

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**Fourth Session — Thirteenth Legislature**  
**25th Day**

**Wednesday, March 16, 1960**

The House met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.  
On the Orders of the Day:

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 51 – An Act to amend The Housing Act**

The Assembly resumed from Thursday, March 10, 1960 the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Bentley:

That Bill No. 51 – An Act to amend The Housing Act be read a second time.

**Hon. T.J. Bentley** (Minister of Social Welfare): — Mr. Speaker, I won't keep the House very long in replying to some of the things that were said across the way on second reading of this Bill. I would like to remind the House that this Bill was arrived at after a good deal of negotiation with the Federal Government. I thought for sure that it would receive unanimous support without argument on all sides of the House. However, I did expect that all members would realize that the protracted negotiations that we have had with the Federal Government on this matter would have been known to all parties, that these efforts on our part to receive consideration from the Government of Canada failed, and all that has been done so far is to leave the money-lender in the same position as he was before, that is, with the full right of recovering from a farm debtor if, for some reason, the farm debtor is not able to meet an obligation.

Instead of understanding on the part of the hon. members opposite, we were treated to an outburst that left me rather wondering what they really wanted. The members for Arm River (Mr. Danielson) and the member for Maple Creek (Mr. Cameron) both attacked the Government for what they said was our failure to re-establish long ago the vulnerability of farmers to the attacks by money-lenders at a time when the farmer could not meet his obligations. That was the sum and substance of their attacks. The gentleman who writes editorials for 'The Leader-Post' and sits in the gallery, remarked in one of his editorials that the . . .

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! The hon. Minister may not quote from an editorial.

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**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — I wasn't going to quote it. I was going to say what he remarked. He remarked that their attack had left me "on the ropes"; but I can assure him I was not hanging on any ropes because of what they did. I was simply amazed at their lack of understanding and of their willingness to realize what had been done, before this Bill was offered for amendment.

The members opposite must have forgotten all of these things or, if they haven't forgotten, then it is something worse. That is, they have shown themselves utterly unable to provide any sympathy or bowels of compassion for a farmer when he is in trouble, and therefore needs some relief from an immediate obligation.

**Mr. McFarlane** (Qu'Appelle-Wolseley): — You've got them into trouble now!

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — I don't know how often they are going to be allowed to reply. They have already had their time on the floor, Mr. Speaker, but they apparently cannot listen to reason.

I would just like to review some of the things which have happened in this field for the benefit of members, because there is a long history with regard to the protection offered the farmers. Without going into it in detail, everybody here, even the youngest member, can remember the days when foreclosures were very prevalent. Nobody here can't remember that. There were a great many farmers who lost all their equity in their farms because of that, particularly during the very bad years of low prices and drought conditions.

There was a good deal of demand on the part of farmers in those days to have some form of protection for them when they were facing that plight, and a number of efforts were provided by the Governments of those days, which proved inadequate. I can mention, for instance, the Debt Adjustment Act of Alberta, which was challenged in the courts and declared ultra vires in 1943. I can go on and mention The Moratorium Act of this province, which provided a great deal of protection for the farmers of this province. Everybody here will remember that it was only five years ago, in 1955, that the Dominion Security and Investment Association, with a partner, The Canadian Bankers' Association, and supported and backed by the Liberal Government of Canada of that day at Ottawa, attacked The Moratorium Act and had it practically disembowelled so far as its provisions for protection of the farmer were concerned.

**Mrs. Batten** (Humboldt): — It was a matter of law.

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — My friends over there are still grumbling and mumbling. They don't like to hear the truth, but this is the truth.

**Mr. McDonald:** — It's so distorted you wouldn't recognize it if you met it on the street.

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — The hon. gentleman and other members opposite would not recognize anything in the form of protection for farmers through their political party, if they met it on the street.

**Government Members:** — Hear! Hear!

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — When The Moratorium Act was attacked, the Liberal Government at Ottawa had two choices. First, the one they adopted, which was to support the Canadian Bankers' Association, and the Dominion Mortgage and Investment Association. On the other hand, they could have come to the province and could have said to the Provincial Government, "We don't think your Moratorium Act is good enough to stand up in law, or it has some weaknesses, and we suggest that, in order to protect your farmers, you might do with it". But they didn't do that. They joined their pals, the money-lenders, in order to defeat, or as I say, disembowel the Act.

**Opposition Members:** — The Courts did that?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — Mr. Speaker, this history I am reciting is correct, and a great deal of detail could be added to it, which I won't bother with today. But I did hope (I admit it was a great hope, but it was worth a try) that, when our beloved "fellow-Canadian citizen 'John'" was elected, he might have more sympathy for the farmers than the Liberals who had preceded him. So I wrote to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Green at that time), and I asked him if we were to make some changes in the powers of the mediation Board, or rather give the Mediation Board some authority to declare that anyone who borrowed under The National Housing Act would be able to do one of two things – either elect himself out of the provisions of The Farm Security Act, or, on the other hand, the Government was prepared to allow the Mediation Board to issue a 'blanket' exclusion for farmers, if they wished to borrow under The National Housing Act, to exclude them from The Farm Security Act. I got replies from Mr. Green, rejecting that suggestion. I will quote one paragraph of the letter:

"We prefer to have an amendment made to The Housing Act, rather than by order of the Mediation Board."

**Mr. Danielson:** —Just like you did with the orphans!

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — Later on in the same letter he says:

"An order made by the Mediation Board would not prove adequate for the money-lenders."

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So any illusions that I had that “brother ‘John’” was going to be more lenient than the Liberals were quickly dispelled. So we find that our friends in Ottawa, no matter whether they are Liberals or Grits, joined up with the same party, the money-lenders, to protect themselves against the farmers of this country.

Then the Provincial Government was faced with the problem of how to provide that farmers might, if they wished, take advantage of the provisions of The National Housing Act. Failing to get compliance with the Government of Canada, either the prior ones, the Liberals, or the Tories to allow us to use the Mediation Board to give this kind of protection I mentioned a moment ago – and which, by the way, we must remember, the Mediation Board was never going to be given the authority, nor has it got the authority, to forever wipe out a debt; all we asked was that we could provide that the Mediation Board could postpone a debt in the year a farmer could not meet his obligations. They weren’t even prepared to go that far along the way. So this Government was faced with what appeared to be a desire on the part of some people that farmers be given the opportunity to borrow under the National Housing Act. Hence, the amendment which we have in front of us, in the form of Bill No. 51.

The member for Maple Creek (I believe it was) was asked a question during the discussion on this. The question was, “Are there any National Housing loans in the other prairie provinces.” If I remember correctly (and somebody can correct me if I am wrong), he said, “Yes, plenty of them.” So I took the trouble to check, and I have the figures from Ottawa now, as they are disclosed by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In the province to the west of us, there have been loans granted since 1948, totalling from 1948 to the end of 1959, 28 loans under the National Housing Act for farmers. That is two and one-quarter a year.

**Mr. Danielson:** — How many from the banks and the mortgage houses?

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — Under the National Housing Act.

**Mr. Danielson:** — They don’t come under the Act.

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — Yes, they do. They have to get authority to get there.

**Mr. Danielson:** — Nonsense; they don’t have to get authority.

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — The hon. member doesn’t know anything about it; he just thinks he does.

**Mr. Speaker:** — Order! Order!

**Hon. Mr. Bentley:** — Don’t let us forget in Alberta, two and one-quarter houses per year, under the provisions of the National Housing Act; the province of Manitoba, there were four. Four since 1952.

There were three in 1952 during the Liberal Government in Manitoba, and one in 1957, a total of four. When hon. members opposite get up and attack this Government and say that other people in other provinces are better off because they allow provisions, I offer this as evidence to show that, even though there might be a desire on the part of many farmers, most of them are not being eligible under the National Housing Act conditions and provisions for these loans, or there would have been more in those provinces. Obviously, Saskatchewan has not suffered because of this to the extent that the hon. members opposite would like to have people believe.

In conclusion, again I want to point out that this Government tried its best to persuade the Government of Canada to permit us to use the Mediation Board as a method of giving farmers temporary protection, and we were refused. The Government then had no recourse but to bow to this senior government's dictates and to offer this amendment. I would doubt very much whether this would produce very much result, but if it will be of any help to farmers to build homes on their farms, then we are happy to make the provisions here, and hope that they do not get into trouble with the money-lenders and the Government at Ottawa.

The question being put, it was agreed to, and the Bill referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

#### **Bill No. 44 – Family Farms Improvement**

The Assembly resumed from Tuesday, March 15, 1960, the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of Mr. Nollet:

That Bill No. 44 – An Act respecting the Improvement of Family Farms be read a second time.

**Mr. J.W. Gardiner** (Melville): — Mr. Speaker, in rising to speaking on Bill No. 44, I would like to say that it is my intention to support the principle of Bill, which will assist in providing improvements for the family farms in the province. However, I think it would be worthwhile to point out that it is unfortunate that this legislation was not provided at an earlier date, at a time when the farmers were passing through an era of fair prosperity, and at a time when the interest rates had not reached the high position they have at the present time. . .

**Hon. Mr. Fines:** — What year was that?

**Mr. Gardiner:** — . . . which would place the Government of this province in a position to really help the farmers of this province. Unfortunately, under the circumstances which we meet as we are considering this legislation, it is very doubtful if many farmers will be able to avail themselves of the assistance which is to be provided by the Government, because of the high costs they will have to

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meet, in spite of the assistance that will be provided through the legislation; the high cost that will have to be paid for the installation of water and sewage, and of course, as well, if they are going to borrow money in order to carry out these works, the high rates of interest which they will have to pay in order to receive the benefits that we are going to provide through this legislation.

I would hope, however, that, through this Bill, the farm people of this province will receive some benefits; that it will make available to some of our people the possibility of receiving the same services that those of our urban centres are able to receive at the present time. However, I think we should also remember that, even in our large city points, this problem of water and sewage has not been completely solved, because even in the city of Regina, we find 2,100 homes within the boundaries of the city of Regina that today have not received the services of sewer and water. So this is a condition which exists not only among the rural people, but even in the larger cities and larger centres of this province.

As has been pointed out in the past in this House, we feel that some measure, and perhaps the measure that has just been passed, will assist to some extent, or provide that farm people could replace some of the older homes before expending large amounts of money on improvements within those homes. I think that is a very good argument, and one in which the Government of this province should place some recognition.

Each of us who represents rural areas knows there are many who would like to have new homes on their farms before putting costly expenditures on water and sewage, and probably would have even appreciated having them before putting in a great deal of money in power improvements, before the power program was completed. However, legislation that was in force in this province, made it very difficult for farm people to be able to realize the benefits of farm people in other provinces, where they not only have the benefits of National Housing to improve their position, but they have the benefits of all other loaning facilities which the farm people of this province have been refused because of the attitudes of the Government of this province down through the years. We find here in Saskatchewan that many of our farm people have been denied the opportunity to construct new homes because of the fact they have been unable to receive the benefits of loans, not only from National Housing, but from other loaning institutions, if they so desire, in order to improve the position of their homes, and also to put into effect the improvements which are being mentioned in the Bill which is before us.

Then of course, too, in view of the low interest rates which, in the years gone, could have been received by farm people in order to improve their farms, this legislation, had it been put into effect 10 years ago, would have provided a great benefit for the rural people of this province. But today, it is more or less a bit of a flag that is waved before the farmers' eyes, and in an election year, trying to indicate

that at long last the Government of this province is trying to take some interest in the position of the people in the rural areas of the province, in trying to provide them with some assistance to put in the required facilities that are already offered in our larger urban centres.

In closing, all I want to say, in addition, is that I hope, when we have passed this legislation, it will be in a form that most of the farm people in this province will be able to avail themselves of the opportunity to improve their homes, not only in regard to water and sewage, but in other ways as well. In other words, this is not confined to a small group; in other words, this isn't confined to those who are in a position to pay for these improvements, but all the farmers in this province are provided the opportunity to benefit because of the actions we might take in this Legislature.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can say, on behalf of the membership of the party I represent, that we are wholeheartedly behind the principle of providing assistance to the rural people of our province, so that they may enjoy the benefits that are enjoyed by those living in our urban centres. We propose to support the principle of this Bill, but at the same time, reserving our right to attempt to improve and to criticize the provisions of this Bill on third reading.

**Hon. I.C. Nollet** (Minister of Agriculture) (Closing): — Mr. Speaker, just a few words which I wish to add to what has already been said in this debate in connection with the Bill. A question was raised by the hon. member for Cannington (Mr. McCarthy), when he referred to the matter of water supply, which we recognize as a very real and genuine problem. I don't know of any problem, financial or otherwise, that will have a greater bearing on the success of this program than our ability to locate a suitable source of water supply. That is the big problem in our province not only insofar as individual farmsteads are concerned, but it will also be a problem in connection with water and sewage for towns and villages.

The hon. member for Melville (Mr. Gardiner) said that it was unfortunate this Bill had not been introduced some 10 years ago; he rather left the impression that, in the past 10 years, we had been neglecting the farm people. I think I mentioned, when I was introducing this legislation, that the first step in the Government's program for improving rural living conditions was the rural electrification program. I mentioned this was the basic service requirement necessary to take further steps in connection with improved rural living. It was the rural electrification program that has made possible the introduction of the farmstead improvement program, which we have at this time.

I remember the Rt. Hon. gentleman, the former Minister of Agriculture for Canada, once suggested that, instead of a rural elect-

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rification program we ought to have more wind electrics in the province. That was his answer to the farmers' electrical program; but I notice the Rt. Hon. gentleman has now finally accepted power from the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, because I think he will admit that it is much better than the old wind electric service.

**Mr. Danielson:** — All the windmills are in this House, here.

**Hon. Mr. Nollet:** — Now the rural electrification program is nearing completion – and I mention this point, Mr. Speaker, since most farmers in the province are now within reach of rural electrification services, although we know they do not all have electricity on their farmsteads, nevertheless most farmers in the province are within reach of power; since this is a fact, the Government felt that now was the time to introduce a further program as part of our over all program to improve farm living conditions. So the farm improvement program comes into existence at this time and, I repeat, we could have made an election promise that we were going to do this, and would probably have received perhaps more political kudos from it, without introducing the legislation, but we are very anxious to get on with this program. Hon. members will note in our estimates we have a Supplementary of some \$83,000 that was used to set up the staff organization, in order to make certain that, in our first year of operation, we would have a staff organization that would make possible the bringing of these facilities to some 1,500 farms in the coming year, which in the first year of the program, with little or no experience in this field, is indeed a pretty ambitious program.

The question of better farm homes is important. The hon. member for Melville again tried to raise the old objection that the hon. member for Maple Creek just made, a minute or so ago, that there are no farmers who have taken advantage of national Housing in any province, to any extent, and it is again for these reasons that we have introduced this province. In the matter of financing there are people-problems, I must admit, but I don't know of any credit facilities that we have in any provincial agency that is superior to the Farm Home Improvement Loan scheme, under which credit can be obtained.

I was more than interested in the hon. member for Melville's comment that since we now have waited 10 years, costs are so high, it is going to be tough for the farmers to install water and sewage and take on added financial costs for these services. I agree with him, Mr. Speaker. That is correct; and why is it that these increased costs came about over the past 10 years? We have had a Liberal Government in Ottawa in those past ten years. He also regretted that interest rates were higher now. This is true. We have a Tory Government now and the Conservatives put the interest rates up in the hope that, in this manner, they could combat the inflation started by the Liberals. So, if there is any blame to be attached at all for the predicament of the farmer insofar as costs are concerned, it can be laid at the door-step of the former Federal Liberal administration, because they de-controlled prices entirely in 1946; and



let the free-enterprise boys reap a generous harvest of profits ever since. Then the Tories come along, and they were going to control the whole situation by raising interest rates.

So we realize that the farmer has a problem, but, as I stated on the first speaking to this Bill, we cannot wait until all of these economic problems are solved. We hope that our national governments will see the light of day sometime, and realize that our farmers require sufficient income to have equal living standards with their urban cousins. We hope that day will come soon, but we cannot wait. We must go ahead the best way we can and work under the existing circumstances.

It is for these reasons that we have provided the 15 per cent grant to farmers who engage in these programs on a group basis.

Before I sit down, Mr. Speaker, I want to clear up a press statement, and this time I am not going to suggest that 'The Leader-Post' misquoted me deliberately, or anything of that kind; but it is just one of those things I must correct. It was this, 'The Leader-Post' stated in referring to my address when I introduced the Bill, if farmers outside the group areas wish to go ahead without waiting for a formation of another group, they can still qualify for grants and technical aid, and buy materials from the Department, but would have to make their own arrangements with a contractor. I wish to make it clear, in order that there is no confusion created in the country or elsewhere, that we intend, in this year at any rate, to confine these grants to those who participate on a group basis. We would like to give the group basis every encouragement and try in the interests of reducing transportation costs of materials to the site of the project, and also to cut down on the transportation, and to make more efficient and effective use of the technical staff services available to farmers. Obviously, if we threw this program wide open and attempted to service, on this same basis, individual farmsteads throughout the province, it would take a tremendous staff, and it would be very costly in terms of mileage transportation, and that sort of thing.

We therefore hope to encourage the group project basis, and we are using, naturally, the municipal unit as a basis in which farmers will sign up for this program. We do hope this program meets with good response. As I mentioned previously, it is not only intended to deal with water and sewage. This, of course, is the first basic requirement and the first step; but we hope also to go on from this to general farmstead planning and beautification. We hope later on there will be other staff added to this Branch, home economists and, people who are skilled in the design of a farmer's general lay-out and the pattern of his buildings, from the point of view of saving labour.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, we do not anticipate a big transformation overnight, but I can see this program set up by this legislation

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when passed by this Legislature, going on for the next 25 or 30 years, and at the end of that period, I think our farmsteads will be the equal in beauty and utility and comfort to any in Canada. That, at least, is my hope.

Bill No. 44 was then read the second time, and referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

**Bill No. 74 – An Act to amend The Child Welfare Act**

**Hon. T.J. Bentley:** — Mr. Speaker, in introducing the amendments to The Child Welfare Act, there is no change in principle involved here. Many of the child welfare problems have to go before a magistrate's court, and because there is a continual contact with the magistrates, we suggest that some clarification would make it easier for them. So, in this Bill we have tried to clarify the definition of "apprehension" of a child, and also tried to state what a magistrate or a court should do in the matter of initially declaring the religion of a child. These are the two main changes in the Act, and with that I move second reading.

The question being put, it was agreed to, and the Bill referred to a Committee of the Whole at the next sitting.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 o'clock p.m. without question put.