

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session — Thirteenth Legislature
37th Day

Friday, April 1, 1960

The House met at 2:30 o'clock p.m.

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. E.I. Wood (Swift Current): — Before the Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of the Assembly a very fine group of students in the upper gallery to your left. These young people are from the town of Cabri, which is one of the greatest little towns in Saskatchewan. They are Grade VII and VIII pupils, with their teacher, Mr. William Brown, in charge. I trust they will find their stay with us profitable and on behalf of the Assembly, I would like to make them very welcome.

Mr. Isaak Elias (Rosthern): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw to the attention of this House another very fine group of young people sitting in the gallery to your right. These are the pupils from the town of Hague, north of Saskatoon, IX, X, XI, and XII pupils of Hague. I hope their experiences here will be pleasant and profitable.

Mrs. J.E. Cooper (Regina City): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, there is another group of Regina students in the gallery, with their teacher, Mr. Chisholm, and I am sure we would all wish to include them in our welcome.

ANNOUNCEMENT RE A.I.C. DINNER

Mr. Speaker: — Before the Orders of the Day, the hon. Minister of Agriculture has asked me to draw the attention of the members to a program which will take place in the Prairie Lily Café. It will be conducted under the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists, the Agricultural Institute of Canada, and the speaker will be Mr. J. Angus McKinnon. Mr. McKinnon, a prominent rancher of the Calgary district, was one of a group of Alberta farmers who toured Russia last year. His talk will be illustrated by slides. The hon. Minister realizes that the House will almost certainly be sitting, but he believes that some members may be able to arrange to be present.

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SECOND READING

Bill No. 86 – An Act to provide for the Acquisition of the Undertaking and Assets of National Light and Power Company Limited.

Hon. C.M. Fines (Provincial Treasurer): — Mr. Speaker, this is a Bill to acquire the assets of the National Light & Power. This can only be done by the Government purchasing the stock of the holding company, which is the Sterling Gas and Electric Company. As hon. members know from press reports in recent months, there have been some negotiations going on. This will enable the negotiations to continue, and at such time as the Government has the stock, if and when the purchase is completed, then, of course, the assets will be sold to the Power Corporation for the operation. I would, therefore, move second reading.

Mr. A. Loftson (Saltcoats): — I would like to ask the Minister approximately what amount is involved in the purchase of that?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — I will make a note of that, and find out for you.

Mr. Loftson: — Also I would like to know how he proposes to get the shares, or are they pretty well held by the companies?

Hon. Mr. Fines: — Mr. Speaker, I think that could better be answered in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. L.P. Coderre (Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, as the eventual taking over of this particular utility by the Corporation will affect a considerable number of people in my constituency, particularly farm people, I feel an article in the 'Leader-Post' this morning, or yesterday, to the effect that the people of Moose Jaw would be assured their rates would not go up is of some interest. That assurance, unfortunately, was not rendered to the rural people who are now receiving better rates from the National Light & Power. I am particularly concerned about my constituents in this respect. In many cases you will note as well that most of these people served by National Light and Power are receiving a rebate of \$2.50 per month on the amount of money paid in for construction involved in bringing power to their farms. Again we have had no assurance, either in the press or by the Minister, who has brought this Bill into the House, that this will continue. I am particularly concerned because we, as a political party, have said that we at some time will refund to the farmers the amount of money they have paid in towards construction. I feel that the National Light is now doing that, and we have not had the assurance that this step that has been taken by the National Light and Power will be carried on. I have deep

concern. I am not going to contest this fact because this may be a good business policy from the point of view of the Corporation taking it over, but I am very concerned, and I look at this Bill with caution on behalf of my constituents affected.

Hon. Mr. Fines (Closing): — Mr. Speaker, the first question asked by the hon. member for Saltcoats, what amount is involved. Of course, one does not discuss the amount involved when they are in negotiations. You cannot divulge that. I think I can tell the hon. member it will be somewhere between \$5 and \$10 million. I think that is about as close as I would like to say.

The second question, how do we get the shares? Well, we get the shares by paying for them, Mr. Speaker. We pay for the shares, we pay the holding company a certain amount – whatever amount may be agreed upon, and they transfer the shares over to the Government, for Her Majesty the Queen.

I notice the hon. member for Gravelbourg has a great concern for his constituents. I want to assure him that we have a great concern for all the hon. members' constituents. Naturally, the Government represents all the people, so we must be greatly concerned about the welfare of all. He stated, Mr. Speaker, that as a political party, they had agreed to make refunds. Of course, you can do a great many things as a political party, but as a Government you may find it a little more difficult to do. He, of course, was speaking as a spokesman for a political party this afternoon. Insofar as farmers are concerned what we shall have to do is see exactly what they have paid. We would certainly not want the people in this area to be treated any worse than the people in the rest of the province, and if the people there have had to pay the entire costs of getting the electricity in, then I think it would be only right that the Power corporation should consider some sort of plan whereby there would be equality, that they would continue to make these refunds at such time as they would be in the same position as the rest of the farmers of Saskatchewan. We certainly cannot have two classes of farmers in the province. I would hope that the Power Corporation would take a very good look at that.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot give you any more information, because I am only allowed, at this time, to reply to the points that have been raised, and I think that is all that have come up.

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

The Assembly then adjourned at 5:32 o'clock p.m.