

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session — Seventeenth Legislature
1st Day

Thursday, November 29, 1973.

2:59 o'clock p.m.

This being the day appointed by Proclamation of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, dated the sixteenth day of October, 1973, for the meeting of the Fourth Session of the Seventeenth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan, and the Assembly having met:

Mr. Speaker informed the Assembly that he had received a communication from the Private Secretary to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor stating that His Honour would open the Session at three o'clock p.m. today, Thursday, the Twenty-ninth day of November, 1973.

3:02 o'clock p.m.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor entered the Chamber and, having taken his seat upon the Throne, was pleased to open the Session with the following Speech:

Mr. Speaker,

Members of the Legislative Assembly:

It is my privilege to welcome you to the Fourth Session of the Seventeenth Legislature of Saskatchewan.

WESTERN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES CONFERENCE

The Western Economic Opportunities Conference convened by the Government of Canada in July was unprecedented on two counts. It was the first federal-provincial conference of First Ministers ever called to deal specifically with the problems of the West. Second, in preparing for the Conference, the four Western Provinces worked together and adopted joint positions on such key issues as transportation, freight rates and agriculture.

My Government approached this Conference with high hopes. Those hopes were dimmed at the Conference itself. They have further diminished in the months that followed.

The Western Provinces were fully united in calling for an end to discriminatory freight rates. Further, they called for a new direction in national transportation policy — one which would make our transport system and freight rate structure a positive instrument in achieving regional development.

Little has been accomplished. Indeed, freight rates have continued to climb. Western aspirations continue to be frustrated.

In agriculture, Western Ministers jointly urged the Federal Government to act decisively in providing realistic income stability for western farmers. As part of that proposal they urged feed grains and price support policies which would:

1. Assure that livestock producers in the West reaped the benefit of their natural advantage in livestock production.
2. Assure grain producers the best price for their product, whether sold in the domestic market or in the international market.
3. Assure both grain and livestock producers of minimum prices which would provide a margin above the cost of production.

The Federal Government either has not acted or has acted directly contrary to those joint Western proposals.

In light of this my Government recently introduced an interim Hog Price Stabilization Program to provide some short-term certainty for hog producers. This program involves a financial risk which the Province alone cannot sustain in the long run. Whether it can be transformed into a permanent stabilization program depends upon whether the Federal Government fulfils the promise held forth at the Western Economic Opportunities Conference.

The lack of tangible results from the Calgary conference is leading to disillusionment and anger. It is my Government's hope that Ottawa will yet move positively to fulfil the just expectations of the West and thereby reinforce the bonds of Canadian unity.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE

Events have moved swiftly in the marketing and pricing of agricultural products during the past nine months. Prospects for grain producers have never been brighter. And, although short-term uncertainties are troubling livestock producers, the demand for meat is strong and future prospects are encouraging.

At the Opening of the last Session of this Assembly, I announced the FarmStart program — a program to assist young farmers to become established in livestock production. I am pleased to report that the reception given FarmStart has surpassed my Government's expectations. In its first month of operation, the FarmStart program approved 205 loans having a value of over \$5 million. Hundreds more applications are under consideration.

FarmStart will be continued and expanded.

You will be asked to approve legislation which will provide grants and other types of assistance for development of new markets outside Saskatchewan for our agricultural products.

My Government is also pleased to announce that legislation will be introduced at this Session to re-establish agricultural machinery testing in Saskatchewan in the form of a Prairie Agriculture Machinery Institute.

The position of our rural service centres has improved steadily this year. My Government will introduce new programs to assist communities to become still stronger through diversifying their industrial and commercial activity.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The year 1973 has been a year of expansion for the non-farm sector of the Saskatchewan economy.

My Government has given particular emphasis to the development of secondary industry to provide more jobs. It is gratifying to note that employment in manufacturing is 10 per cent this year over last, representing 2,000 added jobs. Further, investment in new and expanded capacity is up 40 per cent, indicating a promising year ahead.

This progress is reflected in the overall employment picture. In both September and October more Saskatchewan people were at work than in any corresponding month since records have been kept. October marked the sixth consecutive month in which Saskatchewan had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada.

In the year ahead, the Department of Industry and Commerce will increase its emphasis on identification of market opportunities which will enable existing industries to expand and new industries to develop. Activity will be directed to the building of export markets, not only in North America, but also in Pacific Rim countries and Europe.

CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Basic reorganization of the Department of Co-operation has now been completed. Its new direction emphasizes co-operative development.

Thirty-five new co-operatives have been organized so far this year, most in the area of agricultural production. Of particular note are three alfalfa and cubing operations.

ENERGY

The developing energy crisis in the Western world has serious implications for Saskatchewan. My Government approved the Federal Government's imposition of an export tax on Canadian petroleum moving to markets outside Canada and the efforts to maintain lower prices for Canadian consumers. My Ministers are disturbed, however, on several grounds.

There is as yet no clear indication that the Federal Government proposes to act at the national level to ensure that Canadian resources are developed for Canadian people in the years ahead. Additionally, despite the clear right of Saskatchewan people to receive the added value of our exported oil resources the Federal Government has thus far failed to return to Saskatchewan all or any part of the export tax levied by it on Saskatchewan oil.

Clearly, there is urgent need for a new national energy policy. Just as clearly, events of the past week demonstrate how distant such a policy is. In August, my Government joined with all other Provincial Governments in calling for a First Ministers' Conference on Energy. My Government welcomes the fact that such a conference has now been proposed for late January, a few days before the date on which the Federal Government will permit domestic prices to rise to levels based on the world price. But that date is very late.

In the view of my Government, Provincial action cannot be delayed until the Conference takes place. You will be asked to give early consideration to a series of measures which will spell out a new oil policy for Saskatchewan.

These measures will incorporate the following principles:

1. Control of the oil resource, as with other basic resources, must be firmly vested in the people of Saskatchewan.
2. Future supplies of petroleum for Saskatchewan farmers and other Saskatchewan users must be assured.
3. Increases in Saskatchewan wholesale prices for petroleum products which do not reflect increases in the cost of operations must be limited.
4. Future unearned increments in crude oil prices, over and above the level of prices which have prevailed during the immediate past period, must be retained for the people of Saskatchewan.
5. The returns from producing lands owned by farmers and other small holders of freehold acreage should not be disturbed.
6. Oil exploration in Saskatchewan should be stepped up over the low exploration levels of the past several years.

My Government attaches high priority to these measures.

You will therefore be asked to approve legislation which will provide authority to take decisive action to retain control of oil resources in the people of Saskatchewan, to ensure that the people receive the maximum benefit of any unearned increment in value resulting from political disputes at the international level and from the activities of the international oil corporations, and to conserve our oil and gas resources for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan now and in the decades ahead.

SASKATCHEWAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

Action will be taken at this Session to establish a Saskatchewan Development Fund to provide an opportunity for residents to invest, with security, in western development.

The Saskatchewan Development Fund will be an open-end investment trust. Shares will be sold to residents of Saskatchewan and the shareholder's investment will be guaranteed by the Government.

NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

My Government will provide substantial increases in capital expenditures for upgrading northern transportation in the year ahead. Among specific improvements are the heavy-duty paving of the provincial highway from Waskesiu Junction to La Ronge and rebuilding a number of northern airstrips.

To meet the twin objectives of community improvement and more employment opportunities for northern residents, the Government will undertake a number of sewer and water projects and an expanded program of housing for northern residents in the year ahead. These programs will be concentrated in communities outside the major northern centres.

Greater emphasis will be placed on economic and resource development for and by northerners through an expanded loan and grant program.

ENVIRONMENT

My Government has vigorously pursued negotiations with the Federal Government to implement an agreement for the Qu'Appelle Basin. Work has begun on a number of recommendations in the Qu'Appelle Report, including more detailed analysis of the flooding problems in Regina and Moose Jaw. Work is proceeding on the first phase of tertiary treatment of Regina's sewage effluent.

Again, in the coming year, reforestation will be stepped up in the commercial forest region to guarantee a sustained yield for an increased forest harvest.

Tree nurseries will be expanded. More trees will be planted and more land seeded and scarified than in any previous year.

URBAN AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

My Government is acting to provide substantial increases in assistance to urban governments to enable those governments to provide improved recreation, transportation and other municipal services.

Further steps will be taken to relieve the burden on urban taxpayers for financing education and urban development.

My Government is pleased to note the continued expansion in the supply of housing throughout the Province. The number of housing starts in the current year will exceed 6,000. A large share of those families buying new houses are families on limited incomes who qualify for grants under the House Building Assistance Program.

You will be asked to approve substantial increases in funds for this program as well as for subsidized housing and land assembly projects.

At the heart of our rural communities are the villages and small towns of Saskatchewan. My Government plans to expand its program to improve the quality of life in small communities through increased grants, through stepping up Operation Open Roads and Operation Mainstreet, through extending the community college program and through extending natural gas service to small centres.

EDUCATION

The 1974-75 school year will mark the inauguration of a province-wide system of grants for kindergartens under the direction of school boards.

At the adult level, community college pilot projects have been successfully launched. You will be asked to approve funds to expand the community college program in the year ahead.

Once again, my Government proposes substantial increases in grants to schools and to the University.

My Government awaits the Report of the Commission headed by former Chief Justice Emmett Hall on the Structure of the University. My Ministers anticipate that the report will be received in time for consideration at this Session of the Assembly.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

In further preparation for providing the first phase of free dental care for children in 1974, The Saskatchewan Dental Care Act will be introduced at this Session.

As announced earlier, medical and hospital premiums have been abolished, effective January 1, 1974. Where such premiums have been paid by an employer as a benefit to an employee, new legislation will require payment to the employee of an equivalent amount.

This year the Department of Social Services launched a successful program to provide employment opportunities to employable Saskatchewan Assistance Plan recipients. You will be asked to approve funds to expand this program in 1974.

LABOUR

As another measure to offset cost of living increases for those on low incomes, my Government has announced an increase in the minimum wage from \$1.75 to \$2.00 effective December 1st.

At this Session, you will be asked to approve amendments to The Labour Standards Act which will provide three weeks' vacation leave to employees after one year of service.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Several historic measures will be placed before you concerning representation in this Assembly and the conduct of those nominated as candidates and elected as Members.

Marking the first time in Saskatchewan's history that the establishment of provincial constituency boundaries has been removed from partisan political influence, you will be asked to consider the final report of the Electoral Boundaries Commission and legislation arising from that report.

A new Election Act will be placed before you which will require full disclosure of election contributions and expenditures by parties and candidates and will place limits on those expenditures.

You will be asked to consider the principle of requiring Members of this Assembly to disclose and divest themselves of any financial or other relationships involving a conflict of interest.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

My Government has been giving detailed consideration to the recommendations of the Special Committee on the Review of Liquor Regulations. Although it is considered inadvisable to act on a number of the Committee's recommendations, my Government has decided to proceed with a major program to counter alcohol abuse.

The final reports of the Special Committees on Business Firms and Welfare are awaited by my Government for consideration at this Session. Also anticipated is an interim report from the Committee on Highway Traffic and Safety.

CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

At this Session, my Government will introduce a new legal aid plan which will provide access to comprehensive legal assistance through community legal aid clinics.

You will be asked to protect against invasion of privacy by prohibiting electronic eavesdropping.

A program to provide native court workers, in association with native organization, will be expanded in the year ahead.

MULTICULTURALISM

Less than two years ago, my Government established a new Department of Culture and Youth. This fall the Department's sponsored a multicultural conference attended by 450 representatives of some 80 different ethnic and cultural groups across the Province — by far the largest conference of its kind ever held in Saskatchewan.

This reflects a burgeoning growth of interest in multiculturalism, particularly a re-awakening of interest among young people in their cultural and ethnic heritage.

You will be asked to provide for establishment of a multicultural advisory council, to approve funds for an expansion of multicultural programs, and to provide for grants to support ethno-cultural studies.

Finally, you will be asked to consider legislation permitting a language of instruction in schools other than English or French.

HISTORIC SITES AND TOURISM

As we near the end of 1973, it is appropriate to congratulate the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and all the thousands who joined with them in a magnificent celebration of the one-hundredth birthday of the Force. All of Saskatchewan, and thousands of visitors, participated in a series of memorable events, culminating in the visit of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh.

For Saskatchewan people, this year has brought a realization that — young as our Province is — it has a unique and colourful history.

Preserving our past and building our potential to attract tourists go hand in hand. In the year ahead my Government will embark on several programs to serve both goals.

We will introduce a grant program to assist in preserving historic buildings.

We will begin a series of steps to improve access to historic sites.

We will begin the restoration of the historic Territorial Building in Regina.

We will continue to assist in the development of the unique Western Development Museum in Moose Jaw.

And we will expand capital programs to develop more winter recreation facilities throughout Saskatchewan.

Looking ahead, my Government notes with pride two forthcoming events.

The year 1974 will mark the 200th anniversary of the establishment of Cumberland House.

And in August, 1975, the City of Regina will be host to the Western Canada Games, involving some 2,000 athletes, coaches, managers and officials, plus many more thousands of visitors.

In recognition of the increasing importance of recreation and tourism in Saskatchewan, you will be asked to approve the establishment of a new Department of Tourism and Renewable Resources.

I leave you now to the business of the Session with the full confidence that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities.

May Divine Providence continue to bless our Province and guide this Legislature in all its deliberations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT CLERK

MR. SPEAKER: — I beg to inform the Assembly that Brian Coulter, has been appointed Assistant Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

MR. SPEAKER: — Also that Randi Cummins, Bonnie Mathieson and Deborah Hamilton will be Pages during the present Session

NOTIFICATION OF VACANCY IN THE REPRESENTATION IN THE CONSTITUENCY OF REGINA LAKEVIEW

MR. SPEAKER: — I beg to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Acting Chief Electoral Officer notification of the following vacancy in the Representation:

In the Constituency of Regina Lakeview due to the death of Donald M. McPherson, Esquire.

The Assembly adjourned at 3:31 o'clock p.m.