

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**First Session — Twelfth Legislature**  
**31st Day**

**Friday, March 27, 1953**

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

**SECOND READING**

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Darling:

That Bill No. 94 — An Act to authorize The Local Government Board to adjudicate on Appeals in respect of Rates charged and Service given by Certain Gas and Electrical Corporations — be now read the second time.

**Hon. J.A. Darling (Minister of Public Works):** — Mr. Speaker, this Bill is the result of our dealings with the City of Saskatoon respecting natural gas. At the time that we were discussing the transmission of natural gas to that city, one of the requests which they made of us was that we would provide a Court of Appeal to which users of natural gas could appeal on the question of rates and services. Now, in order to keep faith with the undertaking which we gave to the City of Saskatoon at that time, we must bring in an interim Bill at this Session — at least that is the procedure which I have recommended and the reason for the submission of this Bill at this time. I feel that in setting up the Local Government Board as that Board of Appeal, it should meet with general approval because of the reputation of the Local Government Board. I think the details of the Bill can well enough be discussed in Committee. I would, therefore, move second reading.

**Mr. Tucker (Leader of the Opposition):** — Mr. Speaker, there is just one question I would like to ask the Minister. I have not had time to check into the effect of Section 9, which effects to repeal The Public Utilities Companies Act to the extent necessary to give effect to this Bill. As I remember The Public Utilities Companies Act, it gave the Local Government Board power to fix rates as they thought just and fair, regardless of whether rates had been set by agreement or by franchise. Now that is my recollection of it, and this repeals it. Does this Act in any way interfere with that overriding right to fix rates provided in The Public Utilities Companies Act?

**Hon. Mr. Darling:** — I am told that it does not.

**Mr. R.A. Walker (Hanley):** — Mr. Speaker, I have not had a chance to — I guess I have had a chance, but I have not read the Bill through, and I would like to know whether or not the Bill applies to distributors of bottled gas?

**Hon. Mr. Darling:** — No, I think not. I think it is very probable that when we are dealing with the matter in full, which I am sure will be at the next Session, we will be dealing with other things besides natural gas and electricity. I might say that the same provisions of this Bill that will apply to the distribution of natural gas can also be made to

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apply to the distribution of electricity, so that the Power Corporation rates can also be referred, after it is proclaimed.

**Mr. Walker (Hanley):** — Mr. Speaker, I asked a question — I do not know if I have exhausted my right to say anything about the Bill, but I would urge most strongly that the Minister prepare regulatory legislation in this field, so that it does include the regulation of the bottled gas industry. Several times I have drawn attention to the situation as it exists in the bottled gas industry, and I may say that, even at this time, there is no evidence that the bottled gas industry is enjoying a monopolistic position in this province today. I recall having made that charge in the fall of 1952 and having had it criticized by one of the principal bottled gas distributors in this province and then, not long afterwards, seeing my charges substantially upheld by distributors in Alberta. I had made reference to the fact that in cities in Alberta, bottled gas was available for distribution at approximately \$3.50 per hundred pounds cheaper than it was in cities in Saskatchewan, and that the freight differential on car lots, on tank-car shipments of bottled gas, was only \$1.12 per hundred pounds; that the actual differential in price was several times the freight cost of shipping the gas from Alberta to Saskatchewan.

I am convinced that this sort of situation could not exist in this province if there was not a monopoly in the bottled gas distribution in Saskatchewan. I shall not take the time of the House to outline my evidence for believing that it is a monopoly in this province, but these results certainly attest to that fact. I would urge that the Minister, if it is at all feasible, consider whether or not a House amendment is possible to bring the bottled gas industry under the purview of this Bill. If that is not possible I certainly urge him, now, that the permanent arrangements that will be made at the next Session should certainly include the bottled gas industry.

(The question being put, it was agreed to.)

Moved by the Hon. Mr. Williams:

That Bill No. 95 — An Act to amend The Workmen's Compensation (Accident Fund) Act — be now read the second time.

**Hon. C.C. Williams (Minister of Labour):** — I shall outline the features of this Bill quite briefly, Mr. Speaker, and we can go into the detail in Committee. First, an amendment to Section 14 merely provides that an injured workman does not necessarily have to remain in the province of Saskatchewan during the convalescent period. The way the Act reads now, he must remain here. The Board feels that it would be quite all right for him to go to his home in Alberta, if that is where he lives, until he has recovered. That is number one.

The second point raises the funeral expenses from \$175 to \$250 and provides an amount of \$100 for transportation, or up to \$100 for transportation, of the body of a deceased workman.

Section 32 refers to an invalid child. At the present time, payments for an invalid child, who would, of course, be an orphan — that is,

his father had been killed — only last as long as it is considered the father would have lived. We want to extend that to as long as the invalidity lasts. I think that is quite reasonable.

The amendment to Section 32 deals with payments to dependants of deceased workman: \$60 for the widow, \$25 for each child. Sometimes we find that there are enough children who, at the rate of \$25 a month, would run the total amount of compensation higher than the actual wages of the deceased father, which is the limit. The amounts then are proportioned and might only be \$20 each, if there were enough children, and then as the children gradually grow up and at the age of sixteen go off the pension would reduce payments below the proper total. We just want to be able to recalculate the amount from time to time, and keep it up as high as the deceased parent's wages would permit, depending on the number of dependants.

Another, and perhaps this is the most important section that is being changed, is to give a workman who might have been injured back when salaries were quite low and had his compensation based on that amount — if a recurrence comes back and it might come back five, ten or twenty years later; if and when a recurrence comes back, he would be paid at the rate he was earning when the recurrence returns. Obviously, we would not want him to be paid compensation at the old rate of, say, \$10 a week.

Now here is an important amendment to Section 45 and I am going to take a few minutes on this because I want the House to know exactly what is intended in this Section 45, which is more of a social matter — it does not concern dollars and cents to any great extent. Section 45, as it stands now, reads as follows:

"Where it is found that the widow to whom compensation has been awarded is living with any man in the relation of man and wife without being married to him, or is otherwise leading an immoral or improper life, or is neglecting the infant dependants of the deceased, the board may discontinue or suspend compensation to such widow or divert compensation in whole or in part to or for the benefit of such infant dependants or of any other dependants of the deceased workman."

The Board feels that they are no judge of the widow's morals and while this gives them the power to suspend payments, actually they say they do not want that power, and all the new amendment will say is this:

"Where it is found that a widow to whom compensation has been awarded is neglecting the infant dependants of the deceased workman, the board may divert the infant dependants' compensation to or for their benefit."

In other words, the Board is saying that it is none of their business as to what the widow may do. We have cases at the present time where a widow is living with another man as his common-law wife and as long as they do not get married, she will get the \$60 a month, but the moment she marries that common-law husband, of course, the \$60 stops. I would just like the House to give consideration to that and we can go into it in detail in Committee.

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The next is artificial limbs. At the present time if a workman is injured and his glasses, artificial eyes, dentures, and so forth are damaged, he will be compensated. We are merely adding artificial limbs.

We have an Act, the Dominion Government Employee's Compensation Act, which is administered by the Provincial Board, but there never has been any provision in the Act to give the Board legal power to administer the Act, so we just are asking for that power. Also, the Board wants to pay the provincial auditor for auditing the books.

And, lastly, the Board wishes to be able to borrow up to the amount of \$200,000, with the approval of the Treasury Board. Occasionally they run temporarily short of cash and, in the past, have had to borrow money for a period of thirty days or so and have had to sell some bonds. So the Board wishes authority to borrow up to \$200,000. With those explanations, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of Bill No. 95.

**Mr. W.A. Tucker (Leader of the Opposition):** — There is something, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to say in regard to this most admirable Act, one that I think does receive the support of every one; but there is one thing that I think has not received enough attention, and that is some protection for the dependents of those who work on farms. I think that working on farms nowadays, when there is so much machinery involved, is more hazardous than working in most factories in the province, and it seems to me that the time has come when there should be some attention given to giving some protection to workmen who undertake to go to work on farms. If they do that they are almost sure to have to work longer hours than they work in industries in cities and towns; they generally do not get quite as good hours as workers do in cities and towns. It is small wonder that it is very difficult for farmers to get people to work for them, when we do our best to get the best possible kind of legislation for people who are working in industries which, after all, does cost the general taxpayer a considerable amount of money in one way and another, and which the consumer, in the long run, has to pay for, because it is reflected in the price of things he buys, while on the other hand we do little for the people who are engaged in the basic industry of this country. That applies not only to the person employed but it also applies to the farmer himself. We are continually hearing tragic stories of farmers operating combines and other very dangerous machinery, getting crippled or killed, and there is nothing done by the state to give them some protection — themselves if they are injured, and their dependants if they are killed. I think, in an agricultural province like ours, the time is long past due when something should have been done, when some consideration should have been given to this problem, and I do urge the Government that they give it consideration, if they have not already done so.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that the cost of this Act is covered to a great extent by contributions from people engaged in industry, but I also realize that, in the long run, the consumer has to pay for that, because the person (say) engaged in the building industry, includes the cost of operating under this Act in the cost of doing business. The plumbers, for example, very often just add on the extra cost of some of these Acts to the bill that they render. The consumers are paying for that and the farmers are paying for it, indirectly, and it seems to me time when some system of protecting farmers

and those working for them on their farms should be worked out, and that if it cannot be done in a way of asking for contributions to cover the cost of it, which may not be deemed possible, then I think it is something that might very well be looked after out of public funds.

(The question being put, the motion for second reading of Bill No. 95 was agreed to.)

The Assembly then resolved itself into the Committee of Supply, and after some time spent therein, progress was reported.

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