

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

November 26, 1981

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

MR.. SPEAKER: — I am directed by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor to inform you that he will open the fourth session of the 19th legislature at 2 o'clock today, Thursday, November 26, 1981.

2:03 p.m.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor was then 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 19th legislature of Saskatchewan.

1981 has been a year of important achievements for the people of Saskatchewan. We have finally resolved disputes over the constitution and energy. Our province continues to prosper in a period of national recession. There are, however, many new challenges before us that call for a vigorous response from our people and their elected representatives.

THE CONSTITUTION

On November 5, 1981, the federal government and nine provincial governments, including my government, concluded an historic agreement on the constitution. This agreement heralds a new constitutional era for Canada and for all Canadians.

For the first time in our 114-year history we now have the means to change our constitution without recourse to the parliament in Great Britain. By providing for a Canadian constitutional amendment formula, this agreement secures our total independence as a country. In that sense it can be said that Canada's present-day leaders have concluded successfully the task of nation building begun over a century ago.

My government believes that the new amending formula is a good one for Canada. It confirms and maintains our federal system of government. It ensures the appointed Senate cannot block indefinitely constitutional reforms desired by Canadians and their duly elected governments. It combines flexibility and protection of provincial jurisdiction.

The November 5 agreement also provides for other substantive constitutional changes. It guarantees the protection of individual rights and freedoms while recognizing that in some cases that protection remains the ultimate responsibility of parliament and the legislatures and not the courts.

The agreement constitutionalizes the principle of equalization, one of the crowning achievements of postwar co-operative federalism which commits governments to maintaining reasonably comparable levels of public service for all Canadians wherever

they happen to live. It also clarifies and confirms provincial jurisdiction over natural resources, an important cornerstone of Saskatchewan's economy and a vital part of the confederation bargain for western Canada.

My government is proud of the role it has played in the events and negotiations leading up to this agreement. Saskatchewan was the only province to argue before the Supreme Court of Canada that constitutional change could be achieved other than through unilateral action on the one hand or unanimous agreement on the other. In confirming the constitutional convention of provincial consent and in adopting my government's contention that a broad provincial consensus was sufficient to safeguard the federal principle, the supreme court broke the constitutional logjam and made agreement possible.

My government deeply regrets that the government of the province of Quebec was unable to support the agreement; we wish it had decided otherwise. The participation of Quebec in the building of our country has been and will continue to be of vital importance.

My government is pleased that the proposal put forward by Telex from the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Hon. Roy Romanow, to the Hon. Jean Chretien of the federal government on Wednesday, November 18, has now been accepted. This called for section 28 of the constitutional resolution now before parliament, dealing with equality rights between men and women, to be removed from the ambit of section 33 of that resolution and for the inclusion of a section recognizing treaty and aboriginal rights. My government has been advised that its proposal has been accepted by the other nine governments which were parties to the November 5 agreement.

It is clear that there is still work to be done. Governments must honour their moral and constitutional obligation to Canada's aboriginal peoples. Other constitutional issues including such important matters as the Supreme Court of Canada and Senate reform will also require our attention.

ENERGY AND CONSERVATION

On October 26, 1981, my government signed an agreement with the Government of Canada relating to the development of the oil and gas industry in Saskatchewan and the division of gross revenues among the producing companies, the Canadian government and the Saskatchewan government. Under the terms of this agreement increased revenues will flow to producers to provide a much needed stimulus for Saskatchewan's oil and gas industry. The agreement will also provide a stable framework within which governments and the industry can plan for the future.

The agreement has removed some of the negative aspects of the national energy program and will help in achieving long-term energy security for all Canadians. My ministers have negotiated special provisions which will assist in the orderly development of Saskatchewan's vast reserves of heavy oil. My government is confident that this agreement will ensure continued development of the province's oil and gas reserves and a fair return to the people from this resource.

Energy conservation continues to be a priority of my government. You will be asked to consider amendments to The Power Corporation Act which will more clearly set out the authority of the corporation to encourage energy conservation and promote the development of alternative forms of energy.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

While my government welcomes these important agreements, there are alarming signs of new efforts by the federal government to cut back funding for essential health and educational services. As part of its recent budget, the federal government finally tabled its long-awaited proposals for new cost-sharing arrangements between Ottawa and the provinces. These arrangements provide federal financing for key social programs and institutions in Saskatchewan and other provinces, including medical care and hospitalization insurance, universities and technical institutes. The provinces were assured by Ottawa that these new arrangements would be the outcome of meaningful consultations. These consultations did not take place.

My government will strive to assure that Ottawa maintains adequate finance funding for key social programs. This is not just a fight over money, but also a struggle to maintain nation-wide programs in fields such as medicare which were pioneered by Saskatchewan people and of which we are justifiably proud.

THE ECONOMY

The recent decline in interest rates is indeed a welcome development. Nevertheless, my government is concerned that the decline will not be sufficient to prevent a worsening of the current slowdown in the economy that will ease the burdens on farmers, home-owners and small businessmen.

The federal budget of November 12 will do little to improve the economic situation. Indeed, it will likely cause increased unemployment and wasted productive potential. Current federal policies to counter inflation have failed. Despite the fact that the national economy has entered a recession, no weakening of inflationary pressure is apparent.

My government regrets that the federal budget failed to provide a clear strategy to combat inflation, stimulate economic growth and increase control of the Canadian economy by Canadians. Over the coming months my government will be developing proposals for tax and spending initiatives to promote economic development in Saskatchewan and to assist the people of this province to take full advantage of the opportunities before us. These proposals will be placed before you in next spring's budget. You will be asked to approve The Saskatchewan Home-owners' Security Act to give temporary protection to people threatened with loss of their homes through foreclosure, because of unusually high mortgage interest rates.

AGRICULTURE

Saskatchewan's 1981 grain crop is well above average in yield and quality. Agriculture still contributes the largest part of the gross provincial product — \$4.3 billion in 1981 and \$5 billion projected for 1982.

To meet the challenge to produce more grains needed for world markets, my government will continue the five-year, \$25-million commitment to agricultural research begun in the FarmLab program this year.

High interest rates and low prices have meant difficult times for cattle and hog producers. In 1976 my government introduced SHARP, which has provided valuable

assistance to hog producers, especially in the last two years.

Last year my government announced the beef stabilization plan which will come into effect on January 1, 1982. My government believes that the only long-term solution to problems in the livestock industry is a national stabilization plan for hogs and cattle. My ministers will continue their efforts for the early implementation of such a plan.

My government will continue its fight to protect the Crow rate for prairie producers and to secure improvements in the grain transportation system. One thousand Saskatchewan hopper cars are now fully operational within the transportation system, moving prairie grain to export positions.

You will be asked to consider amendments to The Agricultural Incentives Act and to The Crop Insurance Act.

TRANSPORTATION

The decision of the Government of Canada to make major cuts in passenger rail service has serious repercussions for Saskatchewan. My government stands with communities such as Melville and Watrous in their attempts to retain this important transportation service.

Improvements to the public highways and rural roads continue to be a priority for my government. Work is under way to extend the construction of four-lane highways west of Swift Current and west of North Battleford.

Over 30 communities with populations of 50 to 100 people are eligible to participate in Open Roads II which started this year. In 1981 access roads to nearly half of the eligible communities were oil treated and access roads to the other communities will be completed in 1982.

In the last six years, as a result of an intensive traffic safety campaign, injuries and fatalities in Saskatchewan have decreased by 35 per cent from projected levels. This year my government will begin a program to encourage the formation of local community traffic safety groups across the province.

In the course of this session you will be asked to consider amendments to The Highways Act.

MUNICIPALITIES

In 1982 a number of Saskatchewan municipalities will celebrate their 100th anniversary of settlement. To those communities my government offers its congratulations.

In recent years my government has responded to the changing needs of Saskatchewan's municipalities with a number of new and expanded programs: revenue sharing, expanded transit assistance, urban parks, downtown revitalization, assistance for railway relocation projects, a new community capital fund and many others.

My government will continue to work with local governments and their associations to build on this record of progress to ensure that Saskatchewan municipalities, both urban and rural, share fully in our province's economic development.

You will be asked to consider a new Urban Elections Act which will provide for revised and uniform election procedures for school boards and urban municipal councils.

You will also be asked to consider amendments to The Rural Municipality Act and The Municipal Employees' Superannuation Act.

INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

Saskatchewan is entering an era of growth and will provide exciting challenges to business and industry. To help meet those challenges, my government will strengthen its efforts to assist businesses to improve their marketing and management capabilities. A new pilot program has been implemented to provide support to locally organized groups in promoting economic development in their communities. The activities of the Saskatchewan Research Council have been extended to provide research and technical assistance to businessmen and manufacturers.

Earlier this year, my government introduced the well servicing assistance program and the temporary oil field support program to assist small businesses suffering as a result of the national energy program. To date there has been \$2 million in direct assistance made available to this sector of the economy.

THE NORTH

In the past year my government has been consulting with northern people to determine the best way to reorganize local government in the North. Legislation to establish northern municipalities will be placed before you. This Act will restructure municipal government in northern Saskatchewan to enable local governments to increase their responsibility and authority. During 1982 my government will expand school training programs for Northerners to give northern residents the job skills needed to take advantage of new employment opportunities in the North. These opportunities have been enhanced through the surface lease agreements associated with northern mining projects. The most recent agreement, with the Key Lake Mining Corporation, sets new Canadian standards for employment, training and business benefits for northern people.

Legislation to amend The Northern Saskatchewan Economic Development Act will be introduced.

ENVIRONMENT

As part of the continued commitment by my government to play a strong role in protecting Saskatchewan's environment, legislation will be introduced to amend The Department of the Environment Act. These amendments will strengthen the department's authority to control the storage, transportation, treatment and disposal of hazardous substances.

The transportation of dangerous goods is an issue which has attracted increasing public concern in Canada. With industrial expansion and increased chemical usage in agriculture, the risks will continue to grow and preventive action must be taken now. New federal legislation regulates the interprovincial movement of dangerous goods and provides for the appointment of inspectors to ensure compliance with safety regulations. My government intends to introduce complementary legislation gover-

ning the handling and movement of dangerous goods within Saskatchewan, and will train existing provincial inspection staff to act as dangerous goods inspectors.

JUSTICE

My government is pleased that an agreement has finally been concluded with the Government of Canada to provide for the cost of services for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the province. Amendments to The Police Act will be placed before you.

Three years ago, the governments of Saskatchewan and Canada established the unified family court in Saskatoon as a pilot project. This court has jurisdiction over family law and matters relating to maintenance, custody, separation and divorce. It is presided over by judges experienced in all aspects of family law. The project has proven very successful, and my government intends to set up a similar court in Regina in the near future.

Plans announced earlier for the integration of municipal court services will be completed by March 1982. This will ensure more uniform administration of justice in all parts of the province.

You will be asked to approve a new Court Order Interest Act and amendments to The Jury Act and The Legal Profession Act. Amendments to The Election Act will also be introduced.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

1982 is the 35th anniversary of Saskatchewan's hospital insurance plan and the 20th anniversary of medical care insurance. Our province was a pioneer in the introduction of these critically important services, and my government is committed to maintain the highest standards of hospital and medical care.

But health care encompasses more than hospitals and medical services. Today, ill health is often the result of individual lifestyles — smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, stress. In this session the government will take steps to strengthen its preventive health programs, to inform Saskatchewan residents about habits which result in health problems, and to improve preventive programs for groups within the population which are most at risk. Mental health services will also receive increased attention. At a time when social services are being curtailed in many jurisdictions, my government reaffirms its commitment to this important area of government activity.

Last July the charge for residents of special-care homes was substantially reduced. My government has further demonstrated its longstanding dedication to the needs of the elderly and disadvantaged by increasing its financial support for the home care program, sheltered workshops and activity centres, the child protection program and the province's foster parents. You will be asked to consider amendments to The Medical Care Insurance Act and The Prescription Drugs Act.

LABOUR

My government takes pride in its record of progressive labour legislation — legislation which benefits all the working men and women in this province. The provincial

minimum wage will be raised to \$4.25 an hour January 1, 1982, maintaining Saskatchewan's leadership role. My government has appointed a committee of review to study and make recommendations on all aspects of workers' compensation in the province. My ministers will give early consideration to recommendations to improve benefits for injured workers and their dependents.

In this International Year of the Disabled my government is pleased to announce it will give prompt consideration to the enactment of accessibility standards in public buildings based on the recommendations of an advisory committee which has been established to consider a uniform building code. This committee is reviewing the comprehensive standards proposed by the provincial accessibility committee and already adopted by the Department of Government Services as guideline specifications for all new and renovated provincial government buildings.

EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

My government reaffirms its commitment to provide, in co-operation with school boards, teachers and parents, a sound educational system for all Saskatchewan children in both urban and rural areas.

In addition, it will continue to address the special needs of adults who have not traditionally had access to the education and training system. Decentralized Outreach programs through the community colleges will provide increased opportunities for technical and vocational education for people throughout the province.

As part of my government's effort to increase the employment and training opportunities for native people, the native career development program and the non-status Indian and Metis program will be expanded. Along with the new technical-vocational institute planned for Prince Albert and new training programs in northern Saskatchewan, these will provide the training necessary to ensure that native people will be able to take advantage of the growing job opportunities in Saskatchewan.

My government will also proceed with the construction of the new geological sciences building at the University of Saskatchewan. The modern facility will make an important contribution to the development of the province's mineral resources.

You will be asked to consider amendments to The Education Act.

My ministers believe that a strong provincial library system with grass-roots support is fundamental to the quality of life we enjoy in Saskatchewan. You will be asked to consider amendments to The Public Libraries Act.

CULTURE

My government is dedicated to the maintenance and enhancement of the Saskatchewan culture and multicultural heritage. This year over 1,200 Saskatchewan citizens have attended public meetings in the province to respond to the report of the cultural policy secretariat. In coming months my government will be advancing important new initiatives resulting from those public consultations. These initiatives will be designed to promote and assist the development of our society's cultural expression in the preservation of our cultural heritage. Amendments to The Arts Board Act and The Heritage Property Act will be placed before you.

COMMUNICATIONS

My ministers recognize the importance of communication technology and its potential role in strengthening education and cultural initiatives. My government takes special pride in the fibre optics network which will carry cable television, telephone and other telecommunication services to over 50 Saskatchewan towns and cities. When completed in 1984 this network will be the largest of its kind in the world. The manufacture of fibre optics in Saskatchewan will help provide the base for a high technology industry in this province. I am sure the people of Saskatchewan will welcome the announcement that effective January 1, 1982, the service connection charge for farm telephone subscribers will be reduced from the present rate of up to \$400 to a flat rate of \$100.

CO-OPERATION

Co-operation has long been a part of the Saskatchewan experience. The results are reflected in a wide variety of co-operative organizations in the province. My government strongly supports the co-operative movement and stands ready to serve those who choose the co-operative way. The government has recently entered into agreement with Federated Co-operatives to establish an experimental ethanol plant.

In the coming months the Department of Co-operation will be embarking on new initiatives involving Indian and native agricultural and day care co-operatives.

PENSIONS

My government recognizes that people living on fixed incomes have been particularly hard hit by the failure of federal government policies to counter inflation. Accordingly, legislation was introduced to supplement public service pensions and to increase the pensions paid to the spouses of deceased superannuates and employees under the public service superannuation plan.

The public accounts for the last fiscal year, together with estimates for the year beginning April 1, 1982, will be submitted to you.

I leave you now to the business of the session with 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 of its deliberations.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:29 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Pro Forma Bill

HON. MR.. BLAKENEY: — Mr.. Speaker, I move that a Bill respecting the administration of oaths of office be now introduced and read the first time.

Motion agreed to and the bill ordered to be read a second time at the next sitting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Introduction of Sergeant at Arms

MR.. SPEAKER: — I beg leave to inform the Assembly that Linton Alexander MacDonald, Esq., has been appointed Sergeant at Arms of the Legislative Assembly.

Introduction of Pages

MR.. SPEAKER: — I also beg to inform the Assembly that Blair Butterfield, Brent Christensen, Kevin Kemp, Carmen Layton and Therese Stecyk will be pages during the present session.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

TABLING THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

MR.. SPEAKER: — I beg to inform the Assembly that in order to prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, which I now lay on the Table.

MOTIONS
Speech from the Throne

HON. MR.. BLAKENEY: — Mr.. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Mr.. Romanow:

That the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be taken into consideration on Monday, next.

Motion agreed to.

Printing of *Votes and Proceedings* of the Assembly

HON. MR.. BLAKENEY: — Mr.. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Mr.. Smishek:

That the *Votes and Proceedings* of this Assembly be printed after first having been perused by Mr.. Speaker, that he do appoint the printing thereof and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

Motion agreed to.

Members to Compose Lists for Select Standing Committees

HON. MR.. BLAKENEY: — Mr.. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Mr.. Snyder, the member for Moose Jaw South:

That Messrs. Banda, Birkbeck, Lusney, McLeod and Miner be constituted a special committee to prepare and report, with all convenient speed, lists of members to compose the standing committees of this Assembly provided under rule no. 86:

That the said standing committees be severally empowered to examine and

inquire into all such matters and things as may be referred to them by this Assembly and to report from time to time their observations thereon with power to send for persons, papers and records and to examine witnesses under oath.

Motion agreed to.

Election of Deputy Chairman of Committees

HON. MR.. BLAKENEY: — Mr.. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Mr.. Bowerman, the member for Shellbrook:

That Lloyd E. Johnson, Esq., member for the constituency of Turtleford, be elected deputy chairman of committees of this Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

HON. MR.. BLAKENEY: — Mr.. Speaker, I move this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 2:37 p.m.