

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Second Session -- Twelfth Legislature

Thursday, February 11, 1954.

This being the day appointed by Proclamation of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, dated the Fifteenth day of January, 1954, for the meeting of the Second Session of the Twelfth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan, and the Assembly having met:

Mr. Speaker informed the Assembly that he had received a communication from the Private Secretary to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor stating that His Honour would open the Session at three o'clock p.m. today, Thursday, the eleventh day of February, 1954.

3 o'clock p.m.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor entered the Chamber and, having taken his seat upon the Throne, was pleased to open the Session with the following Speech:

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It is my privilege to welcome you to the Second Session of the Twelfth Legislature of the Province of Saskatchewan.

The coronation of our beloved Sovereign was an occasion of great solemnity and a source of high inspiration for the nations and territories of the Commonwealth. The ceremony, viewed and heard throughout the world, gave us a keener appreciation of our heritage and emphasized the voluntary nature of the partnership between the nations of the Commonwealth. Recalling their visit to our Country and Province, we are assured that the Queen and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, will conquer all hearts on their present tour. We wish them a safe return to their home and children.

Our Province was blessed with another bountiful harvest in 1953. During the past three years Saskatchewan farmers have grown nearly two billion bushels of grain, which exceeds the long-term average production by fifty percent. While this record production has caused serious delivery and marketing difficulties, the large stocks of grain in store on farms provide insurance against less favourable crop years.

Cash income from the sale of farm products during 1953 exceeded the all-time record established in the previous year. However, our economy remains highly vulnerable to fluctuating agricultural prices. It is essential, therefore, that agricultural marketing policies and programmes be re-examined and altered periodically to ensure a greater measure of stability for our basic industry.

The extreme fluctuations and drastic price declines for livestock in recent years continue to emphasize the need for a comprehensive marketing plan for livestock and livestock products. My Government repeats the request that the Government of Canada call a conference for the purpose

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of devising effective, long-term marketing schemes for livestock and livestock products similar in principle to the marketing of wheat by the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Geneva Agreement on Tariffs and Trade has given the trading nations of the world a useful instrument for promoting international trade. It is regretted that certain trade restrictions are being adopted in violation of the spirit of this Agreement, thereby jeopardizing the sale of our agricultural products.

During the past year, the Government of Saskatchewan has continued to urge the Government of Canada to proceed with the South Saskatchewan River Development Project. Further demands of the Federal Government for Saskatchewan to assume greater financial responsibility for this project have been met. At the present time a joint committee is meeting to draft an agreement for submission to both Governments. It is our hope that the Government of Canada will give favourable consideration to proceeding with this important irrigation project during the present year.

Significant progress has been made in the further development of irrigation, reclamation and drainage projects throughout the Province. Adverse weather conditions seriously handicapped drainage development but progress was made in the more seriously affected areas of north-eastern Saskatchewan. Continued attention will be given to this area of the Province in the coming year.

Provision will be made for making cash payment of earned clearing and breaking credits to settlers occupying Crown land in northern Saskatchewan.

Amendments to The Lands Act, The Conservation and Development Act and The Noxious Weeds Act will be presented for your consideration.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life has completed a year of intensive and valuable work in fulfilment of the broad terms of reference assigned to it. Many interested organizations have made submissions dealing with various aspects of rural problems. Thousands of Saskatchewan people attended the many public meetings held. This indicated a spirit of full co-operation to the Commission and rendered a valuable service toward making the endeavours of the Commission a success. My Government wishes to express sincere gratitude for this excellent co-operation extended by the people of Saskatchewan. It is anticipated that the final report and recommendations of the Royal Commission will be available by mid-summer; an interim report will be tabled during the present Session.

A new record was achieved in 1953 when nearly seven hundred wells were drilled for oil and gas. About three hundred of these will likely prove capable of commercial production. Expenditures on petroleum exploration and development during 1953 broke all records. A number of new discoveries were made, of which the Smiley light oil field is undoubtedly the most outstanding. Production of oil in 1953 increased sixty percent over 1952 to reach two million seven hundred thousand barrels.

During the past year, a gas pipe line was constructed from the Brock gas field to the City of Saskatoon. The Saskatchewan Power Corporation is supplying gas to over five thousand customers in the City of Saskatoon and in six communities in the vicinity of the pipe line. Since the early construction of the Trans-Canada Gas Pipe Line is now assured, our public gas utility is laying plans to make gas available to other communities in the Province.

A new Pipe Lines Act will be submitted for your approval.

Prospecting and development in the Pre-Cambrian area surpassed expectations. More than eighteen thousand mineral claims were recorded in 1953 compared with the previous record of over four thousand in 1952.

New discoveries of base metal in the area adjacent to Flin Flon on ground mapped by a provincial geological survey party two years ago insure the establishment of two more mines. Another major mine in the Uranium City area is assured of production and a number of smaller mines will produce when the Eldorado Mining and Refining Company mill at Beaverlodge is capable of processing this additional ore.

The Prospectors' Assistance Plan, the Radio Service and the Saskatchewan Government Airways have contributed materially to the opening of the North. This development has necessitated the purchase of a twenty-one passenger aircraft to provide service between Prince Albert and Uranium City.

Further exploration of our potash resources continues. An agreement which has been signed with a major producer forecasts the establishment of a complete potash mining and producing operation.

The increased activity in the development of the resources of our Province and the corresponding increase in the number of individuals and companies participating in this expansion make it advisable to revise The Securities Act. Legislation to this end will be presented for your consideration.

During 1953 the Saskatchewan Power Corporation completed the largest farm electrification programme ever to be undertaken by it in a single year. The connection of five thousand five hundred farms last year brings the total of electrified farms to more than eighteen thousand. Generating capacity and transmission lines were extended to meet the ever-growing demand for electric power. Provision is being made for an even greater programme of power expansion in the present year.

An agreement on a forest area north of Prince Albert has been completed with a prominent pulp and paper company which has already spent considerable money in surveys and studies of the area. This is an important first step toward the establishment of a pulp industry in our Province. Forest Inventory and Fire Prevention Programmes have been largely instrumental in stimulating the interest which an increasing number of companies have shown in our timber resources.

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Commercial fish production continued at a high level but unfavourable fish market conditions necessitated the implementation of initial price guarantees by the Department of Natural Resources.

Unfavourable weather conditions hampered both highway construction and maintenance operations until mid-July. From that date, improved conditions continued until late fall, allowing completion of four hundred and ninety-five miles of grading, eleven hundred miles of gravel surfacing and two hundred and nineteen miles of bituminous surfacing.

Construction work on the Trans-Canada Highway proceeded at a satisfactory pace. Sixty-four percent of the grading has now been completed.

Provision will be made for another extensive programme of highway and road construction which will include the rebuilding of a large portion of our provincial highway system and the continuation of Trans-Canada Highway construction.

Increased attention will be paid to the important problem of market roads. Engineering staff of the Department of Highways has been assigned to design a grid of main market roads for submission to the rural municipalities. This work is being done in conjunction with the Municipal Advisory Commission which is studying the financial implications of such a system.

The Government of Saskatchewan expressed deep concern over the rising number of highway accidents in the Province, in common with other parts of North America. In an effort to curb this trend, amendments to The Vehicles Act will be introduced which will provide for increased penalties for the violation of highway traffic laws. In addition, amendments to The Highways and Transportation Act providing for greater safety to our travelling public will be introduced. The Legislature will again be asked to appoint a Select Special Committee to inquire into the general problem of highway safety.

The further development of school transportation systems has improved educational opportunities for additional students. During the past year a changed basis for teacher certification was implemented. Legislation will be introduced to provide for some changes in the contractual arrangements between teachers and trustees. Amendments to The Teachers' Superannuation Act, which will further improve the teachers' retirement plan, will be presented for your consideration.

The Saskatchewan financial support for the School Building Programme has made possible further improvements of school facilities in many areas.

It is encouraging to note the continued improvement in teachers' salaries.

Additional accommodation for aged persons is being made available. The Melfort Nursing Home will be in operation in April and

construction of the Regina Nursing Home will commence in the present year.

Communities and organizations are showing keen interest in the provision of housing projects for the care of the ambulatory aged pioneers of their districts. Since the announcement of the Government's policy offering capital and maintenance grants for this purpose, six agreements have been completed and fourteen are in various stages of negotiation.

An agreement respecting rehabilitation of disabled and physically handicapped persons has been signed with the Government of Canada. Under this agreement a Director has been appointed to co-ordinate the rehabilitation services provided by various departments of the Government and private agencies. My Government is confident that this will lead to the extension of rehabilitation programmes presently operating in Saskatchewan.

Legislation enabling the Government of Saskatchewan to join with the Government of Canada in providing pensions for totally disabled persons will be presented for your approval.

A Bureau of Alcoholism has been established to undertake a fact-finding survey on the nature, extent and possible solution of the problems of alcoholism. A careful assessment of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes existing elsewhere is being undertaken with a view to the adoption of such programmes as will best meet the needs of Saskatchewan.

My Government will continue to urge the urban municipalities to participate with the senior governments in the construction of low cost housing projects. Legislation which will facilitate the participation of municipal councils in housing projects will be submitted for your approval.

More than one thousand of our Metis people in five communities are being benefited by a rehabilitation and training programme. These benefits are being extended to two additional communities each year.

The Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan continues to meet the needs of the people of Saskatchewan for hospitalization. During each of the past five years, one person in five has received hospital care at the expense of the Plan. It is gratifying to note that our Hospital Plan has made possible an increase in the percentage of maternity cases cared for in hospitals. This has contributed to a decline in Saskatchewan maternal and infant mortality rates.

Last year two physical restoration centres were established to treat victims of polio and other crippling ailments. More than fifteen hundred patients were treated in these centres.

For thirty years Saskatchewan has had an enviable record for the care and treatment of victims of tuberculosis. In the past decade, the death rate from tuberculosis has been reduced by more than fifty percent. Approximately sixteen thousand persons annually make use of the diagnostic and treatment services provided in the Saskatchewan Cancer Clinics. These programmes prove the value of social health services.

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My Government will continue to press for a comprehensive national health insurance programme.

The Air Ambulance has continued to render a most valuable service for the transportation of seriously ill people to necessary medical and hospital care. The fact that an increasing number of towns are constructing landing strips, mainly for use by the Air Ambulance, reflects the appreciation of this service.

The construction of the University Hospital is being completed and it is expected that patients will be admitted early in 1955. The Red Cross Blood Bank is already being accommodated and it is expected that the Cancer Clinic will occupy its quarters early this year.

The Co-operative movement in the Province of Saskatchewan has continued to grow. Co-operative associations with a combined membership of five hundred and twenty-five thousand reported a total volume of business of almost five hundred million dollars.

My Government extends its heartiest congratulations to the Saskatchewan Federated Co-operatives Limited on the occasion of the twenty-fifty anniversary of its founding.

A new Co-operative Marketing Associations Act to facilitate the administration and operation of marketing associations will be introduced.

Amendments to The Credit Union Act which will assist in the management of credit unions and give them more authority to invest in other co-operatives will be introduced for your consideration.

You will also be asked to consider amendments to The Co-operative Associations Act dealing with membership and the sale of securities by co-operative associations.

My Government welcomes the decision of the Government of Canada to expand the grain handling facilities at the Port of Churchill. The promotional efforts by the Government of Saskatchewan for the expansion of this port and for a greater utilization of the Hudson Bay Route will be continued.

Amendments to Municipal Acts which will provide a two-year term of office for mayors and reeves will be submitted for your approval.

Throughout the year the Government has continued its efforts to limit the excessive burden of railway freight rates on Saskatchewan. These rates have been under constant review and representations have been made to the Board of Transport Commissioners during the various hearings.

My Government has endorsed the request of the Dominion Conference of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities for the calling of a Federal-Provincial-Municipal conference to deal with the financial problems now confronting municipalities, and has so advised the Prime Minister of Canada.

During the past year the minimum wage was increased and the provisions of the Minimum Wage Act and The Hours of Work Act were extended to other areas of our Province. This action will improve the economic position of unorganized workers and those in the low income brackets.

The Apprenticeship Training Programme inaugurated in 1946 has continued to expand. At the present time more than four hundred and fifty apprentices are receiving training designed to increase the number of skilled workers available.

As required by The Workmen's Compensation (Accident Fund) Act, a Committee of Review, which is appointed every four years, will meet later this month to hear representations from interested parties desiring changes in the Act.

The 1953 construction programme of the Saskatchewan Government Telephones was substantially greater than in any other year. More than ten thousand telephones were placed in service last year, bringing the total number of telephone connections to over one hundred thousand. Provision is being made for an even greater construction programme during 1954. This programme will result in a further reduction in the number of those waiting for telephones and will bring an improvement in the quality of long distance service.

The Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Committee, through its sub-committees, has already planned and sponsored many activities for the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of our Province. It is our sincere hope that all citizens and all communities will participate in these 1955 celebrations. The Golden Jubilee observances will serve to honour our pioneers, to reaffirm our pride in Saskatchewan and our faith in its future.

A report of the Royal Commission on Public Accountancy will be tabled.

The Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, together with the estimates for the year beginning April 1, 1954, 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. May Divine Providence continue to bless our Province and guide the Legislature in all its deliberations.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor then retired from the Chamber.

The Assembly then adjourned at 3:30 o'clock p.m.