

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fifth Session — Sixteenth Legislature
40th Day

Monday, April 12, 1971.

The Assembly met at 10:00 o'clock a.m.
On the Orders of the Day.

QUESTIONS

Regina Flood

Mr. A. E. Blakeney (Leader of the Opposition): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to address a question or two to the Government.

There is, Mr. Speaker, a widespread concern about the flood situation in Regina and particularly about what the people think is quite inadequate warning that they received of the danger. The questions which I ask in this regard are: Is the Minister able to give assurance that the forecasting will be such as to give more time or warning to other communities? And the second question: Has the Government formulated any plans for assisting victims of the flood? Have they been in touch with the Federal Government? Are they able to say to the victims to whom they should apply and what assistance they might expect?

Mr. W. R. Thatcher (Premier): — Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet met for one hour this morning and the chief item on the agenda was the flood situation. Our officials have been working on the crisis over the weekend. I wish to inform the House that the Provincial Government has asked the Emergency Measures Organization to give every possible help in the current flood situation.

I think it is fair to say that they are giving leadership in this connection. The entire resources of the Emergency Measures Organization and other appropriate provincial bodies have been mobilized to fight the floods in Regina and elsewhere. May I also indicate that the Government, once again, will entertain requests for flood damage assistance made through local councils and municipalities including the city of Regina. Such appeals should be forwarded by local governments. In other words, we shall not take individual requests. Any requests for assistance must come through the local government to the Department of Municipal Affairs. These appeals should only be made when the fullest extent of the damage is ascertained.

If the damage proves to be of a major nature, provincial authorities will make representations for financial assistance to Ottawa. We are not yet certain of the extent of the damage, and of course Ottawa will only help financially if it is a major disaster. But when we learn or ascertain the dollar damage we will certainly make appeals to Ottawa.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the provincial officials, we think, are doing everything possible in these difficult circumstances.

Mr. W. E. Smishek (Regina North East): — Mr. Speaker, a follow-up question. I wonder if the Premier can tell us whether the Government has directed or has asked the Emergency Measures Organization or others of its agencies to get them to employ as many people as possible who are presently unemployed to assist with the flood control operation? Listening to the radio that the voluntary help was not adequate to assist, at least last night, and it seems to me that what is needed are some people who will be employed. I wonder if the Premier can tell us whether any direction has gone out to employ as many of the unemployed to assist with the flood situation?

Mr. Thatcher: — We have asked Emergency Measures Organization officials to take any steps that are necessary. As Hon. Members know, there have been, I believe, 100 permanent soldiers and airmen moved from the Moose Jaw base. If the situation warrants it, probably a call will go out to Calgary. However, at this moment it isn't considered that that is necessary.

Insurance on Flood

Mr. E. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister-in-Charge of Government Insurance.

Regarding the flood Thursday evening and the houses flooded along Wascana Creek in my riding, can the Minister-in-Charge of Saskatchewan Government Insurance office assure us that this corporation will give these people who have suffered water damage immediate and extended attention?

Hon. A.C. Cameron (Minister of Mineral Resources): — I can't give you that without knowing what kind of insurance they have, of course, but I should be glad to look into the matter.

Question No. 183

Mr. G.R. Bowerman (Shellbrook): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to draw to the attention of the Government that I asked a question (No. 183) on Thursday, March 9th and as of today I haven't received an answer. I should like to know if this will be forthcoming shortly.

Hon. D.V. Heald (Attorney General): — Presumably it was converted. I don't remember it offhand. Was it converted to an Order for Return? What Department was it in?

Mr. Bowerman: — Highways.

Mr. Heald: — All right, I will take it up with the Minister of Highways.

Westward Movement of Wheat

Mr. G.T. Snyder (Moose Jaw North): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to beg the indulgence of

the House just to draw to the attention of Hon. Members and to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. McFarlane) in particular, to a few matters concerning the westward movement of grain over the past week.

Over the weekend I had the opportunity to do some first-hand checking with respect to cars of grain billed for the Port of Vancouver and I discovered that there are still 350 cars . . .

Mr. Thatcher: — On a point of order, can a private Member make a statement?

Mr. Speaker: — Order, order! No, a private Member cannot make a statement. A private Member can ask a question. He can preface his question with the words that are necessary to make his question intelligible. It seems to me that these questions are getting longer and longer and that the preface is gradually becoming longer than the question. The question should be short, sharp and succinct.

Mr. Snyder: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Premier would be a little patient by way of preamble, I have just suggested that there are still some 350 cars of grain in Swift Current. There is no particular . . .

Mr. Thatcher: — What's your question?

Mr. Snyder: — I'll get to it. Just . . .

Mr. Thatcher: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. All that he is doing is making a statement.

Mr. Snyder: — I want to ask a question with an appropriate preamble.

Mr. Speaker: — Let's have the question.

Mr. Snyder: — I will. I am pointing out to the Minister of Agriculture, particularly, that there are 350 cars of grain still in storage in Swift Current. Another 160 cars on the sidings . . .

Mr. Heald: — Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It was my understanding, and I don't know how good my arithmetic is, but it was my understanding that we were restricted to three questions in one period. It seems to me that this is question number four.

Mr. Speaker: — If my memory serves me correctly there was no hard and fast guideline, but it was three questions with two supplementaries to each question if anyone chose to use them. It seems to me that we have had a question, and another question which was a supplementary to the primary question, and then a question with regard to insurance. One question was a supplementary to the primary question which concerned flood control. But never mind, three questions according to the score that I kept here on the Order Paper. One question was a supplementary to floods and the other was in connection with insurance.

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Mr. Heald: — Mr. Speaker, I . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Never mind that, whether we have had three or four, the fact of the matter is that we should not have long preambles to questions. This is surely understood by the House.

Mr. Snyder: — Well, then my question very briefly is: In light of these facts, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister is aware of these facts in light of the kind of hysteria that he was attempting to generate less than one week ago?

Hon. D.T. McFarlane (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I should just like to say that the Hon. Member is quite happy over the fact that he has got himself an increase of 23 per cent in wages and it will take at least two weeks to get the grain moving again, irrespective of the type of statement that the Member tried to make this morning. The whole farm situation is still suffering and even the livestock is still backed up on the farms and this won't be corrected for at least two weeks.

The Assembly adjourned at 10:00 o'clock p.m.