

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
February 6, 1995

The Assembly met at 2:30 p.m.

The 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 fifth session of the twenty-second legislature at 2:30 p.m. today, the 6th day of February, 1995.

2:33 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 an honour to welcome you to the fifth session of the twenty-second legislature of Saskatchewan.

As my government took office in the fall of 1991, Saskatchewan faced one of its darkest hours.

A decade of deficit budgets had brought us to the brink of bankruptcy. An economy too dependent on outside investment for growth was creating jobs at less than half the rate of the 1970s. Farm families faced high debt loads and poor prospects. The training and long-term investments necessary to build a better future had been neglected, and too many young people had decided to seek hope and opportunity elsewhere. Our health care system was costing more and more, yet failing to deliver the services people really needed.

My government's inheritance was a province racked with doubt and division.

Much has changed in three short years.

Today, this Assembly is presented with a legislative agenda which speaks not of deficits, but of sustainable balanced budgets; not of failed megaprojects, but of an expanding local business sector and job growth; not of debt-ridden farms, but of farm families who are enjoying their highest level of optimism in years. This session will see new investments in training and infrastructure to secure our long-term prosperity and advances in our world-leading health care renewal.

In just three years, Saskatchewan has progressed from one of its darkest hours to a new day of hope and opportunity. All Saskatchewan people are proud of their contribution to making this new day possible.

Financial stability and public accountability

In a few days, the Minister of Finance will submit the *Estimates* for the budget year beginning April 1, 1995. I am pleased to report that my government's deficit reduction plan is well ahead

of its targets and that the Assembly will be asked to approve a balanced budget — Saskatchewan's first in more than a decade.

But responsible financial management calls for much more than a balanced budget in any one year. During this session, members will be asked to approve legislation to set new standards in Canada for financial responsibility and accountability. The Balanced Budget Act will promote long-term financial stability and integrity in the administration of the province's finances.

The public also expects increased accountability from their elected representatives. My government has appointed an independent committee to make recommendations on the salary and allowances members of this Assembly receive for the performance of their duties. The committee is also mandated to recommend procedures to ensure that members are more accountable for these allowances. My government looks forward to the committee's report, and is confident that it will provide the basis for a simpler, more accountable system that provides fair and reasonable compensation to members.

My government maintains that financial stability and public accountability contribute to growth and job creation through increased public confidence. This increased confidence has sparked a remarkable economic recovery in our province.

Jobs and economic renewal

Our population has increased steadily since 1992, and is now at its highest level in five years. In 1994 investments in Saskatchewan's oil and gas sector exceeded \$1 billion. Retail sales are up almost 10 per cent. Twelve thousand new jobs have been created in the last 12 months. Saskatchewan's economy has made a remarkable comeback, but much more must be done.

My government's number one priority is job creation. Jobs sustain families. Jobs provide a future for our children. Jobs hold together the fabric of our communities and are the very building blocks of long-term prosperity and security. My government will show the same focus and determination with the job challenge as it has already applied to the deficit challenge.

Through regional economic development authorities, Saskatchewan communities are finding local solutions to job creation and economic development. Nine authorities have already been created, and the early successes are exciting. In the Rosetown district, the new authority has helped to start 24 businesses and create 77 jobs. In less than seven months the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority has helped to create 650 jobs and encourage more than \$40 million in investment.

The Assembly will be asked to continue funding for the establishment of new regional economic development

authorities and to encourage the authorities to expand the range of services they offer.

In Northern Saskatchewan, expansions at the Cluff Lake and Rabbit Lake uranium mines, and the construction of new mine and mill facilities at McLean Lake and Contact Lake, represent significant levels of private sector investment and job creation. These projects will create 250 construction jobs this year and 400 new, full-time jobs when construction is completed. Northern residents currently represent 45 per cent of the work force, but our target is 60 per cent northern employment in all mining jobs created by new and expanded operations in the North.

In the strategic sector of tourism, my government looks forward to the first full year of operation for the Saskatchewan Tourism Authority. My government is confident that our tourism industry is well positioned to take advantage of many emerging opportunities such as the world-renowned T-Rex fossil discovery in the Frenchman River Valley.

Our export-driven economy depends on a modern transportation system for continued growth and expansion. During this session members will be asked to pass The Transportation Partnerships Corporation Act to enable our province to enter into partnerships with communities, private business and other governments to modernize our transportation infrastructure. My government has committed \$20 million for these new transportation partnerships.

My government will introduce amendments to The Environmental Management and Protection Act to permit the establishment of a province-wide, industry-led collection system for used oil, containers and filters. In addition to protecting the environment, this initiative will provide new jobs in the collection system and new business opportunities in recycling and reuse.

My government recognizes the unique contribution that co-ops make to our province's economic and social well-being. During this session, my government will introduce amendments to The Co-operatives Act to simplify registration procedures for cooperatives.

I am also pleased to report that my government has concluded negotiations with Federated Co-operatives Ltd. and the federal government to financially restructure the NewGrade heavy oil upgrader in Regina. This agreement places the NewGrade project on a sound financial footing and provides for a more equitable relationship between the parties. During this session, The NewGrade Energy Inc. Protection Repeal Act will be introduced to complete this arrangement.

Sustainable resource development

Saskatchewan is blessed with an abundance of rich natural resources. Our future economic prosperity and the high quality of life our people enjoy depend on the wise use of these resources. My government has taken a leadership role to ensure

that we sustain our natural resources for future generations, while taking advantage of the many opportunities presented to us today.

The Saskatchewan Energy Strategy: Security and Prosperity, will be presented to the Assembly. This strategy identifies ways to strengthen economic growth through the responsible development of production, processing, and transportation opportunities in our energy sector.

Saskatchewan's forests are a valuable resource providing products, jobs, and recreational opportunities second to none. This year Meadow Lake has been recognized by the Canadian Forestry Association as the National Forestry Capital of Canada. This award will heighten awareness of forestry's role in both the local community and throughout the province.

Current forestry legislation does not provide the sustainability and environmental protection desirable today. My government has been working towards a long-term, integrated management plan for Saskatchewan's forests. During this session, my government will propose a new Forest Resource Management Act. This proposal will lead to the complete overhaul of existing legislation, and provide for the sustainable management of this important resource.

Jobs and agricultural diversification

Realized net farm income in Saskatchewan last year reached \$925 million, the highest level since 1988. One of the reasons for this improved income picture is the willingness of Saskatchewan farmers to diversify. Our farmers have led Canada in diversifying their products and operations.

Farmers want to devote even more resources to the diversification of their industry. The Agri-Food Innovation Fund Act will provide a framework for evaluating and funding diversification projects. The legislation will encourage producers, producer organizations, the private sector, and governments to develop partnerships in a variety of areas including biotechnology, food processing, and education and training related to agriculture.

Recently, my government negotiated an improved farm safety net program for the 1995 crop year. The new program provides a meaningful, affordable level of risk protection for farm families, without acting as a barrier to diversification. Other governments are currently looking to the whole-farm stabilization approach as the basis for a new national support program.

All Saskatchewan residents, farmers and non-farmers alike, support environmentally sustainable agriculture. During this session, my government will introduce The Agricultural Operations Act to help diversify our livestock sector and protect producers from unwarranted legal actions, while at the same time protecting our land and water resources.

Despite the improvements in the farm economy, there are

clouds of uncertainty on the horizon. The Crow benefit remains under intense pressure and indications from the federal government give cause for concern. The elimination of the Crow benefit would essentially wipe out the hard-earned gains that farmers have realized. This government will continue to work with Saskatchewan farmers to protect their income and keep their costs down.

Investing for prosperity

As we look to the 21st century, it is clear that our future prosperity will depend increasingly upon the growth of knowledge-based industries such as information technology, telecommunications, and biotechnology. My government has identified our natural strengths in each of these critical sectors and has targeted each for strong growth and job creation.

The development of information technology holds great promise for Saskatchewan. With a strong local base including Co-operative Data Services Limited, ISM Information Systems Management Corporation, TRILabs, and a new Software Technology Centre, Saskatchewan will continue to be a prominent player in this field.

In telecommunications, Saskatchewan people are leading the way. SaskTel has announced plans to make Internet, the computer network which represents the information-based infrastructure of tomorrow, universally accessible to Saskatchewan residents at an affordable cost.

Just as electrification in the 1950s made new opportunities possible for people in rural and remote areas, universal access to the Information Highway will make the opportunities of the future available to all.

Not only are we using our expertise to develop new products and services here at home, we export this expertise around the world. In Europe, in the Philippines, and in Africa, SaskTel International is designing and installing new communications systems and services.

With 30 per cent of Canada's agricultural biotechnology sector located in Saskatchewan, our province is recognized as this new industry's centre for excellence and expansion. It is estimated that this sector will generate \$200 million in annual sales by the year 2000, and provide hundreds of new, high technology jobs while providing new markets for our agricultural products.

In biotechnology, telecommunications and information technology my government is investing today for greater prosperity and new jobs tomorrow.

Bridges to independence

In order for Saskatchewan people to take advantage of our growing economy and be better prepared for the future, they must have access to high quality education and training. My government believes that training and education are an important bridge to independence, opportunity, and prosperity.

In November my government announced Future Skills, a \$10-million training program designed to help both workers and employers take advantage of immediate job opportunities. Individuals receive the training they need for lasting employment, while employers benefit by working with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, regional colleges, and communities to develop a skilled labour force.

My government will also introduce a new Private Vocational Schools Regulation Act to improve consumer protection, emphasize program quality and enhance the shared responsibility of government and the private sector for regulation of the private vocational school system.

In a few days my government will present this Assembly with the details of JobStart, a new initiative to help young people make the transition to the workplace. This new program will focus on young people who need training to get a first job or summer employment to finance their education.

It will help young people on social assistance who need skills to prepare them for employment opportunities. It will also assist young people who face special barriers to training or finding jobs. JobStart will help ensure that our young people have the opportunity to live, work, and build their futures here at home.

New technology holds great potential to help meet the diverse learning needs of Saskatchewan people. Distance education has a central role to play in providing equitable and affordable access to education throughout our province. During the coming year, my government will increase the number of its distance education training sites and continue to work with educators to expand the range of educational programs and training.

While these new ideas and investments will create opportunities for most, they will not in and of themselves overcome the barriers which prevent too many in our society from sharing in our prosperity. My government is determined to break the poverty cycle and to build new bridges to independence for families in need. Investing in children and families will continue to be a high priority for my government as we work to enhance support and prevention services through Canada's first child action plan.

During this session my government will also proceed with several initiatives designed to improve the child care system. These will include an education campaign to help parents choose safe, quality child care, pilot projects in rural and northern Saskatchewan, and additional assistance for special needs children requiring higher levels of care.

Ensuring sustainable health care

A diversified, dynamic economy and a well-trained workforce are critical to the sustainability of our quality of life. Nowhere is sustainability more important than in our health system. Saskatchewan people are developing a new health system — a

sustainable system — that focuses on maintaining good health and preventing injury, as well as treating illness.

As a first step, we needed to integrate and coordinate all the health services available in the community. Two years ago, my government started this process by replacing over 400 different health boards with 30 health districts. In April my government will complete the structural transition with the transfer of approximately 1,400 Health department staff to the districts. This transfer will give health boards a full range of health services to meet the needs of people in their districts.

To accommodate the transfer of employees, amendments to The Medical Profession Act will be introduced to extend special licences to psychiatrists and medical health officers employed by the district health boards.

The benefits of our health renewal process are just starting to unfold. We are now in a position to invest in a broader range of community- and home-based services. Some will be new services designed to keep people healthier and independent longer, while others will be institutional replacement services.

My government extends its deep appreciation to the people of Saskatchewan for the hard work and energy they have shown during the renewal process. During the coming year, Saskatchewan citizens, for the first time in history, will be called upon to elect their district health boards. This will mark the achievement of a primary objective for health renewal — community decision making and local control.

My government awaits with interest the recommendations of the Select Committee on Driving Safety. The eight-member, all-party committee has spent several months examining a variety of issues related to driving safety. The committee's recommendations will make an important contribution to the wellness approach by preventing injuries and reducing the loss of life on Saskatchewan roads.

Once again, Saskatchewan is leading the way in health renewal as we move closer to our goal of creating a sustainable system which offers everyone appropriate health services in or as close to their homes as possible. Saskatchewan people can now feel confident that their health system will meet both the needs of today and the emerging needs of tomorrow.

Saskatchewan's anniversary

This year marks the 90th anniversary of Saskatchewan's entry into Confederation. In our tradition, these celebrations will be modest, community based and volunteer driven. At a time when others are working to pull this country apart, Saskatchewan's celebration of provincehood takes on a special significance.

Perhaps the single biggest celebration will take place in November, when the Grey Cup comes to Saskatchewan. The 1995 Grey Cup represents an important opportunity to promote our province to visitors from across North America, and is a

tribute to the hard work, spirit, and commitment of Saskatchewan's volunteers.

In recognition of the 90th anniversary, and the true spirit of Saskatchewan people, my government will introduce amendments to The Provincial Honours and Emblems Act to create the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

Conclusion

The agenda my government presents today is evidence of just how remarkable a comeback Saskatchewan has made in three short years.

Saskatchewan will be the first province in Canada to introduce a balanced budget and provide a long-term plan to maintain financial stability. Our economic growth rate is one of the strongest in the country.

We are investing in industries which hold great promise for future growth. We are developing innovative training programs to ensure that our people can take full advantage of these opportunities. And, as the world watches, Saskatchewan has secured the future of medicare and is providing new services that will keep people healthy longer.

Saskatchewan people are justifiably proud of how far we've come.

Today, Saskatchewan people look to our Centennial in the year 2005 with confidence — confidence in our financial stability, confidence in our economic recovery, confidence in our job potential, and confidence in the future of our health system. But perhaps most importantly, Saskatchewan people look to the future with renewed confidence in themselves, and in their ability to build a better future together.

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 its deliberations.

God save the Queen.

His Honour retired from the Chamber at 2:56 p.m.

Prayers

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Pro Forma Bill

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, 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 Clerk Assistant

The Speaker: — I would like to introduce to the members of the Assembly, Ms. Margaret Woods, who is our new Clerk Assistant. I'm sure that she will be an asset to our Table and I ask members to join me in welcoming Margaret Woods to the legislative service.

Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Introduction of Pages

The Speaker: — I wish to inform the Assembly that the pages for this session will be: Rhonda Adams, Trevor Hande, Kristina Johnson, Leanne Notenboom, Lisa Panchyk..

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 His Honour the Lieutenant Governor which I now lay on the Table.

MOTIONS

Speech from the Throne

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Deputy Premier, the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) for Regina Dewdney:

That the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor be taken into consideration on Tuesday, February 7, 1995.

Motion agreed to.

Printing of *Votes and Proceedings* of the Assembly

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by 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.

Hours of Sitting

Hon. Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I move seconded by the member for Regina Churchill Downs:

That by leave of the Assembly that notwithstanding rule 3 this Assembly shall sit on Tuesday, February 7, 1995,

from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and that routine proceedings shall commence at 10 a.m.

Leave granted.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Mr. Romanow: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the House Leader, I guess it is, that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before I put the question on the adjournment motion I have a few announcements to make. The music you have been listening to this afternoon is provided to us by Regina's Royal Canadian Legion Band. Our thanks to the Legion Band for a fine performance. We will hear from them again later this afternoon.

I would like to thank all the guests and members of the public, including the students from the Lakeview, St. Josaphat, and St. Angela Merici schools, who have joined us today.

I want to welcome the choir from Greenall School in Balgonie. 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 their Honours, 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 in the Legislative Library in the east wing.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: — I now welcome the students of Greenall School and invite them to perform under the direction of their teacher, Elaine Schaefer. The choir will sing three selections for us this afternoon — *Ode to Joy*, *Kum Ba Ya*, and *The Road Less Travelled*.

(The choir sang.)

The Speaker: —On behalf of all present, I would like to thank the choir very much. I'd like to thank their pianist, Mrs. Sharon Rilling, and their director, Ms. Schaefer, for just a fine, excellent performance. Thank you very kindly.

The Assembly adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Readers of Hansard will note the changes in the production of the verbatim that coincide with the new session of the legislature.

Hansard is now being produced in an eight and a half by eleven format, consistent with common practice in most offices and with most legislative jurisdictions across Canada. The new size will both save on paper, and make the document easier to read.

In addition, the front cover bears a new picture of the Legislative Building. This new picture is intended both to give a better view of our beautiful building and more appropriately fit the proportions of the larger sized document.

Production methods in Hansard have also changed. Camera ready copy is no longer produced using a photo typesetter, but through desk-top publishing with Microsoft Word 6.0 and a Hewlett Packard LaserJet 400 SI printer. This new production technology, together with the size change, will prepare Hansard for future developments in electronic distribution.