

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Thirteenth Legislature
33rd Day

Wednesday, April 2, 1958

The House met at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

SECOND READING

Bill No. 101 — An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act.

Hon. Mr. Brown (Minister of Power Corporation): — Mr. Speaker, this is an Act to amend The Power Corporation Act and there are one or two amendments which I think should be brought to the attention of the House.

The first one is striking out the words 'in the province' in subsection (1) of Section 12. The reason for that, of course, is the fact that because of the arrangements which have been made for the development of the Hatton-Mary Islands field, it was found necessary to set up a company in Alberta, and our Act at the present time only gives us authority for investing in companies within the Province, and because we had to establish this company in Alberta, it is necessary to provide an amendment to that section, striking out the words, 'in the province' in the fourth line.

The next one, Section 33, we are proposing to add thereto a further subsection. The section at the present time provides for the Corporation entering into contracts with municipalities for the supply of either electricity or natural gas, and we are proposing now that the rate which these contracts will be based, will be established by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. Now, the reason we are proposing this is simply to remove some of the pressure from the Corporation, which is brought to bear in practically every case where the officials of the corporation sit down to negotiate a contract with a municipality. We find for example, that because a community happens to be very close to a power plant, or the source of supply of natural gas, they tend to the thinking that they should be able to obtain a better price than, say a community 100 or 200 miles away. The amount of pressure is terrific, and we are anxious to remove that pressure from the officials of the Corporation, and we are proposing to them to set the basis on these contracts will be entered into by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

Now, the next one is providing for the exclusive rights of the Corporation. It is an addition to 35(a). As the members know, the Corporation does have the provision under the Act at the

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present time, the authority to move in and supply natural gas or electricity in any part of the province. We are merely proposing here to spell out the exclusive jurisdictions which the Corporation actually enjoys at the present time.

There is one other further addition under the Penalty section, as it stands at the present time, where we find that malicious damage to installations has taken place; people going around shooting off insulators, and that sort of thing, and that the only way we can take action is under the Criminal Code, and that is very cumbersome. Therefore, of course, very little action has been taken in the past. We are proposing a simple method of dealing with a situation of that kind, and we are asking them for a new 53 (a) under the Penalty Section.

Those are very briefly, Mr. Speaker, the amendments contained in this Bill, and I think they can be discussed in detail in Committee. I would therefore move Second Reading of this Bill.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

BILL NO. 102 — An Act to amend The Legislative Assembly Act.

Premier Douglas: — Mr. Speaker, the matter of dealing with members' indemnities is always a source of considerable embarrassment to the members of the Legislative Assembly. I suppose they are one of the few groups who have the responsibility of setting their own salaries, and I am sure their estimate of what they are worth does not always coincide with public opinion. I have often thought it would be a very useful innovation, if we were to have some Commission, or Board, or some individual or a group of individuals to whom matters of this sort could be referred. I think it is something that we ought to look at. Whether a small Committee composed of a Chief Justice, and one or two other people couldn't be a Commission to which matters affecting Ministers' salaries, and members' indemnities, and so on, could be passed on at regular intervals, because it is always a difficult thing for members to have to deal with the question of their own remuneration. Yet I feel impelled to introduce this Bill for the consideration of the House. If the members feel there ought to be any change, it is certainly open to any suggestions, or if the members feel it ought to be left in Committee, or be allowed to die, we would certainly be quite prepared to do that, but I think we have to face a couple of facts.

The first is that the reimbursement for members of the Legislative Assembly has slowly been getting out of line with reimbursement in other fields. In 1944, for instance, when I left the

Federal House to come into the Provincial House, the Federal member was getting an indemnity of \$4,000 and the Provincial Member of the Legislature was getting an indemnity of \$2,000. Now, the Federal indemnity and expenses combined have been increased to \$10,000 and the Provincial Members' indemnity is \$2,400 and expenses \$3,600, which leaves them completely out of line with the former relationship.

I know that the great bulk of the members do not go into public life because they hope to make a lot of money out of it. If they had any such illusions, I think they only have to look at the experiences of a lot of people who have been in public life, and see how they finish up at the end of their public career.

What does concern me, in trying to think in terms of years ahead in standing in public life in this province, is this, that if we get the indemnities and the reimbursements to the members to a point where it is no longer possible for a member to pay his actual expenses, to pay for someone to do his work while he is attending the Session, and look after the business of his constituency, and to do that out of what remuneration he gets, then we will, very rapidly come to the place where the only kind of people who can go into public life are people who have private means, and who are able to do this as sort of a public service. That was originally the idea of public life in Great Britain. Members know, for a very long period of time, there was no indemnity. Being a member of Parliament was the prerogative of the country gentry. The squires and the knights of rural England did this as a public service. They went to Parliament and they spent their own money, but there came a time when the people of England thought that maybe ordinary people ought to be able to go to Parliament, too, and that if ordinary people were going to have to leave their work and serve their constituency then, of course, they had to be reimbursed.

I have had a feeling for some time that our present reimbursement is making it difficult for some of the members to continue, and will, I think, increasingly make it difficult for us to recruit members to Parliament. I think one member the other day, who is a school teacher, mentioned to me that he has to hire a substitute from the first of January to the Easter holidays — they can't hire one just for eight weeks so he has to hire him from the entire period from the first of January to the Easter holidays. By the time he pays the substitute and pays his expenses here, it is doubtful if he has anything left with which to serve the constituency the rest of the year.

We might as well recognize the fact that whether we like it or not, government not only in this province, but every field of government is now serving people at more levels. Governments are more and more becoming associated with the life of the community, and I am sure the experience of nearly all the members is the same. A great deal of their time is to be spent meeting with municipal councils, boards of trade, school boards, hospital boards, people interested in rural electrification, people wanting to get gas brought into a community

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and a host of other things which a member must give his attention. It does involve travelling to various parts of his constituency, coming into Regina with delegations, visiting departments, seeing Ministers, Deputy Ministers, seeing various agencies of Government, and all this involves very considerable expense.

I would be very loathe, for this sake of a comparatively small expenditure, if we got to the place where particularly young man and women, who have heavy responsibilities, found that they just could not financially accept the responsibility of running for public office. Those of us who are older, whose families are grown up, we haven't got the same heavy financial responsibilities, and might be able to do this as a public service. But if public life in Saskatchewan is going to continue at a high standard, and even attain a higher standard, we are going to have to attract young men and young women into this Legislative Assembly. To do that, we are going to have to at least be able to assure them that the additional costs which they will incur by being a member of the Legislative Assembly will be met out of the public treasury. Even with the figures I am suggesting, we are not going to make any of them wealthy, but it is hoped it will come a little closer toward meeting their expenses.

The Bill proposes that we raise the members' indemnity from \$2,400, as it is at present, to \$3,200, and that we raise the expenses payable to the member from \$1,200 to \$1,600. This will bring us, I think, reasonably in line. Some of the other provinces, I believe, are contemplating similar increases, and this will not put us ahead of some other provinces who are paying still higher indemnities, and still higher expense accounts.

I might also point out that it still doesn't bring us quite in the same relationship with a member of Parliament that we enjoyed in 1944, when the indemnity for a Provincial Member was exactly one-half of that which was paid to a Federal Member.

With those words of explanation, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of the Bill to amend The Legislative Assembly Act.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

Bill No. 104 — An Act to amend The Annual Holidays Act.

Hon. C.C. Williams (Minister of Labour): — Mr. Speaker, this is an amendment to The Annual Holidays Act (No. 2) and it contains just two changes, which I explained yesterday, but I will briefly repeat today. The original Act,

the original Bill No. 9 provided that the third week's holiday would be provided to anyone with a holiday date after July 1st, which had the effect of depriving many, many people of that third week, because they might have started work with their employer sometime in January, February, March, April or May and so forth, so we have set that date back to the 30th of 1957, which will have the effect of everyone with a five-year service with the same employer, getting that third week of their holiday date this year. That is the first point.

The second point is that employees who may have left the service of their employer, and at the same time may have had their five years in, if they have left the service before the 1st of April, 1958 they will not be entitled to go back and claim a third weeks' pay from that employer. So with that explanation, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 104.

The question being put, it was agreed to.

MOTION RE 40-HOUR WEEK

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Davies:

"That the Government of the Province of Saskatchewan, especially in view of the unemployment situation, be requested to study and consider the advisability of legislation which would provide, as speedily as possible, for a 40-hour work week with maintenance of earnings for employees in Saskatchewan cities and larger towns, and to be extended gradually thereafter to other areas of the Province as conditions would appear to warrant."

Mr. A.L.S. Brown (Bengough): — Mr. Speaker, at this late hour of the Session, I do not intend to take up very much time of the Legislature in discussing any further this resolution which was moved by the member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Davies).

As I intimated when I adjourned the debate, I said I could agree with much, or if not all, of what the member for Moose Jaw had stated, and with what the minister of Labour (Hon. Mr. Williams) stated in their contributions to this debate. However, I also intimated that I did not feel that we, in the province of Saskatchewan, should place ourselves in the position where we might be at a disadvantage as far as economic development is concerned, and as far as industrial development is concerned, or to in any way jeopardize the future economy of this province. I agree, as I intimated yesterday, that there were two large

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groups in Canada who had not received their proper and rightful share of the increased productivity of this country; and had not shared at the same extent as certain other groups had shared, in what might have been termed a rather general prosperity. One of the ways this can be accomplished is by the necessary hours of work, and at the same time maintaining the purchasing power of the people engaged in labour, particularly those work with their hands.

But, I do feel if we are going to have a Canadian economy based upon equality, if we are going to have a Canadian economy which all people will get their rightful and proper share of the production, that a greater number of people will get an increased share of that production; then, I suggest that it becomes necessary to consider these legislations in respect to labour and working conditions on a national scale. I think it is in that way that we can create a greater degree of uniformity, not only across Canada, but a greater degree of uniformity among our respective occupational groups in Canada. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I propose to move an amendment to the motion moved by the member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Davies) and seconded by Mr. Dewhurst:

That all the words after the word "study" be deleted, and the following substituted therefor:

"the advisability of legislation which would provide for a 40-hour work week for employees in Saskatchewan, such study to have particular reference to (a) the impact of such action upon the economy of Saskatchewan, and (b) the potential result of such action upon future industrial development in the province;

"And, further, That, if it be found that such action might have a detrimental effect upon either the economy of the future industrial development of the Province, this Assembly requests the Government of Saskatchewan to reiterate this Assembly's request to the Government of Canada for immediate implementation of a National Labour Code, which would include, among other uniformity factors, a standard 40-hour work week in all phases of Canadian employment."

I draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, to the fact that I could have brought this amendment in by striking out certain words in the original motion, but rather than do that, I struck out all the words after the word 'study' for the purpose of better clarification.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move this amendment to the motion, seconded by Mr. Dewhurst.

Mr. Davies (Moose Jaw City): — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I suggest that the amendment to the resolution forestalls and frustrates, as well as distorts, the purpose of the original motion, which asks for a clear-cut study and consideration of a 40-hour work week in the province of Saskatchewan, and does nothing more. It does not commit the Government or the Legislature to any action at all. However, the last part of the proposed amendment proposes that, if there is a study made or after the study has been made, that some action will immediately result if detrimental effects are to be found. Now that is without any debate by this Legislature, or without any consideration of it, either.

I think the motion I have moved is a clear-cut proposition, and should be dealt with and that the amendment is not in conformity with the motion.

Mr. Speaker: — I have considered this amendment, and in my opinion it is in order. It emphasizes certain aspects of the study and proposes that something be done in certain eventualities, and I so rule. The amendment is before the Assembly.

Mr. Arthur T. Stone (Saskatoon City): — Mr. Speaker, now that you have ruled the amendment in order, I feel that, I ought to say a few words. I appreciate the fact that the mover of the amendment did not take as long as he would like to have done, and I don't think that anything that I have to say will provoke any further discussion. But the mover of the motion yesterday gave some very good reasons why the 40-hour week ought to be considered at an early date, and I think he confined his remarks pretty well to the picture as it presents itself in Canada today.

The motion, however, asks that this Government make a study in view of the existing unemployment problems facing us today. We would ask ourselves how serious is the unemployment picture today, whether it is a temporary recession, or whether it will be with us for an extended period of time. Economists tell us that the trend in the United States and Canada, down through the years shows that in every 20 years we have a cycle of recession, and every indication points to the fact that we are about to enter one of the 20-year cycles. They are of the opinion that it need not last too long, if governments do not delay too long in taking some action, but they are guided by certain events that have taken place. For instance, last year in July of 1957, almost without notice, the United States passed a major milestone. The first time in the nation's history

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the number of people employed in production of goods was fewer than the number employed in everything else — that is, government, trade, services, finance, utilities and transportation.

I go to the February issue of the 'Labour Gazette', page 121, of 1958 and it has this to say:

"Apart from the seasonal movements the labour force has been gradually unchanged since last September. This represents a substantial change from the sharp upward trend of the past two years. It is, in fact, the first time the since the middle of 1934, that the labour force had ceased expanding."

Mr. Speaker, there are very definite reasons for the economists to believe that we are about to enter the most severe recession since the 1930's.

The mover of the motion yesterday pointed out to the unemployment problem across Canada. Getting closer to home, the seasonal average unemployment in the city of Saskatoon from January to March is 4.3, but this year, in 1958 that figure rose to 14 per cent — quite an alarming increase. I would imagine that the picture is very similar in other urban centres in this province. This, Mr. Speaker, to my mind, ought to be cause enough for our Labour Department to be making a study and to find means of alleviating this trend. The struggle for shorter hours on the North American continent has been a long and bitter one. There were some four men hanged, and several sentenced to life imprisonment in Chicago following a demonstration for a shorter work week, after several policemen were killed. In the U.S.A. in 1800, they worked an 84-hour week. By the end of the Civil War it was reduced to 70 and by 1900 to 60 hours, and 50 hours a week was the average in 1929. The worker in the U.S.A. today produces six times for every hour's work than did his grandfather, and there has been more than a 240 per cent increase in production per capita, and a 32-hour work week.

With the rapid introduction of automation and more efficient methods, the 40-hour week is slipping into history in the U.S.A. 45 per cent of six million office workers worked less than 40 hours a week. Automobile workers this year are asking for a 32-hour, four-day week. The machinists and other large labour organizations are putting a 32-hour clause in their contract this year. 90 per cent of the United Ladies' Garment Workers work only 35 hours per week.

It was many years later before Canada began to swing into industrial production, but the general shortening of hours followed

more or less the pattern of our neighbours to the south, as the mover of the motion yesterday illustrated. The introduction of the 44-hour work in this province was regarded by many as a very revolutionary step. There are those who claim our economy, which is to a great part dependent on the farm economy, cannot stand the reduction to a 40-hour week. But the mover pointed out yesterday that most of our workers in the larger urban centres are now working less than a 40-hour week. The large urban centres, and especially the cities, are increasing in population at a very alarming rate. It is to be expected that the city of Saskatoon will reach a population of 100,000 inside of five years. One often wonders where these thousands of people come from, and how they are absorbed, when they do arrive in the city. We know that many thousands of farmers are leaving the farms, and according to the report on the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Life, there are many thousands of more farmers who will find it uneconomical and be forced to leave the farm. This means, of course, many more flocking to our urban centres.

Another serious problem facing our urban centres is the increased number of young folks who are just about ready to leave school, due to the increased birth rate following the last great war. I think we ought to have an exhaustive study made. We have had an exhaustive study made of our rural problems and I hope that we can find means to alleviate some of those problems.

I suggest, too, Mr. Speaker, that we ought to have a careful study immediately of the problems facing our urban centres, especially if unemployment continues. It is my hope that this Government does not do as the Liberal Government before us did — sat here and watched thousands of our citizens go to other parts of this Dominion, seeking work in munitions factories.

Mr. Danielson (Arm River): — Where are they going now?

Mr. Stone: — You can have your say after. I do think many ways can be found, and that is why, in my opinion, a study ought to be made immediately. Just last week, some hundred families in the Gladmer low-rental project in Saskatoon received notices of eviction. Now, if all the available rental space was made available to those families, not half of them would be able to find accommodation in Saskatoon. Most of all, people are aware of the disadvantages of a municipal low-rental housing scheme, but I think our Government could do a great deal in pressing upon council members, business men, labour unions, and others, the advantages of a municipal low-rental housing project, as an investment to the community. Most of the material could be bought here, and provide a lot of jobs with purchasing power for the business man. I know most people prefer to own their own home, but we will always have a percentage of people who, for various reasons, do require rental accommodation.

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Mr. Speaker, I did not intend to take this long. I don't want to delay the debate at this point, as I know the hon. members are anxious to return to their homes. I know the struggle in the past for a shorter work week has been fought against the inhumanely long hours of the worker, and today the struggle is to bring some of the benefits that have been brought about by increased production, because of technical and more efficient methods. I don't think the benefits of increased production ought to go all to these people who own the means of production, while thousands of our people are compelled to walk the street. I must oppose the amendment, Mr. Speaker, because it is not clear in my mind that there is any clear directive to this Government to do anything, should a study determine that there is a problem. Therefore, I am going to support the motion.

The question being put on the amendment, it was agreed to.

The question being put on the motion as amended, it was agreed to.

At 5:00 o'clock p.m., His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having entered the Chamber, and having given Assent to the Bills presented to him, said:

MR. SPEAKER, MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

It is my duty to relieve you of further attendance at the Legislative Assembly. In doing so I wish to thank you and congratulate you upon the work you have done. I wish also to express my confidence that the approval of the programs and plans presented to you will continue to provide the services necessary to the growth and development of our province.

You have approved measures which will make increased grants available to schools in our province. The funds you have appropriated for municipal road purposes will enable the municipalities to proceed with the largest rural road program ever attempted in Saskatchewan.

You have approved legislation which increases the amount of capital which may be borrowed for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation. This will permit expenditures for the extension of electric power and natural gas connections necessary to meet the growing demands of Saskatchewan homes and industry.

You have passed legislation authorizing my Ministers to enter into an agreement with the Government of Canada respecting the construction of the South Saskatchewan River Development Project. It is anticipated that this agreement will be concluded at an early date, and that the construction of this multi-purposes project will commence this year.

It is hoped that the provisions you have made for uniform time to apply throughout the province will be a convenience for the public.

You have approved certain changes in procedures in Land Titles Offices designed to improve the efficiency and reliability in recording land titles. You have amended a number of statutes relating to the judicial system of Saskatchewan. This action will make the courts of our province more accessible and will facilitate the administration of justice.

the legislation which you have enacted to provide for the testing of farm machinery offered for sale in Saskatchewan will afford an added measure of protection for farmers.

A Committee of Members of this Assembly will meet during the year to conduct an enquiry into sales outlets of alcoholic beverages in Saskatchewan. It is hoped that interested parties will assist the work of this Committee by making representations to it.

I am pleased to note that you have made provision for increased grants to communities and organizations planning the construction of new hospital bridge over the North Saskatchewan River at Prince Albert will be welcomed. You have made further benefits available to workers in Saskatchewan by increasing to three weeks the annual holiday period for employees with five years service with the same employer.

I thank you for the provision you have made to meet the further requirements of the public service and assure you that the sum of money voted will be used economically, prudently and in the public interest.

In taking leave of you I desire to thank you for the manner in which you have devoted your energies to the activities of the Session, and wish you the full blessing of Providence as you return again to your respective homes.

The Hon. Mr. Walker, Provincial Secretary, then said:

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

It is the will and pleasure of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor that this Legislative Assembly be prorogued until it pleases His Honour to summon the same for the dispatch of business, and the Legislative Assembly is accordingly prorogued.