

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Fourth Session — Tenth Legislature

Thursday, January 30, 1947.

This being the day appointed by Proclamation of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, dated the tenth day of December, 1946, for the meeting of the Fourth Session of the Tenth 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 thirtieth day of January, 1947.

3:00 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 and pleasure to welcome you to the Fourth Session of the Tenth Legislature of the Province of Saskatchewan.

My Government takes this opportunity of identifying itself with all nations of good will who, in the past year, have laboured in the councils of the world to make secure the peace for which so many men and women of the Allied Nations fought. Though the battles in the air, on land, and on the sea have ended, there have yet to be settled around the conference tables many serious differences which concern the political and economic destinies of the nations. My Government expresses the hope that there will be built a basis of mutual confidence and good will which may realize the desire of the people of Saskatchewan and this Dominion for security and peace.

In July of 1946, this Province was honoured by a visit from His Excellency, the Governor General of Canada, Viscount Alexander of Tunis, and Lady Alexander. The people of Saskatchewan welcomed in his person not only a great soldier, but a well-informed and zealous Canadian. Viscount Montgomery of Alamein also honoured the Province with his presence in September of 1946.

Since the last sitting of the Legislature, Canada has entered upon a new phase of national development. The Canadian Citizenship Act, made effective on January first of this year, creates a new status for the people of Canada, not only as British subjects, but as Canadians. The recent decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council affirms the right of Canada to establish its court of final appeal in this country. Saskatchewan supported the view adopted by the Judicial Committee, and it endorses the principle of Canadian Citizenship. At a time when the world has grown small, it expresses the belief that enlarged national status will enable Canada to contribute to international understanding and good

January 30, 1947

will.

The belief is expressed that Canadian citizenship should carry with it the inalienable right to freedom of conscience, of speech, of thought and of movement. In accordance with such principles, legislation will be submitted at this Session to affirm these freedoms.

My Government has concluded a tax agreement with the Dominion Government, which will be submitted to you for consideration. Saskatchewan will continue to press for further agreements which will realize the public investment and social security measures, including health insurance, enlarged old age pensions and unemployment assistance, outlined by the Dominion Government at the outset of the Dominion-Provincial Conference on Reconstruction in August of 1945.

Steps have been taken to assist in the rehabilitation of veterans in their return to civil life. Under the program of settlement on Crown lands, a total of 764 economic units have been allocated, and 450 additional parcels will soon be granted. The veterans' Matador Co-operative Farm has been successfully established. A clearing program, already begun in the Carrot River area, will make additional land available for settlement in the coming year.

Housing, which is primarily the responsibility of the Dominion Government, has received the attention of my Government, especially as it relates to the needs of the veteran. During the last two years, approximately six hundred living units in all have been constructed, and further building is planned.

On January first of this year, The Saskatchewan Hospitalization Act came into force. Through this legislation, there has been established the largest publicly directed hospitalization scheme on the Continent. Because of the unpredictability of costs at the present time, an amendment to the Act will be introduced to provide for greater flexibility of administration, for a more even distribution of costs, and for providing assistance to hospitals in sparsely populated areas.

This scheme, coupled with the development of regional health services, is creating a system of socialized medicine capable of meeting the needs of the people of Saskatchewan and of improving their health standards. Four health regions are now giving complete public health services, and two additional regions will soon be in operation.

A progressive mental hygiene program has been developed; psychiatric care is being improved, and treatment made more effective through better qualified staff and a program of in-service training. The out-patient service will be developed through an integration of regional health services.

The Air Ambulance Service has been expanded, and in the past year has carried approximately 300 patients from 125 outlying communities in all parts of the Province.

In the past year, there was a considerable increase in the number of patients treated for cancer by the Cancer Commission. A new cancer clinic is under construction in Regina, and completion of an enlarged provincial laboratory will provide greater

January 30, 1947

facilities for analyses and a new division for animal pathology. A program of immunization against communicable diseases has been expanded and vaccines for ten thousand more persons were distributed in 1946 than in the previous year. Free drugs for the treatment of venereal disease continued to be provided, and the venereal disease control program has continued to receive the co-operation of physicians and social workers in the Province.

Legislation will be introduced to transfer to the Department of Agriculture the administration of Crown lands, with the exception of certain unoccupied and non-agricultural areas.

The services of the Agricultural Representatives Branch have been increased. Thirty-six districts have been created, and as the services expand, additional districts will be established. Nineteen district boards have already been appointed on the recommendation of the Provincial Advisory Council, and the balance are expected to function soon. Their activities will bring the farmers' problems sharply to the forefront and will facilitate the formulation of local recommendations and co-operative action. In addition, under The Agricultural Representatives Act, three hundred and twenty-five Agricultural Improvements Committees have been organized in rural municipalities and local improvement districts. This Branch has developed the Agricultural Extension Program in conjunction with the Federal Government and the University of Saskatchewan. By means of this new program, major agricultural improvement projects will be undertaken.

The Feed Conservation and Development Division of the Department of Agriculture, established under The Grain and Fodder Conservation Act, is meeting the need to conserve grain and fodder for winter use in the interests of stabilized livestock production.

Negotiations are being conducted with the Dominion Government, having as their object an agreement for the further development of community pastures by re-grassing and irrigation projects in suitable areas.

The services rendered by the provincially owned and operated seed cleaning plant at Moose Jaw have greatly increased during the past year, and expanded storage facilities have been made available.

The Veterinary Division of the Department of Agriculture has assisted in establishing eleven Veterinary District Boards, six of which are now in operation. Thirty-one Saskatchewan students are attending the Ontario Veterinary College, eleven of whom received provincial scholarships. This program will ensure the Province of more adequate veterinary services.

Steps have been taken to utilize the forests in the best interests of the Province by planning their disposition, preventing waste, and developing their regenerative powers. The progressive reversion of timber rights to the Crown and the policy of marketing it directly have also benefitted the Province.

A promising natural gas field is being developed in northwestern Saskatchewan, and my Government is investigating the distribution and sale of gas as a public utility.

January 30, 1947

Of equal importance is the discovery of increased deposits of crude oil in the Province. Much of the progress in this field has been due to governmental research. There is being established an experimental oil refining plant at Regina, the purpose of which is to test a process for refining gasoline from Saskatchewan oils.

A recently concluded agreement with the Prairie Salt Company Limited will result in the establishment of a million dollar salt industry; construction of the plant is to commence in June of this year.

A co-operative fur program has been inaugurated under which sixty-five out of a projected seventy muskrat conservation and development blocks have been established in northern Saskatchewan.

A long-term parks development program has been charted. This will provide increased accommodation and recreational facilities which will contribute to the greater enjoyment and health of the people of Saskatchewan.

The industrial development program of the last two years has resulted in the establishment of provincially owned and operated industries, including a brick factory and ceramics works, a woollen mill, a shoe factory, a tannery, two fish filleting plants, a timber marketing agency, a printing plant and a fur marketing service. Work is proceeding on a new publicly owned and operated sodium sulphate plant. The manufacture of rock wool will commence this year. Investigations are proceeding for the utilization of wood and wood waste, lignite, and other natural resources. In addition to the industrial enterprises, the Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office has carried on a successful insurance business. The Saskatchewan Transportation Company has operated a publicly owned and operated bus system on the highways of the Province.

These enterprises have indicated the practicability of increased industrial activity as a stabilizing factor in the provincial economy; they have likewise shown that there are fields in which ownership and control by the people through their Legislature can be effectively achieved.

A new Crown Corporations Act will be introduced at this Session to further expand the Government's industrial program. It will also provide for an industrial development fund which will be available for the purpose of stimulating other industrial enterprises.

In spite of continued scarcity of materials, the Saskatchewan Power Commission system was enlarged by the construction of 125 miles of transmission line and by the building of distribution systems in nine villages and hamlets.

Notwithstanding general rate reductions, considerable growth has taken place in the revenue derived from the Commission's system. A greater number of consumers has been added during the year 1946 than was added to the system during the ten-year period 1931 to 1941, and for the first time since its inception, the Power Commission has operated with a surplus.

In order to increase trade, active support was lent to the development of the Hudson Bay Route. Although in the two previous years no shipping whatever passed through that port, in the year

January 30, 1947

1946, almost three million bushels of wheat as well as other commodities were exported through Hudson Bay. To the end that Saskatchewan products may find an increasing world market, there has been appointed a commercial representative to the United Kingdom and Europe who will take up his duties in February of this year.

Co-operative development has been promoted, and there has been a steady increase in all co-operative activity during the past year. A Co-operative Guarantee Act will be submitted at this Session, enabling the Government to guarantee a fixed proportion of loans made to co-operative societies.

In view of the relaxation of certain federal wartime regulations, it was possible to bring The Annual Holidays Act into force on July first of last year. As a result of this statute, all workers covered by the Act now receive a minimum of two weeks' holidays with pay after every year of their employment. Since its proclamation two years ago, The Trade Union Act has facilitated a sixty per cent increase in trade union membership. While industrial unrest has disrupted economies in many parts of the world, Saskatchewan has enjoyed a period of relative industrial peace.

The minimum wage rates in effect in the Province were raised during the past year in keeping with the increased cost of living.

In accordance with the general trend today, it is proposed to introduce legislation which, having in mind the need for servicing the agricultural economy, will reduce working hours in certain types of businesses.

As a result of hearings conducted by the Workmen's Compensation Board, the coverage of The Workmen's Compensation (Accident Fund) Act was greatly extended during the course of the last year.

A detailed classification of the public service has been completed and a pay schedule corresponding with this classification is now being adopted. A personnel policy recognizing the principles of merit and efficiency has received the co-operation and support of the Province's public servants. It is proposed to present a new Public Service Act which will incorporate the principles of classification, the merit system and in-service training.

Amendments to The Fire Prevention Act will be placed before you in order that every effort may be made to avert the tragedies which annually take a heavy toll of life and property in Saskatchewan.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Penal Reform has been submitted; on the basis of this Report, a program is being worked out to provide for more effective correction and rehabilitation of delinquents. Steps will be taken at this Session to transfer the administration of gaols and Industrial Schools from the Department of Public Works to the Department of Social Welfare.

Under The Automobile Accident Insurance Act, payments have been made to more than 1,375 persons injured and to the dependents of sixty-four persons who met their death as a result of

January 30, 1947

automobile accidents. Legislation will be introduced which will increase the benefits payable and widen the coverage of this Act to include collision benefits.

Legislation will be introduced to provide for the cancellation of the debts owing to the Government on account of the seed grain advances made in the years 1935, 1936 and 1937, involving a sum of more than twenty-one million dollars which, coupled with the 1938 seed grain settlement, brings the total seed grain debt reduction to well over thirty million dollars.

Municipalities, both urban and rural, throughout the Province have shown great financial improvement, arrears in taxes having been reduced by approximately two-thirds during the past three years.

Because of the possibility that the federal wartime emergency powers may be terminated while this Assembly is not in session, it is proposed to present an Act empowering the Government to exercise certain economic controls until the Legislature next convenes.

In common with other provinces in Canada and with the United States, the shortage of qualified teachers constitutes the major educational problem. The shortage will continue during 1947. Until this condition is corrected, education will not progress adequately.

The program in larger school units continues to provide improved educational opportunities. One interesting and valuable project is the agricultural high school supported jointly by the Estevan and Oxbow Larger Units. Because of the unit organization and equalization grants, there has been substantial progress in achieving a better distribution of educational costs. An increase of twenty-five per cent in the business of the Saskatchewan Book Bureau indicates the increasing emphasis placed upon the importance of school libraries. Salary schedules for teachers are operative in every unit.

Facilities continue to be expanded in the northern part of the Province. Hundreds of additional children, previously denied the right, are now receiving instruction in the twenty-eight school rooms operating in this area.

In the past year, my Government has extended the highways into the northern part of the Province to serve the growing needs of many isolated communities. It has also completed the hard-surfacing of number one highway, stretching between Regina and Moose Jaw. It is proposed in the coming year to continue an extensive road-building program which will not only hard-surface considerable additional mileage but will emphasize the building of market roads.

Certain amendments to The Saskatchewan Election Act will be presented in the course of the Session.

The Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, together with the Estimates of the year beginning April first, 1947, will be submitted.

I leave you now to the business of the Session with full confidence that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities in the best interests of our Province and I

January 30, 1947

pray that Divine Providence will guide and direct your work.

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