

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session – Twelfth Legislature
38th Day

Tuesday, April 3, 1956

The House met at 10.30 o'clock a.m.

On the Orders of the Day:

RE PRINTED SPEECH OF PREMIER DOUGLAS

Mr. Robert Kohaly (Souris-Estevan): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with, I have come into possession of a Pamphlet purported to have been printed by the Queen's printer, under the name of Lawrence Amon.

The pamphlet is dated 1956 and is entitled "In Defence of Freedom" and purports to be a speech of Premier T.C. Douglas in the debate on the Speech from the Throne.

Now it appears to contain the verbatim report of the Premier's speech, and I have no objection to it. However, I should like to ask the Government whether or not a similar privilege is available to the other members, to have their speeches printed and put together in this particular form, and if so, how do we go about doing this. I think the Queen's Printer has apparently prepared this; it is a nice piece of work, despite whatever cost there may be and it may be advisable that the members should have this facility available. I think perhaps the Government might elaborate on it so that it will serve as a guidance for the members.

Hon. Mr. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's speech has been printed for many, many years. At one time we used to print the speech in the Journals of the House; it was attached at the back of the Journals each year, along with the Budget Address and the Reply of the Leader of the Opposition, or whatever items would be selected by the Public Accounts Committee.

However, some years ago it was decided to discontinue that practice, but there are so many requests for the speech of the Premier that rather than having it mimeographed and sent out to the people who have written in to his office, it has seemed advisable to have it printed, and it has been printed year after year.

Now the matter of whether or not other speeches should be printed I think is something which is in the hands of the members of this House. They can order whatever printing they see fit. The matter was raised in the Public Accounts Committee and instructions were given at that time as to the printing for the year. It is true this was not dealt with at that time because it is not printed by the Legislative Assembly office. This is printed by the Executive Council and is paid for by the Executive Council, and not by the Legislative Assembly.

April 3, 1956

Mr. A.C. Cameron (Maple Creek): — Might I ask this, then, (I think this is a very important point) — how are these pamphlets being distributed; are they available to the members, or where do we apply for them? When somebody drew this pamphlet to my attention this morning, it is beautifully done up; it has beautiful captions at the head of each paragraph. “Ottawa discriminates against Saskatchewan”; the Liberals do this, and so and so say that . . . I received a phone call, this morning too, saying that it would be distributed from — I think it was the Kerr Building or the Kerr Block — to all of the C.C.F. workers in the province of Saskatchewan, as a speaker’s handbook.

Now if that is true, I think we should know which Department authorized the printing of this pamphlet, because, as I understand it, the Queen’s Printer only publishes through the Government and a Government Department must authorize it, and if so, how many copies were authorized of this particular printed copy.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, in reply to that question, there were 4,000 copies authorized by the Executive Council office, and if some were sent out from the Kerr Block or any other place, that is only a small part; the majority of them are sent out, and may I say that we will be very glad to see that all members of the House are provided with copies.

Mr. A. Loftson (Saltcoats): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister of the Leader of the Opposition has the same privilege as has been extended to the Premier?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Again, may I say, Mr. Speaker, that the Public Accounts Committee can authorize any of the members’ speeches to be prepared. It is entirely in their hands.

Mr. Kohaly (Souris-Estevan): — Public accounts did not authorize this one.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — No, I pointed out that — that this was authorized by the Executive Council, not the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. G.H. Danielson (Arm River): — Mr. Speaker, I have been here a long time and I have seen the Premier’s speeches printed, and the Leader of the Opposition’s, but I always recollected that the printing of these speeches had gone before the Committee and it has been through the authorization of that Committee that they have been printed. That has always been the practice. This is a new departure entirely, and I think it is highly irregular.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — No, Mr. Speaker, that isn’t correct. These have been printed by the Executive Council for many, many years. Even the previous administration speeches were prepared by the Executive Council Office.

Mr. Cameron: — And put in the Journals.

Hon. Mr. Fines: — No, not — they were put in the Journals. That is something that was recommended by the Public Accounts Committee to the Legislature, but in addition to that, speeches have been printed from time to time by the Executive Council — speeches which contain information that the Executive Council felt was worthy of having printed.

Mr. Speaker: — I do not think we can allow this discussion to go on much further. If any of the members wish to finalize this discussion would you come forward now. As far as I recollect it was previously authorized by Public Accounts Committee, and when that was dropped it has been at the discretion of the Executive Council.

Mr. Kohaly: — Mr. Speaker, without protracting the problem, the question that I wanted to ask the Government was whether or not the members, individually, have a right to go and have these printed. I anticipate that the answer is 'no', but I am just wondering.

Premier Douglas: — As the Provincial Treasurer (Hon. Mr. Fines) has pointed out, the Public Accounts Committee, in any year, and as they have done in some years, can authorize the publication of any of the speeches; sometimes the speech of the financial critic, or the Leader of the Opposition. The Public Accounts Committee have done that from time to time, upon the request of the members of the Committee.

Mr. Speaker: — I might point out to the members that the speeches are now available in the Legislative Office, and can be reproduced at a very nominal cost.

Mr. A.H. McDonald (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that all members of this Legislature, whether they be the Premier or anyone else, are equal in this Assembly, and if we are going to use public funds to print the speeches of any member, then I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the speeches of all members ought to be printed.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order! I think I pointed out that if this was going to be discussed it will have to come forward in a different manner than under the Orders of the Day.

Mr. McDonald: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is an important enough matter to be brought up . . .

Mr. R. Walker (Hanley): — Well, bring in a motion, then.

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. McDonald: — . . . on the Orders of the Day.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! You have asked questions and statements have been made and they must be accepted. I rule that you cannot get into a general discussion.

Mr. McDonald: — Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Danielson: — Mr. Speaker, is it not the Leader of the Opposition's right to apply . . .

Mr. Walker (Hanley): — How many have you got over there?

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I think the members of the Opposition have had ample opportunity and have received the answers. If you wish to bring

April 3, 1956

in a substantive motion, it can then come under general discussion.

Mr. Cameron: — Political speeches by the Queen's Printer!

Some Opposition Member: — What a ruling!

Mr. Speaker: — What is that remark by the hon. members?

Mr. Walker (Hanley): — Kick him out!

Mr. McDonald: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that there are many things appear in this that were never said in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker: — I am just pointing out that you cannot enter into a general discussion on the Orders of the Day.

Premier Douglas: — Did I understand the Leader of the Opposition to make the statement that there are statements there attributed to people which were not made?

Mr. McDonald: — Certainly, right on the front cover — "In Defence of Freedom." I suppose this is the only gentleman in this Legislature who defends freedom.

Some Hon. Member: — He is one of the most conspicuous ones.

Hon. Mr. Nollet: — No South Saskatchewan dam!

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Order!

RE DISMANTLING OF RAILWAY LINE

Moved by Mr. H. Gibbs (Swift Current), seconded by Mr. James Gibson (Morse);

"That this Assembly requests the Provincial Government to make representation to the Government of Canada and the Board of Railway Commissioners to disallow the application of the C.N.R. to dismantle the railway line of the Burnham-Swift Current section."

Mr. Harry Gibbs (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, I do not think this motion on the Order Paper contains anything too contentious, and I do not think it will take long to settle.

As stated in the resolution, it is dealing with the railway lines — specifically, the C.N.R. coming into Swift Current, and it is the Gravelbourg-Neidpath line. I have had information that it is the intention of the C.N.R. to begin ripping up the railway line.

Some years ago, when this line was put in, the intention at that time, and I believe the commitment at that time, was for the C.N.R. to come

straight into Swift Current. In fact, I know for a fact that they had property already bought in the city of Swift Current for their station and depot, but they came just to the outskirts southeast of Swift Current and stopped there. Why they stopped, nobody seems to know. However, that is what they did, and now that we have the information that they are going to rip up those lines from Swift Current to the village of Burnham, and possibly further down the line. The idea of this Resolution is for this Legislature to stop any action of that sort. I think since we have had in this Session, this year, so much talk about the farmer and the predicament he is in, the boxcar situation and so on and so forth, – well, if we are going to rip up railroad lines they are not going to get any boxcars over that route, that is for sure.

I would like to see every member of this House support this resolution, to stop this dismantling of railway lines. We know that the railways are at the present time, and I think it will be for a long time to come the main mode of transportation in this province or probably anywhere else in Canada, and rather than dismantle railways, railway lines and road beds, I think probably in the future we will have to get some more of them. I heard, the other day, that a man was speaking and he said he would not be surprised if the city of Swift Current in another ten years' time, would be as large, if not surpass the city of Moose Jaw in population. And the way it is growing and expanding and developing at the present time, it looks possible and quite probable that that will take place, Mr. Speaker. For those who haven't been in Swift Current for a number of years, if they would go there now they would get lost – I get lost myself, it is growing with such rapidity.

Now I know that the railways, with this trucking business coming in these past few years as a new industry – I am not saying that we shouldn't have trucks, but I am not going to say that we shouldn't have railways; I think probably both are necessary. This line has been giving service to farmers, elevators and farmers, and I think we can all realize what would happen if those services should be taken from the farmers. That is the basic industry in this province at the present time – farm and agricultural work – and I do not think we should take any facilities from them if at all possible.

As I said, I do not want to speak too long on this motion; I think every member of the House, if they understand it, will vote for it. It is just a matter of keeping our railways and let us get more if we can.

So with those few remarks, Mr. Speaker, I move the above motion, seconded by the hon. member for Morse (Mr. Gibson).

Mr. A.C. Cameron (Maple Creek): — Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say on the motion – I think it is of interest – we talk about the railways as being the main line of transportation and I think the member said, “let us keep our railways open and operating.” It was interesting, when I was home over the weekend, I caught the fast express out, which has just one coach attached to the rear for passengers – one of the older types of coaches, and it was jammed with passengers and we got discussing this matter of closing off lines and the officials on the train told us that that was the first day that they had had passengers on that coach for some time. The other morning coming down they had one; the day before they had two; and most of the time they turned in a ‘nil’ report of travellers on that coach; and they said that the main line passenger train is having the same problem. You will notice

April 3, 1956

on the main line that serves that whole area, as the member for Swift Current will know, some of the trains are being taken off the main line of the C.P.R.

I thought it brought up an interesting point when someone said there was a delegation of several people in Swift Current discussing this matter with railway officials about taking off the services on the branch line, and after much discussion a gentleman said to them, "Well, this is most interesting, but how did you come into the city?" They replied that of course they had motored in; and I think that that portrays a good deal of the picture – that while we want the railways to maintain these services, they are facing a terrific problem in that their passenger service is dropping off at a tremendous rate. The people are using cars and trucks and other means of transportation and the railways are facing a terrific problem. I thought it would be of interest to the House just to point that out – that they have a problem on their hands to keep these railways operating when almost everyone is using trucks, passenger cars and what not, as a means of transportation.

I have nothing against the resolution as such, because I think if the Transport Board, in their judgment, see fit to deny us the right they will do so, and for that reason I am prepared to support the motion. I thought the discussion we had was most interesting, in this whole field of transportation on railways, which are not being patronized due to the passenger cars, buses and trucks and so forth, and they (the railway companies) are facing a tremendous problem even to keep their lines operating.

Hon. T.J. Bentley (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, there is a good deal of truth, of course, in what the member for Maple Creek (Mr. Cameron) said, but I do not think it is germane to this particular piece of track that is mentioned in the resolution.

Passenger service is not so important to the farmers who live at Burnham and use Burnham as their shipping point for their marketable produce and bringing in supplies; they are more concerned with the freight service than they are with the passenger service. They have looked forward for a good many years to the actual operation of this line. Now, if the track is taken up, of course their expectations are finished, they have no further hope; and the farmers on the line coming into Swift Current have been very anxious for a good many years to have that service extended right into the city. At the present time the trains stop, sometimes at Neidpath and sometimes at Burnham, and go back the other way, with the result that the city of Swift Current and the people who wish to deal there are denied the opportunity of shipping their produce in by rail.

So it is not a matter of passenger service; I don't think they would expect that passenger cars would be run there, if they were sure the line would be continued and that some day their hopes would be realized and they would have a freight service into the city of Swift Current over that 14-mile strip. I believe that is what they want. I think we should support the motion in order to show those people that we are interested in their problem and we do not feel the railway should tear the line up just because they do not want to bother operating it.

Hon. T.C. Douglas (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, the member for Maple Creek (Mr. Cameron) has put his finger on what is certainly a very fundamental problem in the entire Canadian economy, and that is that there is a steady shift going on in the whole field of transportation. Buses and trucks and, even more, private automobiles have undoubtedly cut into the railroad business, and that has certainly created problems for the railroad. Any railroad that is trying to stay solvent, of course, cannot continue to run passenger lines just for the sake of the few passengers that may take advantage of it for the few times of the year when the roads are blocked. I think everybody recognizes that.

Not only is that true of passenger traffic, it is also true of freight, and particularly of express, because more and more trucks and even buses are picking up some of the express and the freight haul.

That is why, a number of years ago, when this matter went before the Federal-Provincial Conference, the Saskatchewan Government took the position that, ultimately, in Canada, we must have a transportation authority. We indicated our willingness to surrender certain provincial powers to such a transportation authority, because, as we see it, eventually if there is going to be economic transportation and a removal of duplication then there will have to be some agency in Canada with the authority to coordinate all the various forms of transportation. Instead of trucks and freight trains competing with each other, the trucks and buses should feed these lines, rather than competing with them. Areas where there is a good rail service probably ought to be an area in which there ought not to be franchises let for trucks and vice versa. We cannot afford, in a large country like ours with a sparsely settled population, to have this duplication of services, which is costly and in many cases uneconomical. I think, ultimately in Canada, we will be forced, unless we are prepared to subsidize railroads and subsidize the various forms of transportation we will be forced eventually, to some type of co-ordinated transportation system, co-ordinating air transport, passenger, rail, bus, trucks, canal and shipping all into one co-ordinated system. That, in my opinion, is bound to come.

But that doesn't solve the immediate problem. When we look at the map for this line, one can see, of course, that this is not primarily a passenger line. I am not aware of whether or not an application has been made to the Board of Transport Commissioners to tear this line up, but apparently some intimation has been given to the people of Swift Current and to the member from Swift Current to that effect.

If that line is torn up, of course, it means that the people of those communities mentioned here — Burnham, Neidpath, Scottsburgh and Dendron, and so on, are going to be left without the means of shipping out their grain and their other produce. They are not on a highway in most of these towns and it would leave them in a very awkward position. I think it would certainly be in order for us to make representation to the Board of Transport Commissioners, pointing out the fact that the elevators that stand there will become virtually useless; I have no doubt the wholesale distribution units of oil are probably located on the railroad there, too, because there isn't any highway running through there. All of those facilities will become virtually useless and these people will have to re-orient their whole basis of shipping out their produce. I think some representations ought to be made.

April 3, 1956

Probably this would be as good a time as any for me to point out to the members a service which is available to the various communities and a service which we hope they will avail themselves of. In the Department of Municipal Affairs there is a Freight Services Branch, and we have some fairly competent people in that Branch. Their services are available to any community where railway service is going to be reduced or discontinued. We have, on a number of occasions, met with local people – Boards of Trade or farmers' organizations or the municipality, and helped them in the preparation of Briefs. We do not present the Briefs or undertake the presentation, but with our Freight Services Branch we are in possession of a good deal of information as to the amount of traffic that goes over that particular line, the cost and so on and we have some idea as to whether or not there is any solid basis for making a presentation for the continuation of a railway service in a particular community. If there are any communities, as there undoubtedly are, from time to time, where they have been notified that a service is going to be discontinued or is going to be reduced – if they would get in touch with the Freight Services Branch that Branch would be very glad to help any community in preparing their material and in preparing their submissions, in order that they can be placed before the Board of Transport Commissioners. It is very seldom that the Board of Transport Commissioners grant permission to reducing a train service or discontinuing a train service without giving the people affected ample opportunity to make their presentations. Unfortunately, in a great many cases they do not avail themselves of that opportunity. They haven't the facilities for gathering the information so that they can make a good submission, whereas the railway, on the other hand, has economists and has first-class counsel who can present their case for discontinuing the service. When no information is given on the other side of the question the chances are the Board of Transport Commissioners grant the requests of the railroad.

I hope members will keep that in mind. If there are communities where they are faced with that problem, they should take advantage of the service available in the Freight Services Branch, which is designed to help the local communities present the best case possible for retaining the railway services which are so vital to their economic existence.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

SECOND READING

That Bill No. 77 – An act to extend the Duration of Certain Registrations, Certificates of Registration, Licences and Certificates of Insurance – be now read the second time.

Mr. C.M. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — First I would like to express my thanks to the members for allowing me to proceed with the Second Reading of this Bill, today.

This is the Bill which provides for extending the licenses which normally would have expired last Saturday night at midnight – to extend them until the end of this month.

I am sorry that we could not have given intimation of this at an earlier date to the House, but I think it is very obvious to all that it would have been very unfair to the Revenue Branch if we had made an announcement of this, say a week ago. It is a question which has been in the minds of many people for some little time. In the province of Alberta they passed similar legislation a week ago, and the question has been taken up with the Government by the Saskatchewan Farmers Union. I notice by the press, last night, that the hon. member for Souris-Estevan (Mr. Kohaly) gets the credit for this – well, any credit he can get for anything, of course, is all to the good. He may need it.

We are very glad, for two reasons, to be able to do this. First of all, because of the lack of finances in the hands of the farmer today; and secondly, the difficulty which the farmer has had in getting into town to get his licence plates. For those two reasons the Government has considered it advisable to bring forward this legislation, and it will, of course, be retroactive. The licences will be deemed not to have expired and will be continued until the end of the month.

May I, at the same time, appeal to the general public not to wait until the end of the month to get their licence plates; if they can possibly get into town and get their licence plates now they should do so. I have been urging people to buy their licences early, each year. We put them on sale the 1st of March; one of the troubles is that there are so many people who, financially, could well afford to buy their licence plates early, but they leave it until the end of the month; and of course at the end of the month we have line-ups waiting, and it doesn't help. So may I suggest that even though we are passing this legislation that I hope that those who have not yet obtained their new licences will not leave it until the 30th day of April. I hope that they will get their licence plates as soon as they can. And may I say, too, that I would not want this to be considered a precedent; I would not want the members to feel that because we have done this, this year, we are going to do it in the future. We have, this year, a very serious situation, with the vast amounts of snow blocking so many of our rural roads, that we felt that, this year, we are justified in doing it. I hope that a similar condition will not exist in the future.

Mr. James Gibson (Morse): — Mr. Speaker . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Are you ready for the question?

Mr. Gibson: — I just wonder, Mr. Speaker, if it wouldn't be a good idea to, instead of putting those licences on sale the 1st of March each year, put them on sale the 15th of February. I have heard a number of farmers discuss this very question and there are several reasons for that. The Minister has just pointed out the rush that there is to get the licences on the last day; well I find there is a rush on the first day – that is, in the cities; and some farmers, in many winters, as most of us know, there are periods possibly around the 15th of February that road conditions are much better than they are on the 1st of March. Therefore, they would have a longer period to pick their licences up. Over the week-end I was speaking to quite a number of farmers who haven't yet got their licence, but who would have been anxious to get them. I think that 15 days earlier would avoid that rush even on the 1st of March, let alone the rush on the 1st of April,

April 3, 1956

and I hope that the Minister will give consideration to that. He may have a good reason for not doing it, but I would like him to think it over anyway.

Mr. Cameron: — I have just one question. Does that include dealer and commercial licences?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — All plates, yes.

The question being put, it was agreed to, and the Bill referred to a Committee of the Whole later today.

The Assembly adjourned at 8.30 o'clock p.m.