

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Fourth Session — Seventeenth Legislature
38th Day

Wednesday, March 27, 1974

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

WELCOME TO STUDENTS

Mr. E. C. Whelan (Regina North West): — Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all Members of the Assembly, 50 Grade Eight Students from Al Pickard School in Regina North West. They are seated in the west gallery with their teachers, Mr. Dunn and Mrs. Henderson. It is also my pleasure to introduce to this Assembly a group of 31 Grade Five and Six students from the Ken Jenkins School in Regina North West. They are located in the east gallery with their Principal, Peter East.

The Al Pickard School is located in North Normanview and the Ken Jenkins School, Regina's newest school, is located in South Normanview. This district, Normanview, is Regina's fastest growing urban area.

On behalf of all Members may I extend a warm welcome to these two groups, Mr. Speaker. We hope their visit to the Legislature will be pleasant and educational.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. H. H. Rolfes (Saskatoon Nutana South): — Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure this afternoon to introduce to the House two groups of students from two elementary Saskatoon public schools. I think this must be somewhat of a record, Mr. Speaker, that a Member has that many students in the House at one time. There are a total of 104 students from these two schools.

The students from Churchill School are Grade VII students. They are accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Kelly Bauer, Mr. Schultz and Mr. Reehan. They are seated in the west gallery. I'll be meeting with these students at 3:15.

Behind me, Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery, we have Grade V students from Prince Philip School. I had the pleasure of meeting with these students last week for about one hour, when they asked questions and I tried to inform them about procedures in the House. These students are accompanied by their teachers Mr. Porteous and Mrs. Beattie. I will be meeting with these students at 3:30.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that these students will enjoy these proceedings this afternoon and I should like to draw to their attention that there is something a little bit different this afternoon in that they will see Estimates being done. I hope you will enjoy the proceedings and find it very educational.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. A. Oliver (Shaunavon): — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Hon. Everett Wood who is ill, I should like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and to this House some 50 Grade VII students from St. Patrick and St. Joseph Schools in Swift Current. I hope you will enjoy your stay and have a safe trip home.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS

Assistance to Municipalities for Snow Removal Costs

Mr. J. Wiebe (Morse): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Acting Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Messer). During the past winter, Saskatchewan has witnessed I think one of the worst winters in terms of snow and snow drifting in the past 20 years. It has been quite a costly venture for most of our municipalities. The normal budgets which they have had to budget for snow removal averaged over the ten year period was not sufficient, of course, for the expected this winter. It is quite evident that most municipalities are looking at rate increases of from seven to twelve mills above their normal budgeting. As we see in the Budget, there is no increase . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Your question please, I think the statements are getting a way too long.

Mr. Wiebe: — Mr. Speaker, in order to get the question answered correctly I feel that I have to phrase it in this way. To ask the question, Mr. Speaker, there is no increase shown in this year's Budget. Is the Department of Municipal Affairs prepared to help the municipalities throughout this province in a one-shot effort for this year to offset the seven to twelve mill rate increase that will be required to pay for snow removal?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. J. R. Messer (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, I know nothing of the seven to twelve mill rate increase that the Hon. Member makes mention of. We are aware, as are all residents in the Province of Saskatchewan, that this winter has been a severe one. Certainly municipalities have run into larger expenses in attempting to keep the roads open for those whom they service. I have had no specific discussions or, for that matter, correspondence with municipalities asking for special assistance in regard to the snow removal. However, if municipalities do make requests to the Department or to the Government, it certainly will be given consideration.

Primrose Air Weapons Range

Mr. J. G. Richards (Saskatoon University): — Mr. Speaker, I have a question to direct either to the Hon. Mr. Kramer (Acting Minister of Northern Saskatchewan) or to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Kowalchuk) who unfortunately is not here today, concerning the Primrose Air Weapons Range. A 20-year lease was signed in 1954 which expires

this year. It was obviously a bad lease from the point of view of the province and from the point of view of native peoples dispossessed of fishing and trapping rights. The lease is now up and my question to the Minister is: What are the Government's intentions with respect to renegotiation of this lease in terms of provincial revenues, in terms of compensation and recognition of native rights to the timber and to the oil, which I understand could be up to 500 million barrels based on very tentative estimates of heavy oil in the Cold Lake area, immediately to the west of this reserve?

Mr. Kramer: — Mr. Speaker, the Acting Minister of Northern Saskatchewan is my colleague, the Hon. Gordon MacMurchy . . .

Hon. G. MacMurchy (Minister of Education): — Mr. Speaker, in response to the question asked by the Hon. Member for Saskatoon University, with respect to whether negotiations from our point of view with the Federal Government in respect to the bombing range are underway, I don't think they are at this point. That is not to say that they will not be established in the very near future. I have no accurate information in my mind. I can probably provide the information if the Member requests it through a Question.

Mr. Richards: — If the Minister would provide this information I should be very grateful. I will put it on the Order Paper in the appropriate form.

The Supplementary question, can the Minister give assurance that there will be significant local participation this time round on these negotiations so that people at Canoe Lake for example, will know what is going on with respect to that bombing range and that we won't have, as we have had unfortunately for the last 20 years, a deal in which local people have had no participation and only token compensation for loss of hunting and fishing rights?

Mr. MacMurchy: — I think the Member for Saskatoon University is well aware, Mr. Speaker, that it is a general policy of this Government, there has been in fact consultation with community groups.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Piling of Sawdust at Copper Mill at Sturgis

Hon. N. E. Byers (Minister of Environment): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to reply to a question raised yesterday by the Hon. Member for Cannington (Mr. Weatherald) concerning the piling of sawdust at the Sask Forest Products Copper Mill at Sturgis. We have contacted the Sask Forest Products' officials since yesterday. We are assured by the Sask Forest Products' officials that the company is temporarily storing sawdust near the mill. However, the sawdust is contained within a slab fencing and we are assured that it is being stored in an area that is not susceptible to flooding. This is an arrangement that by necessity is temporary and the company does plan to undertake the construction of a permanent retention

area immediately after the land dries up this spring. So I hope that all Hon. Members will be assured that this company is doing its best to retain sawdust so as to not unduly pollute the waters of the Assiniboine River with the high spring flood potential this spring.

Mr. T. M. Weatherald (Cannington): — Mr. Speaker, I believe I'm allowed a comment. I certainly appreciate the information and I sure do agree that it is temporary because the first day the sun hits 50 it is going to be in the middle of that river. What we are really interested in is how to stop it being in the middle of that river.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! Statements back on the questions, I don't think that should be done on questions on Orders of the Day.

Automobile Accident Insurance

Mr. J. G. Lane (Lumsden): — Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for Automobile Accident Insurance propaganda. In light of the unprecedented promotional campaign, and I say misleading promotional campaign put on by the Automobile Accident Insurance Fund, when does the Government of Saskatchewan intend to start telling the people of Saskatchewan first of all, that the point system has been reintroduced and secondly, there is a possibility the point system is being reassessed for a period of three years, that a review of drivers' licences is being made retroactive for a period of three years?

Hon. R. Romanow (Attorney General): — Mr. Speaker, I believe that information is being put out as accurately and as fairly as we can. I told the Members in Crown Corporations and I have indicated in Questions at the time the AAIA rates were announced in the House that there would be a demerit system introduced. All I can say is that I believe the information is being handled as fast as it can be and if the Hon. Member feels that we should be putting out more public information along these lines, I certainly will take that up with the SGIO officials and urge them to consider additional public information on these areas.

Mr. Lane: — Well that's my supplementary question. I would hope that the Minister would be prepared to now start telling the public of Saskatchewan that in light of the demerit system and the premium system that has now been implemented, that under an Automobile Accident Insurance Policy we now will have some of the highest insurance rates in the Dominion of Canada. I would ask the Minister when he will start to tell the public that information?

Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I notice the Liberals applauding to that question because they do applaud any time there is a question which knocks the Saskatchewan Government Insurance office. The Member is totally wrong when he says we have the highest insurance rates anywhere in Canada. He is totally wrong. We and Manitoba still have the best automobile insurance rates anywhere in North America . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Romanow: — . . . I tell the Member for Lumsden, the best anywhere in North America. The Members opposite applaud when he says we've got the highest insurance rates which full well demonstrates the Liberals' disgust for SGIO and if they had the opportunity they would sell it. I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, that the simple fact of the matter is that if we are going to be penalizing the accident prone, the conviction prone drivers, as the Member for Rosthern (Mr. Boldt) believes in, in which I also believe in, and I thought your party believed in, we are going to have to be introducing a demerit system on that basis. If we are going to be penalizing those who are accident prone and thereby putting the drain on the fund, we have to have this type of a system. Maybe it isn't going to be the best. Maybe it is going to have to be overhauled but to say that we have got the highest insurance rate by combining those two is an absolute and total falsehood.

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Personal Privilege, that is not a falsehood, that is the truest statement made in this House, Mr. Speaker. And under the Government opposite we have the worst run government operated insurance program in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: — Order! I wish the Member would learn to ask questions without prefacing them first, we wouldn't get into this crossfire if questions were asked just as a question without the statements.

STATEMENT

Error in Leader-Post re Community Capital Fund

Hon. J. R. Messer (Minister of Agriculture): — Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day I should like to correct an erroneous impression given in a report in the Leader-Post yesterday regarding second reading of the Community Capital Fund Bill. The error relates to the impression given in the article that urban communities of 500 or less in population would not be eligible to receive grants under the Community Capital Fund Program. I want to make it clear that the program applies to all villages, towns and cities in the province regardless of size and also to hamlets and rural municipalities. There is no discrimination, Mr. Speaker, whatsoever in the program as between the larger centres and the smaller ones as was inferred by the Member for Lumsden who is quoted in the article. If he had read the Bill and the pamphlet I handed out it would have been abundantly clear to him.

I also should like to clarify that we are not asking urban communities of 500 population or less to prepare a five-year capital budget, simply because such detailed planning might be burdensome. However, we would encourage them to carry out program planning, it would surely supply assistance in the planning as may be required.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Leader-Post to make an appropriate correction as soon as possible so that the urban communities are not misled by this article nor continued to be misled by the Member for Lumsden (Mr. Lane) who was voicing his inability to understand the facts.

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Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that my statements in the House were brought in on a comment by the Minister, and I have a right to comment.

There is no doubt that under the program as announced by the Minister that there is discrimination against communities under 500, that the Government is indicating a lack of confidence in villages or communities under a population of 500, and if the Government opposite had confidence in these villages they would allow them to bring in a five-year program and a five-year budget . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. Messer: — On a Point of Order!

Mr. Speaker: — The Minister rose to make a correction on a press statement. The Bill is before the House and I think any debate on the details of the Bill will be better done in second reading and I won't entertain any more discussion on it at this time.

Mr. Lane: — I would take the matter . . .

Mr. Speaker: — Order!

Mr. K. R. MacLeod (Regina Albert Park): — Mr. Speaker, may I revert to the little controversy a second ago between the Hon. Acting Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Hon. Member for Lumsden. Mr. Speaker, would I be right in thinking that the remarks of the Minister of Municipal Affairs properly shouldn't have been brought here but were really part of his rebuttal or his closure of debate at the time when he closed the motion?

Mr. Speaker: — No, the Member has a right to rise in the House if he is misquoted in the Press. A Minister has the right to rise on Orders of the Day and make ministerial statements and he was correcting a statement in the Press. If the debate pertains to the Bill itself that would be left until the Bill comes up but he was rising on that statement and we have now passed that part of the Orders.

Mr. J. C. McIsaac (Wilkie): — The Minister may well have a right to correct an incorrect Press report, whether he has the right to cast aspersions and snide remarks relative to comments by the Member for Lumsden or any other matter, that's a question that is very much open. I suggest he has no right to engage in casting remarks on the comments of any other Member in the business of correcting a press statement.

Mr. Speaker: — I think this will be best settled if we leave it until second reading of the Bill when you can have a full debate both ways.

Mr. Lane: — Mr. Speaker, on the Point of Order. Seemingly we are starting a practice of ongoing censorship here, when a Minister

can get up and correct anything in the debate and surely that practice of the Acting Minister of Municipal Affairs should have been stopped as soon as he started to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: — I have ruled that the Minister or other Members have the right, if they feel that the paper has misquoted them, to rise and make a statement. I can't always control the words that any Member may use. But they have the right to rise if the paper has misquoted them. But a debate cannot ensue over that issue.

The Assembly adjourned at 5:30 o'clock p.m.