

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
February 7, 1994

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

The Speaker: — I beg to inform the Assembly that I have received a communication from the private secretary to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor stating that Her Honour will open the fourth session of the twenty-second legislature at 2 p.m. today, the 7th day of February, 1994.

2:01 p.m.

Her 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 twenty-second legislature of Saskatchewan.

Our province will mark two important anniversaries during 1994. June 6 will be the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion when Allied troops stormed the windswept beaches of Normandy, launching the deciding battle of World War II in Europe. Of course, D-Day celebrations symbolize the final victory, but this battle was but a part of the whole.

Nearly 75,000 Saskatchewan men and women served in the army, navy and air force during the Second World War. They fought in the Battle of Britain, the Battle of the Atlantic, at Hong Kong, Dieppe, Sicily, Italy, and Holland.

My government will join with veterans' organizations to mark this important anniversary and to honour those who fought to preserve democracy, so that we and generations yet to come could live as free men and women.

1994 also marks the 50th anniversary of the election of Tommy Douglas and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation — North America's first social democratic government. This historic election changed not only Saskatchewan, but ultimately shaped many important changes across Canada.

The Douglas legacy is a deep commitment to economic and social justice and an unyielding faith in the power of community and cooperation to achieve them.

A Journey of Renewal

That faith has been tested and sustained over the last two years as the people of Saskatchewan have joined my government on a journey of renewal — a renewal of our economy, renewal of the Saskatchewan spirit.

The journey has often been difficult, with unprecedented challenges along the way, but Saskatchewan people have undertaken it together, and together, we have made great progress.

Restoring Sound Financial Management

The overriding problem which faced my government on the day it took office was the legacy of a decade of deficit spending. Necessity demanded that the first priority be to restore confidence in the province's ability to manage its financial affairs.

The results have been positive. In a few days, this legislature will be presented with a budget which will confirm that the deficit for this year is \$294 million. That is a reduction of more than \$1 billion from the projected deficit which faced my government when it took office. The government remains on target to present a balanced budget in 1996 as promised.

Important though this is for ourselves and for future generations, the government attaches even more importance to the way in which it is being accomplished — by sharing the burden equitably and protecting those least able to sacrifice. My government reiterates its conviction that reducing the deficit is important not as an end in itself, but as only the means to move forward, to restore confidence, to create growth and jobs.

Jobs and Economic Development

The economic development strategy which my government introduced in 1992 — *Partnership for Renewal*, has three key goals: to create a positive climate for economic renewal, to build on existing strengths, and to seek full employment.

The partnership is working. We continue to have the lowest unemployment rate in the country. However, we must strive constantly to do more to create long-term employment opportunities for young people.

My government will work with communities and development organizations to form a number of regional economic development authorities. These regional authorities will help communities work together on economic planning, promotion and marketing.

Pending final consultations with the tourism industry and communities, the tourism authority Act will be introduced to establish a joint industry-government tourism authority. It will be responsible for developing and marketing Saskatchewan as a tourist destination.

The trade development corporation Act will permit the establishment of a trade development organization to manage all provincial export marketing services.

A new research and technology commercialization plan will support product and process development for international market opportunities.

A new transportation policy council is developing a comprehensive transportation policy to ensure

competitive market access for Saskatchewan exports and to provide links to move products in and out of Saskatchewan.

To replace the Saskatchewan Economic Development Corporation, now being wound down, the government will introduce the Saskatchewan opportunities corporation Act to establish a new corporation with a sharper focus and a better-defined mandate.

Saskatchewan was one of the first provinces to join the federal-provincial infrastructure program, which will enable our governments, in partnership with our municipalities, to rebuild key elements of our public infrastructure. These projects will provide jobs in urban, rural and northern communities.

My government is determined that Saskatchewan benefit from the proposed Canadian network for the advancement of research, industry and education, what has been commonly called the "electronic highway" project.

This project represents a massive expansion and upgrading of Canada's information technology. This could mean more high-tech jobs for the future.

An Information Technology and Telecommunications Strategy Committee is already at work, trying to maximize Saskatchewan benefits from this project. The committee includes representation from private industry, the education field, and the provincial government. Our province is likely to play an important role in this national effort because SaskTel's information technology network is already one of the best in Canada.

In fact, SaskTel International is exporting our telecommunications expertise around the globe. SaskTel engineers and technicians helped to design and install the communications system in the tunnel which will link the United Kingdom with France. This export of expertise supports continuing research and development here at home and helps to maintain high-tech jobs in Saskatchewan.

After a rigorous environmental review, the Governments of Saskatchewan and Canada have given conditional approval for development of two new uranium mines in northern Saskatchewan. This \$250 million expansion of the uranium industry will play a significant role in northern economic development over the next four years.

My government is determined that northern residents benefit from the development of new uranium mines. In partnership with the federal government, industry, and northern educational institutions, my government will participate in a multi-party training plan which will train Northerners for at least 60 per cent of the permanent jobs created by this expansion.

Agriculture

Agriculture is a critical component of any economic

development strategy for Saskatchewan. My government has released Agriculture 2000 — *Strategic Direction for the Future of Saskatchewan's Agriculture and Food Industry*. The strategy is a vision for the future created by the people who have a stake in that future.

Over the last decade, farm families have adapted to the need for change, often more quickly than governments or government policy. Saskatchewan today is the world's largest producer of green lentils, mustard and canary seed. The acres committed to these and other specialty crops have increased sevenfold in twelve years. The production of cattle and hogs has increased to the point where livestock-related farm income in our province exceeds a billion dollars a year.

My government will adapt its programs and services to support more diversity in Saskatchewan's agricultural production.

An agri-food equity fund will be established to encourage new value-added agricultural businesses in Saskatchewan. The potential here appears limitless. Just one example is the recent announcement by Biostar, a Saskatoon-based biotechnology company, which plans to build an \$8 million manufacturing plant in that city. Eventually employing up to 40 people, the plant will manufacture vaccines for the livestock industry and export them worldwide.

A beef industry development fund will be established to improve products and enhance markets for the beef industry. The beef industry requested that such a fund be established with the cooperation of the federal government, following the termination of the national cattle tripartite stabilization program. This will meet industry needs while a whole-farm plan is being developed.

The Saskatchewan Farm Support Review Committee has completed a report on safety net options. The report provides a basis for the Government of Saskatchewan to negotiate with the federal government and other provinces on a national, whole-farm safety net program that better reflects the needs of the family farm.

The Family

Last year my government announced its intention to better focus on the needs of children and families with the introduction of the action plan for children.

We have initiated a number of projects to address problems such as child hunger, family violence, and illiteracy. These projects have grown out of innovative work done by community agencies and schools to meet the changing needs of children and families.

The integral relationship between family well-being and community action is nowhere better illustrated than in the West Flat community of Prince Albert. Initially there were three concerned citizens and their families. They spoke to others, they involved groups,

they organized. Consensus led to action and the West Flat Citizens Group was formed. Adults, teens, and children shared ideas for community improvement. The group enlisted the aid of the action plan for children.

Today there is a community preschool for ages three to four, a community centre in what was a vacant school, and community resources being combined with those of provincial government departments to focus on meeting the needs of families and children in an integrated way.

In the year ahead the action plan will concentrate on two fundamental objectives — prevention and support. That is prevention services to help children and families avoid problems before they occur, and support services to assist families and children in crisis.

The Ombudsman's Act will be amended to establish a children's advocate within the Ombudsman's office. The advocate will provide public education on the needs of children and youth, will be responsible for responding to individual children who are receiving government assistance, and will work with government to ensure that programs and services better meet the needs of children and youth.

The victims of domestic violence Act will provide remedies to address situations of immediate danger and minimize the disruption to victims' lives whether they are spouses, children, seniors, disabled persons or any others in an intimate or family relationship.

Legislation will also be introduced to accommodate the expansion of the Unified Family Court on a province-wide basis. This will ensure that the justice system deals with family breakdown and other family law issues involving children in a more responsive, supportive, and less adversarial manner.

The Saskatchewan family and the Saskatchewan labour force are undergoing major changes. The participation rate of women in the workplace has increased dramatically, leading to more dual-earner families. In addition more single parents are participating in the paid labour force. Today's workplace is dominated by employees who share at least some responsibility for the care of family members.

Recognizing that balancing work and family responsibilities faces more workers than ever before, my government will introduce amendments to The Labour Standards Act and to The Trade Union Act which will help respond to this need.

Amendments to The Labour Standards Act will have the greatest benefit for the 70,000 people working in Saskatchewan's lowest-wage jobs, most of whom are women and young people.

Amendments to The Trade Union Act will ensure that it is fair, balanced, and up to date, while at the same time encouraging a healthy climate for job creation

and economic development. These amendments follow an extensive consultation process with both workers and employers.

It is fitting that the action plan for children and the amendments to legislation which will improve the working conditions faced by Saskatchewan families are moving forward in 1994, the year the United Nations has proclaimed to be the International Year of the Family.

Health

In the year just passed, Saskatchewan communities took the first long stride toward renewing our health system. They came together in a spirit of cooperation to form 30 health districts. District boards now begin the task of shaping the health system to meet the particular needs of their residents.

With the course now firmly set toward a more coordinated, responsive, community-centred health system, my government will continue to enhance its support of district health delivery. To assist boards in this task, the government will place before you several legislative changes, including a new public health Act.

My government would like to acknowledge the people who have worked tirelessly for the betterment of our health system. Those who have served on district boards, health professionals, community volunteers, and employees of health programs, have all made immeasurable contributions. To all, the government extends sincere appreciation.

Together we will renew our health system to keep it secure for our communities, our families, our children, and our grandchildren.

Education

Building on the initial successes achieved with integrated school-based services, the government will widen their application during the coming year to ensure children have the support they need to learn.

We will also introduce amendments to The Education Act which will remove barriers for school divisions that want to amalgamate. In doing so, we will work closely with communities and school divisions to assess these voluntary amalgamations and determine their impact on the quality of education.

We will work in partnership with post-secondary institutions to develop common objectives for a more integrated, coordinated education and training system that serves the economic and social needs of Saskatchewan people.

People must have access to services and skill training programs that assist them in the labour market. My government will work with the Government of Canada, business, labour, training institutions, and our communities to ensure that training and employment services are coordinated and responsive.

This is especially crucial for young people whose future depends on the quality of their education and skills training, and how that training relates to the modern workplace.

High school apprenticeship pilot projects in La Ronge, Nipawin, and the Eston-Elrose area, are building better linkages between school and the world of work. Participants in these programs will receive both high school credits and credit toward apprenticeship training.

Electoral Boundaries

With the completion of its public hearings, the constituency boundaries commission is expected to submit its final report for consideration by this Assembly. You will be asked to approve recommended boundaries for 58 constituencies, a reduction of eight.

The revised boundaries will also establish a new and better standard for representation by population.

Conclusion

Twenty-seven months ago, our province began an historic journey of renewal. It is a source of pride for all Saskatchewan people that we have come so far in so short a time.

Because our community was willing to make difficult choices and was prepared to accept sacrifices today to build a better tomorrow, we can now look to the future with renewed hope and optimism.

The journey has been difficult, the sacrifices deep, but we are beginning to see the positive results. That this is so, is a tribute to the courage, energy, and commitment of the people of Saskatchewan.

The *Estimates* for the year beginning April 1, 1994, will be submitted. I leave you now to the business of this session, with full confidence that you will favourably discharge your duties and responsibilities.

May Divine Providence continue to bless our province and guide the legislature in all its deliberations. God save the Queen.

Her Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:22 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Pro Forma Bill

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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 read a first time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — I wish to inform the Assembly that the pages for this session will be: Scott Grabarczyk, Lesley Strelloff, Daryl Beadnell, Melissa Bennett and Troy Davies.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

TABLING THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

The Speaker: — I beg to inform the Assembly that in order to prevent mistakes I have obtained a copy of the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor which I now lay on the Table.

MOTIONS

Speech from the Throne

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my colleague the Deputy Premier, the member from Regina Dewdney:

That the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor be taken into consideration on Tuesday, February 8, 1994.

Motion agreed to.

Printing of *Votes and Proceedings* of the Assembly

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by my colleague the House Leader, the member for Regina Elphinstone:

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. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before putting the question on the adjournment motion, I do have a few announcements to make. The music that you have been listening to this afternoon is provided to us by Ambiance Music. The members of this group are Brian Johnson and Lisa Simmermon. Later this afternoon you will be entertained by the Regina Conservatory of Music junior orchestra. They will be playing under the direction of Lisa Simmermon. Our thanks to Ambiance Music for a fine performance. We look forward to hearing the music of the junior orchestra later this afternoon.

I would also like to thank all the guests and members of the public who have joined us today. In the west gallery I want to welcome members of the Thom Collegiate choir from Regina. I will be calling on them to sing for us immediately following the adjournment.

Following the choir selections, I would like to invite everyone to join Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Third Party and members of the Legislative Assembly at the Speaker's tea which will take place immediately following the Chamber ceremony. The tea will be in two locations — room 218 in the west wing and the Legislative Library in the east wing.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I now welcome the students of the Thom Collegiate choir and invite them to perform under the direction of Mr. Tom Magnuson. The choir will begin by singing "River in Judea" and "African Folk Song". Their third selection for us this afternoon, will be "O Canada" and I ask that everyone please stand at that time.

(The choir sang.)

The Speaker: — On behalf of everyone present here, I would like to thank the choir and the director, Mr. Magnuson, for a very splendid performance. Thank you very much.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Assembly adjourned at 2:27 p.m.