

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Third Session — Twelfth Legislature
1st Day

Thursday, February 10, 1955.

This being the day appointed by Proclamation of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, dated this Seventh day of January, 1955, for the meeting all of the Third Session while 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 tenth day of February, 1955.

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 AFFORDS ME great pleasure to welcome you to the Third Session of the Twelfth Legislature of the Province of Saskatchewan.

On the first day of January I had the honour of officially inaugurating the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Province of Saskatchewan. At the opening of this Session I wish to draw to your attention the historical significance of this location and to pay homage to the pioneers of this land whose toil and vision we honour. I extend my thanks and sincere appreciation to all the people who worked to prepare for the celebration of our fiftieth birthday. I urge all the people of the Province to co-operate with their local Jubilee Committees in the celebrations which they will be sponsoring to commemorate 1955 as our Jubilee Year. I pray that these celebrations will not only honour the past but herald a great future for our people. I also wish to take this opportunity of inviting former Saskatchewan residents as well as people in Canada and other lands to join with us in celebrating our Golden Jubilee.

Saskatchewan will be honoured in this Jubilee Year by the visit of His Excellency the Governor General, who will officially open the new Provincial Museum of Natural History. This Museum is not only a tribute to the courage, toil and vision of the pioneers but is also a reminder of our solemn obligation to safeguard our natural resources for our children, the citizens of tomorrow.

Saskatchewan 1954 crop was one of the most disappointing ever experienced. Continuous wet weather, the most widespread rust infestation in history, and frost reduced a very promising crop to the lowest level since 1943. The effects of crop failure combined with the relatively low farm prices has caused a drastic decline in farm income.

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Extensive spring flood conditions and the continuation of the wet weather experienced over the past years in north-eastern Saskatchewan created an emergency situation for many farm families. My ministers have kept in constant touch with conditions arising out of all the crop failure and have taken prompt and effective measures to cope with the situation. Early action was taken to supplement farm income by providing various types of work and wages programmes for useful community projects including repairs to roads and bridges. Assistance was also made available to farmers for financing farm operations. Supplementary estimates covering the cost of these programs will be submitted for your approval.

Because of reduced agricultural income my ministers deemed it advisable to accelerate the programs of paying farmers for clearing and breaking done on Crown Land in certain areas of Saskatchewan. To date farmers leasing Crown land have received cash payments of over one and one-third million dollars and have retained crop rental shares valued at a similar amount. Provision will be made for a continuation of this policy in the coming year.

Assistance is being provided in locating and storing seed supplies and for the movement of seed grain and carload lots to points of need. Provisions of The Municipalities Seed Grain and Supply Act for purchase of supplies in behalf of farmers requiring seed have been implemented.

My Government is disappointed that the Government of Canada has not seen fit to call a conference, as requested by this Legislature, to devise effective long-term marketing schemes for livestock and livestock products similar to the principles of the marketing of grain by the Canadian Wheat Board. The widespread desire for some action to be taken is shown by the fact that the plan has been submitted to the Saskatchewan Marketing Board by farming organizations for the establishment of a provincial livestock producers marketing board.

You will be asked to amend The Provincial Lands Act to facilitate the Government's policy of allowing veteran lessees to purchase Crown land after ten years of tenure. Amendments to The Conservation and Development Act and The Water Rights Act will also be presented.

My Ministers have continued to discuss with the Government of Canada the question of the construction of the South Saskatchewan River Dam. A draft agreement presented by the federal Minister of Agriculture on the apportionment of the costs of the dam as between the Governments of Canada and of Saskatchewan has been tentatively accepted in principle by my Government. My Ministers will continue to press upon the Government of Canada the need for recognizing that the construction of this dam is in the national interest.

The comprehensive investigations conducted by the Royal Commissions on Agriculture and Rural Life have been concluded and it is anticipated that several volumes of their report will be tabled during the course of this session.

The unemployment problem has grown to serious proportions throughout Canada. In 1954 the number of persons registered as seeking employment was the highest on record since the end of the war. My Government

will continue to press for at Federal-Provincial conference for the purpose of implementing the 1945 proposals and to ask the Federal Government to join with the provinces and municipalities in concerted public investment programmes to alleviate unemployment.

The increased number of apprentices enrolled for training and the number of persons taking advantage of examinations offered in the trades during 1954 is indicative of the value of the Apprenticeship Training Programme.

The Government will introduce legislation for the amendment of The Workmen's Compensation (Accident Fund) Act to provide increased benefits to widows and children of workmen killed in the course of their employment.

The production of crude oil in the province continues to expand in significant proportions. At the present time more than eleven hundred wells are capable of producing oil. During 1955 over five million barrels of oil were produced. This represents an average daily production of fourteen thousand barrels as compared to two thousand one hundred barrels in 1949. The production of natural gas from one hundred and twenty wells during 1954 increased by one-third over 1953.

Last year the second highest record of mineral claims staked was experienced when seven thousand two hundred and ninety claims were recorded. Claims in good standing continue above the twenty thousand level. Mining leases in good standing increased from six hundred and thirty-three to seven hundred and sixteen.

No less than seventy companies have been active in uranium development in the Beaverlodge area during the year. Three are now producing uranium ore. Five are preparing to produce in the near future and eight others are either underground or are preparing to sink shafts.

Excellent interest is being shown in the province's potash resources. The Western Potash Company is continuing to sink its shaft at Unity. East of Saskatoon the Potash Company of America is presently drilling holes for freezing the shaft site and will begin its sinking operation this summer.

The Saskatchewan Minerals Corporation has expanded its facilities in the sodium sulphate field. This expansion will not only result in further utilization of our sodium sulphate resources but will create employment opportunities which will benefit all the community.

Extensions to the natural gas system to serve as additional communities were completed in 1954. To guarantee gas supplies a transmission pipeline was extended to the Coleville Field.

Developments in this scheme to transmit gas from Western Canadian fields to Canadian and American markets have been followed closely. Engineering plans for the transmission and distribution of gas in major Saskatchewan centres along the proposed route of the Trans-Canada Pipeline have been prepared.

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The fact that six thousand five hundred additional farms were served with power last year indicates the popularity of the Farm Electrification programme. This programme greatly exceeds any other farm electrification programme ever attempted in Canada in any one year. The Power Corporation has as its objective the bringing of power to additional towns and villages and to seven thousand five hundred farms during the coming construction season.

The Government has continued its policy of attaining maximum benefits from our forests, while ensuring their productivity in perpetuity. The Forest Inventory programme, now completed on almost thirty thousand square miles in the mixed wood forest belt, will be extended farther north.

Summer commercial fishing on the northern lakes yielded more than five million pounds of fish for North American markets. Legislation dealing with the construction of fish processing plants will be submitted for your approval. Sport fishing in Saskatchewan continues to provide recreation for our people and attracts ever-increasing numbers of anglers to our province. It is of interest to note that angling licence revenues are now over ten times what they were ten years ago.

Road construction in Northern Saskatchewan progressed favourably last year. This programme makes more accessible our forest and mineral resources.

You will be asked to consider amendments to The Pollution of Streams Act and the Northern Administration Act.

Despite adverse weather conditions the major portion of a record highway construction programme was satisfactorily completed. This year you will be asked to approve estimates providing for the third phase of a five-year highway construction programme.

Good progress has been made in mapping the proposed grid system of main market roads which will be supplementary to the provincial highway system. It is anticipated that a grid plan will be completed in time to be studied with the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life. In the meantime the Government will propose additional assistance to rural municipalities for market roads pending a full study of this report.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the work of the Select Special Committee on Highway Safety and the amendments to The Vehicles Act enacted last year assisted in greatly reducing the number of accidents on our highways. As a direct result the Government was pleased to announce large reductions in the cost of automobile insurance provided by The Automobile Accident Insurance Act. You will again be asked to set up the Highway Safety Committee to give further attention to highway safety matters. Amendments to The Vehicles Act will be submitted for your consideration.

The largest construction programme in the history of the Saskatchewan Government Telephones Corporation was completed during 1954. More than seven thousand telephones were added to the system, bringing the total number of telephones in service to more than one hundred and fourteen thousand. New telephone exchange buildings in the city of Regina, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw will be placed in service during this year.

The twentieth completely automatic telephone exchange was brought into service this year. A new, large construction programme designed to further reduce the waiting list of those desiring telephone service will be undertaken during this year.

The Student Aid Fund continues to assist Saskatchewan students to attain higher education. Both the number of students assisted and the total amount disbursed during 1954 are higher than at any time since the fund was established in 1949.

A favourable vote by the ratepayers has established another Larger School Unit on a permanent basis. This brings the number of units so organized to a total of forty-seven.

The teacher supply system continues to improve. The number of studies supervisors employed has shown a sharp drop, and enrolment in teacher training institutions has shown a satisfactory increase. The Government in co-operation with trustees and teachers sponsored the bringing to Saskatchewan schools of one hundred thirty-five well-qualified teachers from Great Britain and Eire.

Amendments to The School Grants Act will be introduced to provide increased grants for education.

I am pleased to advise you that the University Hospital is now caring for patients and that it will be officially opened during the course of this Jubilee year.

It is gratifying to know that the Saskatchewan Training School at Moose Jaw will be occupied this year. In addition to the transfer of those in the present training school, a number of patients from the Saskatchewan Hospital at Weyburn will be transferred to this new institution.

A building to provide modern facilities for the care of tuberculosis patients is now under construction at the Saskatchewan Hospital at Weyburn. The completion all the nurses' residence at this hospital will improve facilities for the nursing staff and will release space for other purposes.

A consolidation of programmes in existing Health Regions has gone forward. It is proposed to continue the establishment of additional Health Regions as rapidly as staff requirements and local community conditions permit.

Saskatchewan was fortunate in 1954 that poliomyelitis occurred at a much lower rate than in the two previous years. Restorative services for persons paralyzed by this and other crippling diseases are being provided and excellent results are being achieved. Existing centres are working at full capacity and provision will be made for the centre in the city of Regina to be expanded. This year it is proposed to begin a trial of recently developed Salk type poliomyelitis vaccine.

In order to prevent the recurrence of the pollution of the North Saskatchewan River my Ministers deemed advisable to call a conference of the Governments of Canada and the three Prairie Provinces with a view to establishing a mutually satisfactory method of controlling water pollution. It is hoped that the Joint Pollution Control Board, as recommended by this Conference, will be established and it will become in effect of public instrument for the protection of vital water resources.

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As part of the programme to provide security for our senior citizens my Government is pleased to report that excellent progress has been made in providing housing accommodation for aged persons during the past year. In fourteen municipalities or groups of municipalities housing units for aged married couples and hospitals for single aged people have been completed or are in the process of construction. Capital and annual maintenance grants will be made available to these institutions. You will be asked to make provision for the continuation of the policy of assisting additional housing areas which are in the planning stage.

During the past year the Saskatchewan Nursing Home at Melfort was opened. Care is being provided for one hundred and fifty aged persons in this home. Construction of a three-hundred bed Saskatchewan Nursing Home in the city of Regina has commenced and is progressing at a satisfactory rate.

During the course of this Session the Government intends to place before you proposals to give additional assistance to pensioners under The Old Age Security Act.

The Government will propose an increase for the recipients of Mothers' Allowances. An increase in the per diem payments to foster homes which are undertaking the humanitarian service of carrying for foster children will also be submitted for your consideration.

A programme for the payment of an allowance to totally disabled persons has been in effect since the first of the year.

The people of the province are to be commended for the fact that tax collections have been maintained at a high average during the past year notwithstanding serious crop losses. Preliminary estimates show that the average tax collection is over eighty-five per cent of the taxes levied in the municipalities of the province.

The co-operative movement throughout the province has experienced steady progress. One thousand one hundred and eight co-operative associations with two thousand three hundred thirty-nine places of business and a combined membership of over six hundred thousand had a net turnover of business and services of four hundred and seventy million dollars.

Legislation will be introduced to improve operating procedures of credit unions, to clarify their borrowing powers and to regulate the conditions under which they make certain types of loans.

Among other measures, you will be asked to consider amendments to The Larger School Units Act, The Municipalities Seed Green and Supply Act, The Power Corporation Superannuation Act and The Telephone Department Superannuation Act.

The Public Accounts for the last fiscal year, together with the estimates for the year beginning April 1st, 1955 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.

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

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