

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

Thursday, November 28, 1974.

3:00 o'clock p.m.

This being the day appointed by Proclamation of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, dated the fifth day of November, 1974, for meeting of the Fifth 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-eighth day of November, 1974.

3:03 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 Fifth Session of the Seventeenth Legislature of Saskatchewan.

SASKATCHEWAN'S FUTURE

Prospects for our Province in the immediate future look bright. Economic activity in all major sectors is up, and all indicators point to continuing buoyancy in 1974.

My Government is pleased to report that the mandate it received from the people of Saskatchewan in 1971 has been largely fulfilled. As we look toward the latter half of the seventies, however, there is a renewed sense of urgency to seek out new solutions to emerging problems and to strive for even greater achievements.

My Government has laid the groundwork to meet future challenges by aiming in its first term toward two main goals: to develop Saskatchewan's natural resources for the benefit of the people, and to preserve and strengthen our rural way of life centred on the family farm and rural community.

But there are warning clouds on the horizon. My Government notes with increasing concern some of the proposed policy directions of the Federal Government. The threat of removal of long-standing protections for farmers in the movement and marketing of our grain products is disturbing. Federal incursion into provincial rights to ownership of natural resources stands in the way of long-term planning for the future development of those resources for the benefit of all citizens.

FEDERAL BUDGET

My Government is greatly concerned about the impact of the recent Federal Budget on the people of Saskatchewan. The Budget penalizes Saskatchewan more than any other province. It departs from agreements reached at the meeting of First Ministers

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in Ottawa in March. It invades the right of a province to control the development of natural resources within its boundaries. By undermining the relationships which have existed between Federal and Provincial Governments for many decades, it has set government against government, and region against region and in so doing has weakened the fabric of Confederation.

Specifically, the Budget will cause Saskatchewan to lose in equalization payments an estimated \$40 million. It proposed to disallow as a deductible expense for corporate tax purposes royalties paid to provincial governments but not royalties paid to private mineral owners. It contains a wholly unprecedented provision which, if literally interpreted, will levy a penalty tax on Saskatchewan natural gas sold to the Saskatchewan Power Corporation for distribution to Saskatchewan customers unless the gas is sold at prices prevailing in other provinces. This is an attack on the entire concept of using the Saskatchewan Power Corporation to provide natural gas to our citizens at the lowest possible prices. By this provision, the Budget levies a heavy and unwarranted penalty on Saskatchewan people solely because in the past our Provincial Government made arrangements to ensure future supplies of natural gas for Saskatchewan citizens at reasonable prices.

My Government is giving careful study to these developments and will be making known from time to time policy decisions which may be required as a result.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

During the past year, my Government has moved to achieve a more significant degree of public involvement in resource development.

SaskOil has commenced operations. The Saskatchewan Mining and Development Corporation has been established to enter into joint ventures in the hard rock mineral area. This past month, my Government announced its intention to see that all new potash mines are either publicly owned or that the Crown has a majority position in any joint venture.

Through public ownership, public participation in joint ventures and control of the levels of royalty, my Government will pursue a policy of developing and conserving our mineral resources in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESS

The establishment of regional business representatives in nine centres to assist small businessmen has been well received. This assistance will be expanded to provide more intensive counselling on specific business problems.

To assist Saskatchewan manufacturers, my Government has provided funds for market development through the Aid-to-Trade Program and the recently formed Saskatchewan Trading Corporation.

More loans have been provided to assist small businesses. In 1974 to the end of October, 80 small businesses had loans approved by SEDCO, compared to 62 in all of 1973. The bulk of these have been in rural Saskatchewan.

My Government will continue to search for new opportunities for businesses which can establish and thrive in the

smaller centres and rural areas of the province.

AGRICULTURE

During the past year, my Government has continued to expand the opportunities for Saskatchewan farmers through Land Bank, FarmStart, and other programs. More than one thousand parcels of land have been leased by the Land Bank Commission to farmers many of whom would not otherwise have been able to acquire land. Some 1800 loans have been approved through FarmStart. The average age of farmers receiving these loans is 27. The Crop Insurance program has been greatly expanded with total coverage reaching more than \$290 million this year.

You will be asked to provide additional funds to carry on these important programs.

Instability of farm income continues to be the most serious obstacle standing in the way of a healthy farm economy and a stable rural population.

To enable Saskatchewan to participate in federal-provincial income stabilization programs, you will be asked to approve an Agricultural Returns Stabilization Act.

To assist Saskatchewan farmers in meeting increasing production costs, you will be asked to approve a Farm Cost Reduction Act to permit the payment of rebates on farm fuel costs.

Interest-free cash advances are also being provided to cow-calf operators to enable them to maintain calves during this period of low prices.

My Government recognizes that Saskatchewan, as a major food producing province, has an obligation to the hungry people of the world. Adoption of a policy to provide matching funds for aid to developing countries earlier this year has been enthusiastically received by the public. Much interest has also been shown in a proposal which my Government put forth recently for the establishment of a Canadian Food Bank as part of a World Food Program.

TRANSPORTATION

Saskatchewan has long recognized the importance of transportation, and the railway system in particular, to the development of Western Canada.

In recognition of this, my Government joined with the other Western Provinces and the Federal Government in seeking a rational approach to improvements in transportation. It is therefore with surprise and concern that my Ministers note recent suggestions that the very cornerstone of western transportation, the Crow's Nest Pass rates, should be removed. This would have a massive impact upon western transport and pose a serious threat to the economic and social life of rural Saskatchewan.

My Government will seek assurances that any such suggestions will be considered in the framework of the ongoing federal-provincial negotiations, with all possible opportunity being provided to hear and consider the concerns of the people and the communities affected.

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INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Encouraging progress has been made in the industrial sector of Saskatchewan's economy. Increasing numbers of people are employed in manufacturing and processing industries.

Some important new prospects have opened up, particularly in the development of iron and steel, forest products and mineral processing.

During the forthcoming Session, you will be asked to consider and approve the expansion of provincial programs to enhance desirable industrial and commercial development in Saskatchewan.

NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

Rapid and exciting development is occurring in the North. La Ronge, Uranium City, Hudson Bay and other northern communities are booming.

In Uranium City, my Government is working closely with Eldorado Nuclear. Plans are underway for a doubling of the uranium plant's capacity. Many new homes have already been built, with another 200 slated for construction this summer.

A new Saskatchewan Forest Products plywood plant is in production in Hudson Bay. Construction of wood processing plants is planned for Carrot River, Big River and Prince Albert.

The road to the Gulf Minerals operation at Rabbit Lake has been completed as well as a winter road to the Mokta mine at Cluff Lake. Production at Rabbit Lake is expected to commence in the coming year.

Concurrent with this expansion, a vigorous program is under way to provide northern people with housing, sewer and water, hospital and school facilities.

Before 1974 is ended, SaskTel will have completed phase one of a microwave hookup into the communities of Stony Rapids, Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Uranium City, thereby providing telephone service comparable to that enjoyed by people in the South. Work is completed on another line to the northwest which reaches from North Battleford to La Loche. In co-operation with the CBC, Plans are under way for the provision of television service to over a dozen remote northern communities within the next two to four years.

As a result of these activities, hundreds of northern people have found employment. Social assistance rolls in the North have declined by a more than 55 per cent during the past year. This important area of our province will continue to receive priority consideration, and future announcements will reflect this commitment.

ENVIRONMENT

The devastating floods throughout the province in the spring of 1974 dramatically illustrated the need for better control over flooding and over the use of lands subject to frequent flooding.

My Government will continue to give high priority to the recommendations in the Qu'Appelle Report. You will be asked to approve major expenditures for water quality control, flood control, and tourism and recreation developments as part of a multi-million dollar ten-year program.

Recently, an agreement was signed with the Governments of Canada and Manitoba for a three-year comprehensive study of water and water-related problems in the Souris River Basin. Work will commence on the study early in 1974.

SOCIAL SERVICES

During the next few months, a number of programs of particular benefit to senior citizens will be introduced.

You will be asked to approve a special branch of government to deal with their specific needs. Support will be provided for the establishment of a provincial council and for local councils to enable senior citizens to participate in government decisions which affect their lives.

Earlier this year, my Government introduced the Family Income Plan, the first program of its kind in North America. Since its inception, over 20,000 Saskatchewan working families have been provided with a better and happier life.

This year Saskatchewan has initiated the first program in Canada which provides for persons unable to pay a fine, an option other than serving time in jail. Those who choose to do so may work off their fines in community service.

In the year ahead, the Department of Social Services will take new initiatives to improve family, social and correctional services for people of Indian ancestry.

JUSTICE

My Government will be co-operating with the Federal Government and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in establishing a program to provide for recruitment and training of thirty-two Indian people as special constables in the RCMP within the next four years. Training will commence in early 1975.

A program has recently been established to provide native court workers to act as communicators between native people, the courts and other elements of the justice system. This program has done much to bridge the communication gap between native people and the court system and will be expanded in the year to come.

My Government will be implementing a program to provide for court sittings in ten Indian Reserve areas. These courts will be presided over by Indian people, appointed as Justices of the Peace, who will hear cases involving provincial statutes and the Indian Act.

HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS

While construction of new houses declined sharply in the rest of Canada, 1974 has been a busy year for housebuilding in Saskatchewan.

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To the end of September, there were more than 5,400 housing starts in Saskatchewan. This compares with 6,400 starts for all of 1973 and is in sharp contrast with the figure of 1,700 starts during the entire year of 1970.

The Senior Citizens Home Repair Program helped many elderly people to make needed repairs to their homes. Substantial funds were provided for land assembly. The newly established Community Capital Fund provided communities large and small with the ability to expand services and facilities for their residents.

During the coming year, my Government will continue to assist these communities to meet their needs. At this Session you will be asked to approve a program to expand water assistance grants to urban centres. You will be asked to approve an increase in funding for the purpose of purchasing and servicing of land in urban centres across Saskatchewan. New housing programs will give greater impetus to co-operative housing in both rural and urban areas.

Amendments will be proposed to The Urban Municipal Elections Act and to The Urban Municipality Act.

HEALTH

My Government takes pride in the restoration of Saskatchewan to a position of leadership in health services.

The unrestricted right of all persons to health services has been established through the removal of deterrent fees and abolition of premiums.

New services have been progressively added. Chiropractic care has been insured, hearing aids are provided at cost and the handicapped will be greatly helped through the SAIL program which will provide such items as wheel chairs and artificial limbs free of charge.

The AWARE program of public education about alcohol use and abuse was launched during the past year. In the field of alcohol education, my Government has substantially increased its budget. You will again be asked to give high priority to this important program.

This fall, the program to provide dental care to children began. You will be asked to provide additional funds for 1975 so that by next fall, more than 30,000 additional children will be covered.

In the months ahead, Canada's first universal prescription drug plan will become a reality.

Saskatchewan continues to enjoy virtually full employment. Over 25,000 new jobs have been created since 1971. Average unemployment last year was 3.6 per cent. This year's average to the end of October has been only 2.8 per cent.

Helping to create jobs in small communities and to develop needed facilities is the function of the Provincial Municipal Winter Works Incentive program. You will be asked to provide funds to continue the program this winter. Project sponsors will again be encouraged to give preference in employment to disadvantaged persons.

The Occupational Health and Safety program has also proven to be a success. Thousands of workers have benefitted.

In recognition of the need for a more comprehensive program to assist persons whose livelihood is disrupted by sickness or injury, my Government has established a committee to study this important matter. This committee is charged with examining the feasibility of a universal sickness and injury compensation plan. A report will be forthcoming in the new year.

An Act to name the first Monday in August a statutory holiday to be known as Saskatchewan Day will be introduced.

You will be asked to approve legislation to supplement the pensions being received by persons under public service superannuation plans.

HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

Operation Open Roads will be completed in 1975, bringing dust-free access roads to 275,000 people in 500 Saskatchewan communities. You will be asked to provide funds for the completion of this program.

The Department of Highways will be acting to bring more than 600 miles of roadway into the provincial highway system, as well as expanding roads and highways into the North.

Some time ago, my Government established a commission in co-operation with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, to examine the possible development of a system of dust-free grid roads. A report is expected early in the new year.

SCIENCE POLICY

The rapid growth of scientific knowledge and new technologies is vital to every field of human endeavour.

You will be asked to consider the establishment of a new Science Council to advise on science policy and to help apply the fruits of research to the development of our province.

MATRIMONIAL PROPERTY

My Government has directed the Saskatchewan Law Reform Commission to undertake a thorough study of the law relating to matrimonial property.

To date, the Commission has issued three working papers and set out tentative proposals for the reform of the law in this area. It is anticipated that the Commission will bring forward its final recommendation some time in 1975.

Interim legislation will be introduced to give the courts power to make a fair and equitable division of property between spouses.

STATUS OF WOMEN

The year 1975 has been proclaimed by the United Nations as International Women's Year, during which time there will be intensified activities to promote equality among men and women. My Government is pleased to join in support of those efforts.

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Policies will be implemented, beginning in the new year, to improve employment opportunities for women in the Saskatchewan civil service and to increase the numbers of women in management positions.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Over the past three years, my Government has taken a number of major steps to reform our electoral system and provide more opportunity for people to exercise their rights in a democracy. Establishment of the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission and legislation to amend The Election Act were means toward this end.

During this Session, you will be asked to approve legislation which will allow handicapped people a more equal opportunity to exercise their rights in choosing their elected representative.

OUR HERITAGE

This year my Government initiated a program of assistance to preserve historic buildings in the Province. You will be asked to approve measures to continue and expand this program in the year ahead.

In order to assure the protection and conservation of our wildlife resources, my Government acquired some 30,000 acres of habitat lands. This program, carried out with the co-operation and support of Saskatchewan sportsmen, will be expanded.

Other legislation will propose the establishment of additional protected areas, noted for their abundance of plant and animal life.

EDUCATION AND THE ARTS

Next year will mark the completion of a major phase of the Community College program. This innovative educational program will be extended during 1975 with new colleges in nine more regions, in addition to the four new in operation.

At this Session, you will be asked to consider providing increased funds for the operation of these colleges as well as for regular schools and the universities.

Last year, a conference was held in Saskatoon which fostered a renewed interest in Saskatchewan's multicultural heritage. Over 500 people attended this conference. Next year, a conference on the arts is planned, which will serve as a focal point for the promotion of the arts in our province.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

In August, 1975 the City of Regina will play host to the first Western Canada Games. The largest sporting event ever held in Saskatchewan, the games will attract an expected total of 1,700 athletes and coaches from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

I am pleased to inform you that the City of Swift Current has been awarded the second Saskatchewan Summer Games to be

held in 1976. These games follow upon the successful Summer Games in Moose Jaw in 1972 and the Winter Games in North Battleford in March of 1974.

These and similar activities attract many visitors to Saskatchewan. During the past year, over \$220 million worth of business was generated by the tourist industry.

My Government will be preparing to meet the increasing demands which this influx of visitors will have on existing facilities and resources. Expanded programs will be undertaken to satisfy these needs.

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 Gwenneth Joyce Ronyk has been appointed as First Assistant Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

INTRODUCTION OF PAGES

Mr. Speaker: That Linda Miller, Catherine White and Austin Banner will be Pages during the present Session.

NOTIFICATION OF VACANCY IN THE REPRESENTATION IN THE CONSTITUENCY OF WILKIE

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 Wilkie due to the resignation of J. C. McIsaac, Esquire.

The Assembly adjourned at 3:58 o'clock p.m.