

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
March 17, 1983

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER: — I beg to inform the Assembly that I have received a communication from the private secretary to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor stating that His Honour will open the session at 2 o'clock p.m. today, the 17th day of March, 1983.

2:05 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 the second session of the 20th legislature of Saskatchewan.

My government looks forward with confidence to the opportunities which lie ahead for Saskatchewan and her citizens. There are finally hopeful signs that the period of severe economic shock which has jolted the western industrialized world, and therefore Saskatchewan's international markets, is gradually coming to a close. While the world-wide recession is not yet over, we in Saskatchewan must now prepare to act with other governments in Canada to bring a maximum of stability to our economy and protection to our citizens during the reconstruction period.

We must be able and ready to create a firmer economic foundation for the future. Our economy has retained its fundamental strength and my ministers believe Saskatchewan's economy will help lead the recovery in North America.

CANADA

Nationally, the recession has been the worst economic turndown since the Great Depression. In Canada, over the past year and one-half, output has fallen by more than 9 per cent and more than half a million jobs have been lost.

SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMY

Saskatchewan has not experienced the kind of decline in total output seen elsewhere in Canada. In 1982 Saskatchewan was the only province in the nation to report employment growth. Nevertheless, growth and output in employment did slow. Prices and markets, for many of our major exports, have declined. Our unemployment rate is the lowest in Canada, but it's still too high.

While some sectors of our economy, such as the potash industry, experienced weak demand for our products, there have been signs of recovery in recent months. The housing industry is strong. Housing starts in Saskatchewan rose 14 per cent in 1982 over 1981, while falling 29 per cent nationwide.

Inflation in Saskatchewan has consistently been the lowest in Canada. The health of the province's oil industry has improved substantially, as a result of royalty and marketing

changes implemented by my ministers. However, the present confusion in international petroleum markets has adversely affected the industries of both Saskatchewan and Alberta.

It is anticipated that the renewed economic growth will not immediately lead to a strong improvement in the national unemployment situation. My government will be introducing measures to deal with this problem.

TAX POLICY

It is a government's obligation to ensure that the cost of government is distributed fairly and equitably through the tax system. It is also a government's obligation to ensure that the tax system does not become excessively burdensome to the people of the province. Steps have already been taken by this Assembly to lower the total tax burden. My government remains committed to the overall objective of lower taxes and will continue to take steps to reduce taxes wherever they are excessive and whenever reductions are possible.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

My government has consistently worked to promote a co-operative relationship with the federal government. Co-operation has been a key factor in the development of the Saskatchewan Family Farm Purchase Program, which is being delivered through the farm credit corporation.

The Saskatchewan oil industry has been strengthened through parallel royalty and tax reductions, and by the co-operation of governments in the resolution of the marketing problems which plagued the industry in the early part of 1982.

My advisers continue to believe that good relations with Ottawa, over the coming months and years, are important if the two levels of government are to act together to solve common problems. Unfortunately, some recent initiatives by the federal government do give my ministers somewhat less reason to believe that a mutual willingness to co-operate will prevail in the future.

My government attempts to develop more frequent contacts with the political representatives of the mid-western states, to facilitate the discussion of issues of common concern, such as water, agriculture and tourism. While we are competitors in many areas, particularly in the world grain and livestock markets, it will be useful to explore the several possibilities which may arise from consultation with the neighbours.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It is in Saskatchewan's interest to expand and diversify its economy over the next decade, to enable our citizens to enjoy challenging careers at home in this province. Saskatchewan needs a stronger private sector to bring diversity and flexibility to our economy, to generate income for future investment and to meet the competition in resource and manufactured products from countries which have advanced through the inventiveness, energy and resilience of their own private sectors. My ministers have taken steps to encourage the people of Saskatchewan to invest in their province.

To meet the challenge of competition, Saskatchewan must be prepared to advance

from the base of strength given to us by our advanced agricultural industry, and to develop and broaden the steps we have already taken in advanced technology research. Infrastructure enhancement, particularly in education research capacity, is urgently needed.

My government will soon be announcing details of a major high technology development strategy. This strategy would provide the impetus to: (1) permit the private sector to benefit from the implementation of high technology in existing and new industries in Saskatchewan, and (2) allow the public sector to lead the development and application of technology. The strategy will include the provision of support and financial services to inventors and entrepreneurs, the establishment of industrial high technology research and development centres, the linkage of industrial services with the training of highly skilled manpower, and the co-ordination of the provincial agencies and departments to provide industry with an advantage in this vital segment of economic development.

The effective implementation of technology in the service of Saskatchewan continues to be the role of the Saskatchewan Research Council. In the coming year, the council will be restructure to focus on key area such as water resource research, the transfer of computer-assisted design technology to industry and the environmental problems related to acid rain. High technology services would be made relevant to the needs of Saskatchewan industry.

LABOUR RELATIONS

My government believes fairness and balance in labour-management relations throughout the province must be achieved as a precondition to the generation of new employment opportunities. Productive relations amongst the government labour unions and employers will be pursued by the new labour relations branch of the Department of Labour and by the continuing work of the Saskatchewan Development Committee.

In this session, further amendments to The Workers' Compensation Act will be placed before you to advance the work already completed in the first session.

CROWN CORPORATIONS

Saskatchewan has developed over the years a mixed economy in which both public and private initiatives have a place. My advisers believe that, when properly balanced, this mix will work well. The Saskatchewan crown corporations will continue to play a key role in our economy while still leaving room for increased private sector investment and growth. Measures will be introduced to streamline the operations of the corporations and increase their effectiveness.

CO-OPERATIVES

Over the years, the people of Saskatchewan have arrived at unique and effective responses to the challenges of economic environment. Co-operatives are now directly involved in supplying feed, fuel, fertilizer, general farm supplies and food. My government recognizes and appreciates the contribution of co-operatives to the growth and prosperity of this province. Discussions with many co-op leaders have suggested to my ministers the necessity of changes in enabling legislation. These changes, by reflecting the needs of individual co-op members and needs of the co-

op organizations, will provide a strong supportive base for future development. A new co-operative act will therefore be introduced in this session.

SMALL BUSINESS

Many small contractors supply, or would like to supply, their services to the government. On small projects the ability of these contractors to quote on their work is complicated by the government's requirement for performance bonds. My government intends to review its requirements for bonding on small projects. A new policy should simplify procedures for small Saskatchewan contractors.

AGRICULTURE

Saskatchewan is fortunate to have an agricultural industry which has retained its position as an innovative competitor in the world markets. Saskatchewan's agricultural strength and expertise has won for it a place as a chief export dollar earner for Canada. My government has taken a number of significant measures to strengthen the agricultural sector. In particular, the farm purchase program will help guarantee that the farm industry is composed of family farm units.

My ministers will introduce several additional bills respecting agriculture in this session. Among them will be amendments to The Saskatchewan Farm Ownership Act to restrict the use of limited partnerships as a device enabling non-resident and non-agricultural corporations to invest in agricultural land in Saskatchewan.

A horse racing commission Act to govern the conduct of horse racing will be placed before you.

My government will be taking new initiatives in the area of agricultural research and marketing development. Producers and commodity groups will be invited to participate in all aspects of these new endeavours. These measures will need special enabling legislation which will be introduced shortly. Amendments to The Horned Cattle Purchases Act will be introduced.

Other measures to facilitate the growth and stability of Saskatchewan's agricultural industry will be brought to the Assembly for your consideration.

This Assembly has expressed its unanimous opposition to the current federal plan for replacing the Crow rate with a new freight rate structure. My ministers continue to believe that the new plan will impose unacceptably high costs on Saskatchewan farmers without allowing compensating benefits. If required, measures will be placed before the Assembly to keep Saskatchewan's grain and livestock farmers competitive with those in other parts of Canada.

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Over the past few months we have witnessed a dramatic increase in oil industry activity in Saskatchewan. However, in the past few weeks a new concern for our oil industry has arisen because of the prospect of dramatic decreases in the world price of this important provincial resource.

One effect of a decline in a world oil prices will be a reduction in projected provincial

revenues. Another effect could be a reduction in exploration, development, and potentially the production of Saskatchewan's oil resource. Important gains made in revitalizing our oil industry are threatened. My government is watching the world oil price situation very carefully. Saskatchewan is prepared to act to protect our oil industry to ensure that as a province we retain our traditional position as owner of the resource.

Recently, my government introduced a new natural gas pricing policy for Saskatchewan. This new policy is aimed directly at stimulating the development of our province's gas reserves and lessening our dependence on more expensive imported natural gas.

My government is committed to a 10-year program to extend natural gas to farms and rural municipalities, bringing services to approximately 25,000 and 10,000 residential customers. Up to 300 man-years of work per year will be created by this \$340 million undertaking. Saskatchewan families will benefit from the provision of less expensive heating fuel, and business activity will be stimulated by installation projects.

My government's pursuit of new market opportunities for our natural gas will stimulate a Saskatchewan industry that has languished over the past decade.

My government will actively continue its efforts to streamline and simplify the legislation and regulations governing the development and taxation of Saskatchewan's mineral resources. Recently, my government began this process by implementing a much simplified tax system for freehold oil production. This new tax system will save both industry and government significant administration costs, while achieving a level of provincial revenue equal to the former, complex tax method.

To carry on this program, my government will soon introduce a new simplified system for the taxation of Saskatchewan's other mineral resources. This new streamlined system will achieve important savings in administration, again without any revenue loss to the province.

In addition, my government reaffirms its promise to bring forward other measures in the future to further streamline the development of Saskatchewan's mineral resources.

The Saskatchewan Power Corporation is steadily working to expand the power resources of the province and to increase availability to consumers. Construction of the Nipawin hydro-electric project is proceeding on schedule, with the first unit expected to be in operation in late 1985. Seventy-one per cent of the contracts let to date have been awarded to Saskatchewan contractors or suppliers.

The Saskatchewan potash industry has been severely hampered by the shrinkage of world markets as a result of the recession. American farm customers in particular have been burdened by overproduction, high costs and low returns, and have cut their purchases of fertilizers. Government revenues have declined, and extremely high inventory levels have resulted in plant closures and temporary layoffs.

A number of initiatives are being taken to improve the competitiveness of Saskatchewan potash. A warehousing and storage network has been established in the United States, and unit train shipments have cut transportation costs.

Approaches are being made to Brazil to overcome its discrimination against Canadian

potash. Saskatchewan is joining with the federal government to examine the possible funding of an industry association. My government will support key market initiatives such as the soon to be signed Saskatchewan-China agronomic development program, which will be funded by the Saskatchewan and federal governments and implemented by the Potash and Phosphate Institute of Canada.

My government continues to support the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan phase 2 Lanigan expansion — one of the few western megaprojects still proceeding. Despite a delay of one year in the construction schedule, \$80 million will be invested this year.

My government believes that the huge potash reserves of Saskatchewan and the long-term delivery guarantees which can be given as a result will again put Saskatchewan at the forefront of world production as the international economy recovers and demand rebounds. Both private companies and the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan will be in a position to market aggressively.

GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS

My ministers are taking measures to bring a higher degree of efficiency to the operations of government, and to guarantee to the public helpful and courteous service.

My ministers will be introducing a number of legislative changes to implement improvements to the organization of the Government of Saskatchewan.

The objective of the reorganization will be to achieve a more effective and efficient government structure, better able to respond to the needs of the people of Saskatchewan.

In addition, a productivity improvement study, to stimulate performance within the public service, is being undertaken by a team of senior public service and Crown corporation officials, and is chaired by a member of the Assembly.

My government is continuing the regulatory review process. Steady progress is being made in the task of pulling obsolete regulations and statutes from the books and revising others to eliminate vague and confusing procedures, excessive time delays and red tape. Regulatory reforms will ease the way of the public in its dealing with government and improve the quality of public administration. Within the next year, an omnibus bill, The Regulatory Reform Act, will be presented for your consideration.

EDUCATION

Competitiveness for modern economies and security for individuals is increasingly tied to the efficiency of the educational system. My government recognizes the importance of maintaining a strong educational system in the province through programs aimed at strengthening and supporting the curriculum, providing opportunities for linguistic, native and specialty groups, and ensuring an equal and adequate level of offering capital grants.

Changes to The Education Act will be introduced to reflect concerns of the education communities. You will be asked to consider amendment to The Teachers' Superannuation Act and The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Act arising from the successful completion of provincial teacher bargaining.

My government considers post-secondary and adult education to be a cornerstone in the economic and social development of Saskatchewan. If we are to rise to the challenge of providing our people with opportunities from growth and personal achievement, and our province with the skilled manpower necessary for a vital economy, innovative, bold action must be undertaken. Therefore my government will push ahead with major new initiatives designed to make our adult education system an even greater engine for growth in Saskatchewan.

My government's goal is threefold: to substantially increase the range of training programs offered, to broaden the range and greatly increase the number of people serviced, and to increase access to credit training programs for young people and adults throughout Saskatchewan. To this end, my government will significantly increase capacity in the next three years through a number of measures, including: the addition of new training programs at the province's three technical institutes, the completion of the expanded version of the Prince Albert technical institute, improved planning for teacher training and manpower needs by forging a closer link with labour, industry, the public, improvement and expansion of our ability to train highly skilled manpower for complex fields, notably through addition of new high-technology programs to the curricula of the technical institutes, and the development of contemporary education and training programs targeted for single parents in need.

My government is working to improve Saskatchewan library services. Revisions to The Public Libraries Act will be introduced later this year, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public library resources. The catalogue and support service has been automated. A joint venture agreement encompassing the Saskatoon and Regina Public Libraries and the Provincial Library will make the complete collection of all three resource libraries available in machine-readable form. Additionally, my government will proceed immediately with the research, planning and the request for proposal necessary to set up a Saskatchewan data base.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND HEALTH CARE

My government is committed to improving the quality of life for all citizens in particular, preparations are being made to meet the challenge placed on government and society by the growing numbers of seniors. My ministers are also deeply committed to improving independent living opportunities for the disabled and disadvantaged.

My government intends to encourage a sense of responsibility for their own well-being amongst individuals, families and local communities. At the same time universal programs and standards will be safeguarded by government to ensure that the rights of all are realized to the fullest potential.

In social programming, my government will emphasize an effective partnership between community-based services and government-funded programs. In this way the social fabric of each individual community can be made stronger.

The federal-provincial joint job creation program is being implemented smoothly, and is currently over halfway to attaining its overall goal.

My government will continue its commitment to improve health services in Saskatchewan. Attention will be focussed on maintaining and stabilizing basic health

care services. The cancer program, in particular, will continue to be expanded and improved.

A new approach to ambulance services will be initiated. Several steps will be taken to strengthen the ambulance program and to incorporate it within the health care system. On April 1, 1983 the responsibility for the ambulance program will be transferred to the Department of Health. An ambulance services unit will be established at a senior level within the department to co-ordinate all aspects of the program. Also, a joint ambulance service advisory committee will be established with the groups and organizations involved. Finally, in the coming months, my government will work closely with providers of ambulance services to develop a new funding system for implementation on April 1, 1984.

HOUSING

Over the past year, my government has begun to make changes in the priorities and direction of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. The objective of these changes has been to make the corporation a true partner with the private sector in providing Saskatchewan's housing through co-operation rather than through competition.

New programs such as the build-a-home Saskatchewan program have proved very successful with the single detached housing starts rising substantially since the introduction of the program in December 1982.

MUNICIPALITIES

My government has undertaken a comprehensive review of the position of Saskatchewan's municipalities, and believes a number of adjustments are required in the legal structures governing local governments. The Planning and Development Act is the key tool for enabling municipalities to accommodate orderly economic growth by shaping and directing the physical development of their communities. Municipal and private sector groups have requested an update of the Act which has not been reviewed since 1973. The Departments of Urban Affairs and Rural Affairs have been revising the act in consultation with the Department of Northern Saskatchewan, municipal interest groups such as the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, and representatives of private industry associations.

The new Act is intended to preserve and strengthen local autonomy by providing municipalities with a framework within which they can make their own land-use decisions, and it will provide them with a greater range of land-use management techniques. The redrafting is taking place within the context of my government's regulatory reform program and its desire to promote more business activity while maintaining protections for public health and safety.

For a number of years urban governments have been urging modernization of The Urban Municipality Act. The Act is the single most important legislative tool for urban municipalities' and the need for changing and updating it is now paramount. The Department of Urban Affairs in consultation with urban administration officials and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities' Association has been drafting a new Act which will be introduced in the Assembly late in 1983. The act will streamline and update municipal practices and procedures to enable urban government to face the challenges of the 1980s and will increase the degree of local autonomy afforded to the urban level of government.

The Northern Municipalities Act, which was introduced in the first session to allow consultation, will be introduced in revised form for your consideration.

An adequate supply of water and the effective treatment of waste water are essential to the well-being of the people of Saskatchewan and its economic stability and future development. To review water issues and water management problems, my government established a cabinet committee on water concerns. The committee held public hearings in 10 communities throughout the province. The views gathered from the municipalities and from local governments will form an important part of my government's strategy for dealing with the many different demands on this vital and limited resource.

My government intends to introduce measures to bring all water-related legislation and services under one body. This exciting new approach will facilitate many of the water programs and projects which have been discouraged for years.

The first general revaluation of all properties in the province for tax purposes on a standard valuation base will be completed in 1985. The completion and implementation of this program will place all municipalities, including the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, on a common valuation base for the purpose of levying property taxes and calculating major provincial grants. The basic computer program for the automation of the provincial assessment file will be completed in June of this year.

HIGHWAYS

My government, in its efforts to make Saskatchewan's roads safer, intends to introduce a new vehicle Act in this session. The new Act will modernize a much outdate piece of legislation. As well, it will focus attention on the dangers of drinking and driving, by increased fines and allowing mandatory body fluid samples. My Minister of Highways hopes to promote expanded participation in the Driving Without Impairment program.

Necessary amendments to The Highways Act will also be introduced to promote safe highway travel. An Act respecting the transportation of dangerous goods will be placed before the Assembly.

COMMUNICATIONS

My government will propose legislation to establish a licensing authority for cable services in Saskatchewan, with jurisdiction to regulate access to and use of this valuable and limited facility in the province of the carriage of those services.

The delivery system for distance education services in Saskatchewan lags behind recent technological developments and is now dependent upon the postal distribution of printed and audio-visual materials. A telecommunications-based distance education service utilizing existing provincial facilities may provide a more effective and cost-efficient means of disseminating instructional and cultural materials. Accordingly, my government will be developing a proposal for the introduction of a modern distance education system and will invite the people of this province to participate directly in the development of such proposals.

JUSTICE

In relation to justice services, legislation will be introduced to clarify and modernize the role of the Attorney General for Saskatchewan as the chief legal adviser of the government and the official charged with the administration of justice in the province. My government will also propose legislation increasing the monetary jurisdiction of the small claims court, thereby providing a quicker and more inexpensive means for resolution of legal disputes at the provincial court level. Amendments will also be proposed to The Queen's Bench Act to expedite and simplify legal proceedings.

OTHER LEGISLATION

Amendments will be proposed to the Department of Finance Act to streamline administration and financial procedures. A separate Act will be introduced to give the provincial auditor a clear and independent mandate.

Other legislative measures to modernize statute law, promote the efficient operation of departments, agencies and boards and protect the citizens of Saskatchewan will be introduced in the Assembly.

CONCLUSION

The *Public Accounts* for the last fiscal year, together with estimates for the year beginning April 1, 1983 will be submitted to you.

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.,

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Pro Forma Bill

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

Motion agree to.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

MR. SPEAKER: — I beg to inform the Assembly that Timothy Hustak, Suzanne Johnson, Shawna Rae Levee, Beth Miller, and Robert Verhelst 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. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I moved, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Berntson (Souris-Cannington):

That the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be taken into consideration on Friday, March 18, 1983.

Motion agreed to.

Printing of Votes and Proceedings of the Assembly

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Berntson:

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.

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

MR. SPEAKER: — It has been moved by the Premier that this House do now adjourn. Before putting the question on that motion, I have a few announcements that I would like to make.

I would like to thank the Good Company Band from Moosomin for taking part this afternoon in the opening of the second session of the 20th legislature. The band, under the direction of Mr. Shortie Avon did an excellent job and we appreciated very much having them here this afternoon.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — I would also like to thank the children of St. Theresa Catholic School and their teacher, Barbara Francis, for being with us today. They took part in the ceremonies outside of the building at the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor. I think the ceremony outside was much better because of their being here and I would like to thank them very much for taking part in the opening ceremonies today.

HON. MEMBERS: — Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: — Immediately following the proceedings in the Chamber, I would like to invite everyone who is here to a Speaker's tea in room 218 of the Legislative Building. If you just turn to the left from the well in front of the main doors here, you will find the room very shortly; it's just a few doors down.

Motion agreed to.

The Assembly adjourned at 2:47 p.m.