

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Second Session — Sixteenth Legislature
29th Day

Friday, March 14, 1969

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. C.G. Willis (Melfort-Tisdale): — Mr. Speaker, it is seldom that I have the opportunity of welcoming to this Chamber a group of students from my constituency. Melfort-Tisdale, as you probably know, is over 170 miles from here, but in spite of the distance we have in the east gallery and the west gallery, 123 Division 3 students from the town of Melfort. They are accompanied by six teachers and three bus drivers. They are touring the city today and I am sure that this visit to the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, will be the highlight of a day which they will long remember.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. G.B Grant (Minister of Health): — Mr. Speaker, through you and to the Members of this House I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to a grade eight class from the Elsie Dorsey school in my constituency in the Speakers gallery, accompanied by their principal, Mr. Wilson. I am sure the Members join with me in extending a welcome to them and trust that their meeting in session here today will be educational and enjoyable.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. E.I. Wood (Swift Current): — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Assembly a group of some 22 students of grades 11 and 12 from Hazlet high school in the central rows of the Speakers gallery. Hazlet is some 35 miles the other side of Swift Current in a northwesterly direction, so these pupils have travelled some 185 miles to be with us here today. They are accompanied by their teacher, Mr. Dale Hadden and Mrs. Hadden, as well as Harold Ronning, their bus driver. We trust that their stay with us will be educational and interesting and that they will have a good tour of the city and of the area and will have a safe journey home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF NEW CANADIANS

Mr. E. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to all Members of this House, 14 new Canadians under the leadership of Mrs. Estelle Anthony who are located in the Speakers gallery and 12 new Canadians under the leadership of Joe Malach who are located behind me in the west gallery. These new Canadians are from several countries in Europe. They are studying occupational English at St. Pat's Vocational school in Regina North West. All Members I am sure join me in welcoming them to Saskatchewan and congratulating them for being interested in parliamentary

March 14, 1969

procedure and in expressing the wish that their stay with us this afternoon will be informative and pleasant. I wonder if they could stand up. I am sure that all Members of the House would be interested in seeing these new citizens, these new Canadians that have come to our land. Would these two classes stand up please.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. J.C. McIsaac (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to join with the Hon. Member (Mr. Whelan) who just took his seat in extending a welcome on behalf of Government Members to the members of the two classes from Saskatchewan House. We too hope that they will not only have an enjoyable afternoon, but that they will continue on the course that they are embarked on and hope that they will see fit to become permanent residents of the Province of Saskatchewan. My thanks also to the two teachers, Mr. Malach and Mrs. Anthony for bringing their classes here this afternoon.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Hon. L.P. Coderre (Gravelbourg): — Mr. Speaker, not to be outdone, I have a group of students in the Speakers gallery, 22 students from Palmer - not quantity but quality. They have been conducted here to tour the Legislature and places of interest in the city of Regina by their teacher, Mrs. Swenson and they were driven here by a Mr. Neil. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, and the Assembly will welcome them here this afternoon and hope that they have a very enjoyable and fruitful afternoon and a very safe journey home.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

WELCOME TO MINISTER OF LABOUR FROM MANITOBA

Hon. G.B. Grant (Minister of Public Health): — Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may call the attention of the Members to a visitor sitting at the back. He is the Minister of Labour from the Province of Manitoba, Mr. Witney and his guest, Mr. Keith Taylor from Flin Flon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

EMERGENCY ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

Mr. W.S. Lloyd (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are proceeded with I wish to ask leave to move adjournment of the House under Standing Order 20 for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance namely:

Today's announcement by the Hon. Mr. Pepin that substantial sales of grain are being made by signatory nations to the International Grains Agreement at prices lower than the minimum prices set out in that Agreement and that Canada is considering a policy of selling grain at prices

lower than the minimum prices provided in the Agreement; that such a move by Canada would almost certainly result in lower returns, and possibly substantially lower returns, for grain producers in Saskatchewan; that these facts disclose urgent need that the Government of Canada firstly, take all possible steps to ensure the effective operation of the International Grains Agreement; and secondly, institute support prices for grain sold under the Agreement; and that all of the foregoing raises the urgent necessity of this Assembly forthwith making a recommendation to the Government of Canada in respect thereto.

Mr. Speaker, if I may underline the reason for urgency, my understanding is that the exporting wheat nations are meeting in conference next week to consider what possibilities there are of salvaging the International Grains Agreement. I believe the International Wheat Council is also meeting. I know that the Government of Canada will be going there and making every attempt possible to save the Agreement. It seems therefore highly desirable and hopefully useful if we in this Legislature could express our concern and add our support to the Government of Canada in those efforts, when it meets with our competitors in the field of selling wheat next week. It is because this is so extremely important and vital, Mr. Speaker, that I ask leave to adjourn the House to discuss this at this time.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: — In connection with the proposed motion by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition I draw the attention of all Hon. Members to our Standing Orders, Section 20, subsection (3). The person moving the motion “hands a written statement of the matter proposed to be discussed to Mr. Speaker, who, if he thinks it in order, and of urgent public important, etc.” This of course puts the onus on the Chair to decide (1) if it is in order and (2) if it is of sufficiently urgent public importance to warrant the putting aside of all of the business of the House in order that the matter could be at once discussed. I bring to your attention first the question of it being in order. There is a paragraph in the statement which says: “ and secondly, institute support prices for grain sold under the Agreement ”

I draw your attention to Resolution No. 8 standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Member from Kelsey (Mr. Messer) and adjourned under the name of the Provincial Treasurer (Mr. Steuart):

This Legislature recommends that the Provincial Government request the Federal Government to adopt an agricultural policy which will provide for both export and domestic guaranteed prices of wheat.

I presume that a guaranteed price for wheat implies support prices. The part therefore about instituting support prices for grains is already under discussion by the House and that part of the Resolution is perhaps out of order.

I draw your attention to the opening remarks in the statement, “Today’s announcement by the Hon. Mr. Pepin.” I have not as yet heard of this announcement and I have no knowledge of it. Until such time as I do receive the announcement or find out what it is, either through the press via some other of the news

March 14, 1969

media or by direct contact with the Minister involved, I fail to see how I can be expected to rule on the motion. Until such time as this statement is available to all of the Members of this House, I do not think that it would be possible to have a meaningful debate thereon.

I would further draw your attention to the fact that an urgency motion must involve the administrative responsibility of the Government. The administrative responsibility of the Canadian Wheat Board lies with the Government of Canada and not with the Provincial Government of the Province of Saskatchewan. However, I am willing to defer my decision, if the House would agree, until such time as I have a copy of the Ministers statement before me and until such time as I have fully considered whatever statement it was that Mr. Pepin made.

Mr. Lloyd: — Mr. Speaker, would it be in order to comment on your remarks.

Mr. Speaker: — Yes.

Mr. Lloyd: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the other Resolution, I was aware of course of its presence on the Order Paper. May I submit, Sir, that there is a difference which is a distinct and distinguishing one. The other Resolution refers to the general policy of a long-time nature. This one refers to something which seems to me must be considered immediately and at this time and during the period during which the International Grains Agreement is in jeopardy. I would submit, Sir, that the difference is real enough that hopefully you would see fit to allow us to discuss it because of the emergency, the need to get a point of view expressed in public and supporting the Government of Canada. Secondly, with respect to the fact that you, Sir, and other Members of the House may not yet have seen or may not be aware of the statement by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, I am aware that this perhaps poses a problem. May I say, however, that it has been in the news today. I have been contacted by various people of the news media with respect to it and have heard it mentioned on at least two news broadcasts, so that it seems to me, Sir, that this is sufficient evidence that the statement has been made. While I can appreciate the desirability of you, Sir, to delay a ruling, I can only repeat that the meetings to which I refer at which these are to be discussed by the Government of Canada and the governments of other nations are only next week. To defer it would perhaps mean waiting until next weekend and we may lose the effect of whatever weight the opinion of this Legislature may have.

Hon. W.R. Thatcher (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, I don't think any Hon. Member in this House would deny that the effects of a wheat price reduction would be very serious as far as Saskatchewan is concerned. There have been rumours, and I call them rumours, in the press, over the radio, to the effect that something is happening in Ottawa as far as wheat prices are concerned. This morning we tried to contact the Minister of Agriculture but he was not available. We tried to get Mr. Pepin, the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Again without success. We did contact an official of the Wheat Board, but even he was rather vague as to what is happening. I submit that this House cannot have a meaningful debate on this subject until we have the facts before us. In this respect may

I suggest that it would make sense for you to defer a ruling until Monday, when we know precisely what has happened. We hear, and I don't know if it is correct or not, that wheat has dropped one cent a bushel. If that is the figure it is certainly not desirable, but I don't know whether it is a national crisis or not. I do suggest that with the facts before us on Monday, you could make your ruling. Then if we do have the debate we can discuss the subject intelligently. I don't think such a debate can take place today, because we have not seen the Minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: — There is no doubt about it that however well informed other Members of the House may be, I am certainly not in full and complete possession of the facts and I certainly don't feel like arriving at a decision on a matter as important, as I consider this one to be just on the spur of the moment. I would draw your attention to May's Parliamentary Guide, 7th edition, page 364 when it says:

The matter raised must be not offered when facts are in dispute or before they are available.

I therefore propose to wait until I have the full and complete facts before me. That should not take too long, but whatever time it takes I ask the concurrence of the House in that regard.

Just a minute now, the correct citation is on page 365 of May's Parliamentary Guide:

A motion has been allowed to be postponed without prejudice to its claim to raise a matter of urgency.

That is the citation which I am following.

Mr. Lloyd: — In accepting your proposal, to ask a question for clarification, do I take it then, Sir, that your ruling will be on the basis of the request which I have placed before the Legislature this afternoon?

Mr. Speaker: — The ruling will be made on the basis of the request which the Leader of the Opposition has made and it will be considered on the basis of the facts as I get them, when I get them, and I shall proceed to secure them forthwith.

Before I put the adjournment motion I want to inform the House that I did receive by telegram this afternoon at approximately 5 p.m. a copy of the statement made in the House of Commons at 2 p.m. this afternoon by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, the Hon. Mr. Pepin, and I will be in a position to rule on the admissibility of the adjournment motion offered by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Lloyd) immediately after the Orders of the Day are entered into on Monday next.

Debate adjourned.

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