, while putting into effect its pre-election promises, has carried out a programme that not only attracts attention throughout much of the civilized world, but has won for itself re-election for its third consecutive term of office. Parts of the C.C.F. programme have already been ably dealt with by the mover of the Address in Reply. Other accomplishments of this Government are deserving of mention.

Ranking high on the list is certainly the achievement of the Department of Highways. When the Minister of Highways assumed office in 1944, he took over the responsibility of building up and retaining the largest provincial highway system in Canada, a responsibility made greater by the fact that three-quarters of that system were highways in name only. At this time I should like to compliment the Minister of Highways and his staff for the vast strides made in improving and extending that highway system. The construction by the Department of 4,200 miles of road is a record of achievement of which the Department should take a great deal of credit. This mileage of construction represents over 50 per cent of the provincial highway system and greatly exceeds the provincial highway system of either Manitoba or Alberta.

Also there has been vast improvements as regards blacktop in the province. Prior to election of the C.C.F. there were only 132 ½ miles of blacktop in Saskatchewan. By the end of 1952, Mr. Speaker, this has been increased to 995 miles. In this province today, one can travel over continuous blacktop from North Portal on the United States border to Regina and Saskatoon to Radisson, a distance of 376 miles, or from the United States border to Saskatoon to Rosetown, a total of 409 miles without leaving blacktop. Besides this, blacktop is rapidly being extended to connect all the larger centres of this province.

So much has been accomplished by the Department of Highways in the period 1944 to 1952 that there is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that that accomplishment materially assisted in the victory of the C.C.F. at the polls, last June 11. But not only was there on that occasion endorsement of the past highway achievements of this Government, but also there was approval of the highway plank of the platform upon which the C.C.F. appealed for re-election. A five-year programme comprising 2,500 miles of grade, 1,200 miles of blacktop and 500 miles of asphalt-treated highway is indeed a programme worthy of support.

While concentrating on highways connecting our larger centres of population, this Government has not forgotten the main market roads which are primarily the responsibility of municipal bodies. It has been the custom of past governments of the province to make grants towards the improvement of these main market roads. But the whole set-up of previous governments has not been such as to make municipal councillors happy. I studied the statements of

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grants received by the rural municipalities in the constituency of Melfort-Tisdale, a record which doubtless can be duplicated in practically every constituency in the province. I found that each rural municipality received a total of three or four grants in the ten years preceding 1944. The rural Municipality of Star City, in which I farmed, received in those 10 years three grants totalling \$800. In the nine years of C.C.F. Government, the Rural Municipality of Star City received grants in excess of \$10,400.

Rural Municipal councillors, Mr. Speaker, appreciate the fact that the C.C.F. introduced an annual grant – an annual equalization grant based on the needs of the municipality, the amount of the grant varying with the assessment and population of the municipality, the mileage of provincial highways within the municipality, the topography, amount of bush cover, stone and other handicaps to road building.

Rural municipal officials appreciate also that this Government saw fit to implement the recommendations of the Britnell-Cronkite-Jacobs report by withdrawing the tax from the property tax deal. The Public Revenue Tax of 2 mills, if retained by the municipalities, will substantially aid them in carrying on their work without increasing their rate of taxation over that of last year.

Another Department in which great improvements have been made is that of Natural Resources. When the C.C.F. took office they found a record of neglect of the natural resources of this province. Prior to 1944 no attempts had been made to find out what the natural resources were, nor was there any programme of conservation of our renewable resources. Now, to quote from the annual report of the Natural Resources Department for 1950-51:

“Emphasis is placed on the gathering of basic data through our forest inventory, geological surveys, fisheries biological investigations, game and fur census and regional resources surveyed for the purpose of providing the basis for coordinated management and development plans which will permit the best use of the province’s natural wealth.”

That approach to the problem of our natural resources has already shown results. Our Forest Industry, which last year produced products valued at more than \$9 ½ million, is being placed on a sustained yield basis.

One illustration of effective forest management practised by the Department concerns the work being done in the district by the new high utilization sawmill at Big river. As a result, in the forest inventory, it was estimated that there are 90-million feet of merchantable saw timber in that area. It is planned to remove the matured timber at the rate of 6 million feet annually for the next 15 years. Following this, the cut will be reduced to a sustained yield basis of 2 ½ million feet each year. Big River, because of this planned management of her forest resources, is assured of a timber industry in perpetuity.

A natural result of the planned management programme for our forestry resources was the setting up of the Saskatchewan Timber Board which has assisted in the orderly marketing of timber products, in the stabilizing of price to the producer and in the assuring to the public of its just shares of the profits arising from the timber resources.

It was realized early by the Department that forest management could not succeed without adequate fire protection, so high priority was given to a modern fire-control programme which features the only smoke-jumper unit in Canada.

In our fishing industry, too, the Department has taken the lead in acquiring knowledge of the fishing potentials so as to manage this recourse in such a way that it will always be a source of livelihood or recreation to the people of this province.

In our fur industry, a fur census in conjunction with a fur conservation programme is showing fine results, especially in regard to beaver population, the number of beaver taken in 1950-51, totalling 141,000 as compared with 473 in 1944-45.

Reference is made in the Throne Speech to the great prospecting activity taking place in the far north. The Saskatchewan Government is actively assisting in this development by completing geological surveys of promising areas. Besides, classes have been held to train prospectors, while assistance is being given to prospectors in the field.

More spectacular than other mineral developments has been that of oil. For years it has been thought that Saskatchewan had oil resources, but little exploratory work was done before 1944. When the C.C.F. took office one company was leasing large acreages on an exploratory basis, but there were no regulations making exploration compulsory. Under the C.C.F., oil production has increased from nil in 1944 to 1,600,000 barrels in 1952, and this appears now only to be the beginning.

And, Mr. Speaker, oil companies came into here, spent a great deal of money — \$31 million in 1952 alone — even though the C.C.F. Government retained for the province from 25 per cent to 60 per cent of the Crown Resources in a checkerboard pattern. The interests of the people of this province have been safeguarded. The oil resources of Saskatchewan have not been given away. This development in oil, Mr. Speaker, has taken place in spite of the fact that critics of this Government proclaimed loudly that the policies of the C.C.F. would keep oil companies out of this province, that oil would not be discovered as long as the C.C.F. Government was in power.

Mr. Speaker, as a farmer I am particularly interested in our agricultural industry. I am glad to say that the C.C.F. Government has recognized the basic importance of agriculture in this province. The amount of money made available for the work of the Department of Agriculture has increased from \$493,000 in 1943-44 to \$3,666,000 in 1952-53. The work of the various branches of the Department has been extended, as reported in the Throne Speech to the end that the quality and quantity of production from the farms of Saskatchewan be improved and increased.

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But, Mr. Speaker, there is another side to the agricultural picture which is of great importance. No matter what programme the Department of Agriculture follows, no matter how efficient the farmers themselves are, the welfare and prosperity of western agriculture depend directly upon policies laid down by the Federal Government. The matter of markets, of prices received for agricultural products, of trade agreements, of marketing boards, of costs of production and cost of living, are all under the jurisdiction of the government at Ottawa.

Western agriculture has prospered in the last 10 years. In no other decade have farmers enjoyed such a period of stability. One contributory factor has been the great need for our agricultural products during and following the war. American and Canadian aid has helped importing countries to buy our farm goods. Also, because of the 5-year British Wheat Agreement, which assured us of stable prices, we escaped the fate of the farmers following the first World War when, with the disbanding of the Wheat Board, wheat prices fell sharply from the high of \$2.32 in 1919 to .65 cents in 1923.

Saskatchewan farmers have appreciated the fact that we have had forward prices; but we object to having our prices fixed without a corresponding control over costs of production. Since the removals of price controls in 1945, production costs have been continually rising, implement prices going up, railways requesting freight rate increases faster than the transport board can handle them, farm labour wages mounting, and cost of repairs climbing along with the cost of living.

While these costs have been rising returns from a bushel of wheat have actually fallen. The International Wheat Agreement was fixed in American dollars. When the Government at Ottawa freed the Canadian dollar in 1950, and it rose above the United States dollar, we received less for every bushel of wheat sold under that agreement. The wheat farmer largely owes what prosperity he has to the fact that he has produced abundantly. In the past three years, Saskatchewan farmers have produced almost one billion bushels of wheat which is equivalent to more than four average crops. This large production has more than offset the comparatively low price we have received, so that we farmers have had a fair degree of prosperity.

But, Mr. Speaker, there are signs that this period of prosperity may be coming to an end. We have not as yet delivered half the 1952 crop to our elevators. It is altogether certain that, come July 31st, there will be a considerable part of this year's crop still on our farms and, though we hate being pessimistic, there is a possibility that come July 31st there may be no International Wheat Agreement. With a huge carryover on our hands and no Wheat Agreement to dispose of it, in an orderly manner, the farmers of Western Canada could be in for a rough time.

Farmers in Saskatchewan agree, practically unanimously, with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, when it states in an advertisement in the "Western Producer" of January 29: "first, an International Wheat Agreement is the best way of marketing our wheat and, second, prices in the new Agreement should be substantially increased."

However, Mr. Speaker, we would also agree, I think, that there should have been more done by the Government at Ottawa to control our production costs. If price controls had not been removed in 1945, if price levels

had been held, we would not now be having difficulty in getting importing countries to agree to a substantially higher price or, in other words, to pay for our uncontrolled inflation.

Even more important than Ottawa's failure to hold the price line has been the attitude of the Federal Government toward trade. The world needs our agricultural products. However, with economic aid virtually at an end, we are relearning today that trade is a two-way street. We must buy from those to whom we wish to sell. Exports must be paid for, in the long run, by imports.

Britain recently was exporting textiles to us, quite successfully – the Liberal Government at Ottawa increased the tariff from 15 per cent to 22 ½ per cent. Following the war, British automobiles were being shipped to Canada on an expanding scale – an anti-dumping duty was declared against them.

This question of foreign markets for agricultural products is causing anxiety in practically every food-exporting country. Here, in Saskatchewan, Mr. L.J. Bright, in a guest editorial appearing in the November 7 issue of the weekly "Co-operative Consumer", is greatly worried about the Federal Government's trade policies. In an article entitled "Agriculture – Canada's Basic Industry", Mr. Bright, after pointing out the importance of agriculture and effective export markets for agricultural products, states:

"Before the farmer can share at all in these billions of dollars, the grain must be sold. A glance at the statistics tells us that the Canadian carry-over of wheat is increasing substantially. We know first hand that farm, country and terminal storage is jammed. We also know that our principal customers need our grain, but have great difficulty securing dollars with which to pay for that grain. Dollars can only be secured by loans or gifts from Canada or the United States or, and preferably, by sales of goods in a dollar area.

"Many millions of bushels of our grain have been purchased by virtue of loans and gifts in the past few years, and without these purchases the position would have been chaotic and ruinous for the producer.

"The only permanent solution is by reciprocal trade with our customers, and Britain has made valiant efforts to secure dollars by selling her products in Canada. We presume that the Federal Government is aware of the problems, and aware of the United Kingdom's efforts to honourably solve them.

"If then, we are to accept as sincere the compliments of our industry and of its importance, surely it is a fair question to ask why the Federal Government hampers with tariffs and anti-

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dumping duties the attempts by our main markets to secure dollars with which to buy our agricultural products.

“Apparently when the chips are down, the Canadian automobile industry, which cannot compete even with the United States manufacturers without tariff protection, is more important than the agricultural industry. The selfish and greedy attitude of these people is exemplified in their refusal to allow British firms to display their cars at the Auto shows at Montreal and Toronto, next year. The sale of these cars and other products in Canada is essential to the welfare of every Western farmer.

“Farmers should make a point of asking every candidate in the next Federal election where he or she stands on this matter. Do not underestimate the importance of this problem. Either we will exchange our food for Britain’s industrial products, to our mutual benefit, or we will become the colonial pawn of a Government-subsidized Eastern industry.”

Mr. Speaker, I would agree with Mr. Bright on the importance of this question and, like Mr. Bright, I would urge that every candidate or potential candidate in the coming Federal election take the first opportunity to declare his stand on this important matter.

Mr. Speaker, in the States we find that the matter of trade is causing serious concern also. The editor of the “Country Gentleman”, in the February (1953) issue, discusses the question of markets in an article entitled “Farmers Have a Stake in Foreign Trade.” He says:

“Export markets are necessities so long as American farmers produce more than this country needs. In the 1951-52 fiscal year, they took one-third of our cotton and wheat crops, one-fifth of our tobacco and soy beans, and one-sixth of our hard-pressed lard production. Altogether, our export trade added more than four billion dollars to farm income.

“These foreign markets are now slipping away. Exports of farm products are down 30 per cent below the previous year. This loss has contributed to the drop in farm price levels. If it goes on, surplus problems will return and some of our crops will have to be cut back by acreage controls.

“We do not have to lose these vital farm export markets. They can be held; but to do so will require a change in some of our traditional trade policies and

thinking. the facts should be faced. The free European countries are the chief market for our farm surpluses, because they must import one-third of their normal food needs.

“We have been paying a part of their food bill ourselves. In 1948-49, two-thirds of our farm exports were paid for by aid funds, but now less than one-fifth is being financed that way. Without aid, the free nationals lack the dollars to keep on taking as much of our farm products.

“A substitute must be found for aid. The right one is proposed by the American Farm Bureau Federation: it is trade, not aid. This will call for some revision of our present tariff and trade policies. As these now stand, the food importing countries cannot trade with us enough to pay for the farm products they need. The Farm Bureau has urged a bi-partisan commission to devise ways of mutually expanding the free-world economy through more trade.

“It is a good idea. Both farming and our most efficient industries must have foreign markets to prosper. The only way to assure them is by expanding the exchange of goods. In the 1920’s, when a similar situation existed, we took the opposite course and raised our tariffs. Other nations retaliated and American farmers went through the wringer as a result. Let us be more intelligent this time.”

Mr. Speaker, the problem here is similar. We in Canada are faced with the same situation as in the States, so much so that if the Government at Ottawa does not revise its traditional trade policies and thinking, the farmers of Canada, too, are likely once more to “go through the wringer”, and, make no mistake about it, if the farmers do, the country as a whole will suffer for, to paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, “No economy can long endure half prosperous, half depressed.” Not only farmers, but every one in Canada has a stake in foreign trade.

I would have liked on this occasion, Mr. Speaker, to take time to review the South Saskatchewan River project. However, I am sure, before this Session is over, every member of this Assembly will unanimously unite in protest against the recommendation of the Royal Commission, and will demand that the South Saskatchewan River project be proceeded with now.

Reference should be made, Mr. Speaker, to the Crown Corporations of this Government. These Corporations, condemned on every hand by opponents of the C.C.F., threatened with being “thrown out the window” if the Opposition achieved power, nevertheless have contributed much to Saskatchewan’s industrial growth. In 1951, the Crown Corporations of this Government gave employment to 3,708 persons and produced goods and services valued at more than \$31 ½ million.

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The most outstanding corporation from the viewpoint of the farmers is Saskatchewan Power Corporation. No single thing has meant so much to the farm family as being connected to the power line. Beginning with 135 farms connected prior to 1944, the Power Corporation now has more than 12,000 farms serviced – a tremendous undertaking when one considers the size of Saskatchewan farms and the distance those farm houses are apart. Practically all towns and villages in the province have been connected by a low voltage system, largely since 1944, while a higher voltage transmission grid transmits power from larger efficient plants in the province to the distribution network. In spite of the fact that many of the larger cities are separate from the Corporation, and that farmers are subsidized to the extent of 60 per cent of the cost of bringing power to them, the Corporation has changed a deficit of \$231,000 in 1944 to a surplus of \$1,450,000 in 1951. The Minister of Public works and the hard-working officials and staff of the Corporation deserve our hearty congratulations for a job being well done.

This afternoon, Mr. Speaker, the mover of the Address in Reply and I have reviewed some of the achievements of the past two Legislatures. Within the short period of time from 1944 to 1952 a ‘people’s government’, dedicated to the principles of Humanity First has introduced measures of social security, of economic planning and management which have brought to the people of this province a considerable measure of social security and economic well-being. In the implementing of the programme recently endorsed by the electorate, it is my sincere prayer that the next four years will record a further improvement in our lot.

Mr. Speaker, I take pleasure in seconding the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne as moved by the junior member for Regina.

Mr. Tucker: — Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to adjourn the debate.

(Debate adjourned)

The Assembly adjourned at 4:30 o’clock p.m.