| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
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| Manitoba | 28e | 1re | Discours du trône | 5 décembre 1966 | Richard S. Bowles | Lieutenant-gouverneur | PC |

Mr. Speaker and Members of The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

I am happy to welcome you to the First Session of the Twenty-eighth Legislature of the Province of Manitoba.

The celebration of 1967 as our National Centennial Year will begin within a matter of days, Everywhere throughout Manitoba enthusiastic preparations are being made for its fitting observance. In an evolving modern society, we may expect to continue to face problems of growth and of change, but let us recall thoughtfully and thankfully the trials successfully overcome in the first 100 years of the life of our nation and respond with confidence to the challenge of our second century of expansion. There is so much that Canada has done well and there are so many Canadians who have contributed that all of us, of whatever stock or origin, may share in the natural pride of patriotism and claim our place as citizens in a great and growing land. Let there be both faith and resolution that under a benign Providence we shall see our country rise in strength and increase in devotion to all that is good and true among men.

The Pan-American Games to be held next summer in our province provide an unequalled opportunity not only to offer a warm western welcome to all our visitors, but also to tell the Manitoba story to a worldwide audience, We can be proud of the preparations now being made and I am sure we shall do justice to this unique occasion.

Among the causes of confidence in the future of our province within the Canadian nation, my Ministers include continuing and significant economic advances during the past year. Agriculture, our basic industry, is at present realizing the highest returns of any year in our history. The increase in per capita personal income, estimated to be rising at the same rate in Manitoba as it is for the nation as a whole, has also reached a new high. The increase in industrial and commercial employment in 1966 is setting an all-time provincial record while at the same time unemployment is at a minimum.

The breakthrough in natural resource development of our northern frontier is cause for special satisfaction. The Nelson River hydro-electric project is proceeding on schedule. My Government has now agreed that transmission from the Kettle Rapids generating station to southern Manitoba will be by direct current and that the transmission lines will follow a route lying west of Lake Winnipeg.

The new mines being opened and the forest development now commencing will create new wealth and unprecedented opportunities for many Manitobans. Job training and employment opportunities for Indians are expanding. Industries and individuals all over Manitoba will benefit from an investment in natural resource development which, in the near future, will amount to hundreds of millions of dollars.

My Ministers will recommend improvements in essential northern public services involving schools, roads, public facilities, and utilities. A standing offer has been made to the federal authorities to provide provincial financial assistance to hasten the provision of television services in northern Manitoba: it is hoped that agreement by the Government of Canada will not be long delayed.

Education, youth and manpower development continue to take first place in my Ministers' proposals. A most substantial increase in the appropriation for education will be recommended with two main purposes in view; first, to provide for the increasing costs of education generally and secondly to enable the province to take over a larger portion of that part of the cost of education now supported by local taxation. For this latter purpose a new cost-share formula and a new foundation grant program will be recommended.

Included in the overall education program will be provision to continue the growth of technical education facilities. A large increase in public support will also be recommended to help meet the rising costs of operation at the University of Manitoba and its associate colleges. My Ministers will propose that Brandon College be accorded university status on July 1, 1967.

My Ministers have recommended that in the spring of 1967 a vote be held to record the wishes of the public in certain areas of Manitoba regarding the establishment of what is known as the "Single district" school division system. My Ministers wish to record their appreciation of the support for this policy volunteered by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Manitoba Teachers' Society and others.

A measure will be placed before you to authorize the use of the French language in public school instruction under certain conditions.

My Ministers will also report on a wide range of educational matters, including teacher supply, new schools for the Frontier School Division, the education of various categories of handicapped children, adult education, the enrichment of courses and curriculum, and increased flexibility of the public school system generally.

A measure respecting tax free gasoline for certain agricultural purposes will be placed before you.

Approval will be sought for improved services for agriculture, including crop insurance on a province-wide basis and livestock disease control. An ARDA plan for the Interlake area has now been proposed for the consideration of the Government of Canada and it is hoped that an agreement may soon be concluded. My Ministers have also noted with approval the plan proposed in the report of the federal royal commission on the marketing of fresh water fish.

My government is prepared to co-operate with the Government of Canada in the implementation of the recommendations of the royal commission and to propose other improvements.

Members will recall that the Report of the Committee on Manitoba's Economic Future, tabled in the House March 7, 1963, was a comprehensive study of how the fundamental problems of economic development then facing Manitoba. were to be approached and solved. My Ministers have informed me that good progress has been made in achieving the high goals set by the Report which prescribed responsibility to government and also to private enterprise in attaining the Committee's objectives. My Ministers have recommended that the Committee on Manitoba's Economic Future be reconvened to reassess and restate these high goals and to reemphasize the effort required of the private sector of our community. The problem of rural growth centres and balanced regional development will be an important aspect of this review.

The rising costs of the Manitoba Hospital Services Plan are cause for serious concern.

The new hospitals now 'coming into use, the improved medical services, and wage levels have led to a doubling of the cost of running our hospitals since 1959. You will be asked to consider ways and means of finding the very large amounts of money needed to support this vital service.

My Government is seriously concerned about the effect of increases in the cost of living on the people of Manitoba. For this reason it is co-operating with the governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta in establishing an enquiry to study and report on problems associated with the recent increases. In the meanwhile, however, you will be asked to provide cost of living increases in Manitoba welfare schedules.

Legislation to provide for medical services insurance and to set up air pollution controls will also be proposed.

My Ministers are pleased to inform me of the excellent industrial relations experienced in Manitoba in the year 1966 and pay tribute to the mature and responsible attitude displayed by both labour and management. A noteworthy development has been the establishment of a Nelson River Project Committee by the Minister of Labour last summer, An agreement between the Manitoba Hydro, representatives of management, and representatives of labour has now been reached with respect to work on the Nelson River project over .the next 10-year period. This agreement stabilizes labour-management wage negotiations and provides for no strikes or lockouts during its term. Although minimum wages are now effective at $1.00 per hour throughout the entire province, the Minimum Wage Board has been reconvened to consider this matter again in the light of current conditions. For the first time the Board will be aided by the addition of two women to its numbers. Certain improvements to The Workmen's Compensation Act will be submitted for your consideration.

An extensive program of highway development will be reported upon and further expenditures will be proposed for highways and provincial roads. Preliminary work on the Lynn Lake highway surveys is now in hand together with other northern forestry and access road developments. A provincial contribution to the construction and maintenance of the metropolitan streets system will again be recommended.

A decentralization of the administration of provincial waterways and drainage operation is planned. It is expected that by reason of accelerated construction the Red River Floodway will be available for partial use if needed this coming spring.

The Manitoba Water Supply Board has informed the government that it now operates 25 plants supplying towns and villages in the province. Five additional plants will be in operation soon and 12 more are now under consideration.

The new Department of Tourism and Recreation will appear in my Ministers' estimates for the first time. My Ministers expect that the benefits of tourism to Manitoba can be substantially increased and attention will be given to the opportunities rising from our Centennial Year and from the holding of the Pan-American Games in our province. The development of the provincial parks system will he pursued in order to meet the demands not only of the tourist industry but of our own citizens as well.

It is the intention of my Ministers to place before you certain proposals respecting a civil remedies code for the protection of the rights and liberties of the citizen in the modern state. Among matters to be included are: legal aid to indigents, a citizens' protection bureau, Compensation to victims of crime, a Legislative Commissioner for Administration, the licensing of direct sellers and credit agencies, the registration of chattel mortgages and liens, and the regulation of credit, including the disclosure of interest, etc.

Approval will be sought for policies intending to promote merit and the enhanced, career development among professional classes in the Civil Service. The driver training program will be recommended for some 25 high schools in the province.

Legislation will be offered with respect to Local Government elections, and a new municipal code for cities, towns, and villages will be placed before you. Legislation respecting a housing and renewal corporation, uniform time, provincial elections and the redistribution of provincial constituencies, The Expropriation Act, liquor control, and the establishment of a Water Commission will also be introduced.

The question of transportation in all its aspects is a matter of concern to my Ministers today as it has been in the past. My Government will seek approval of its policy respecting the establishment of the National Transportation Research Centre, enquiry into .the requirements of north-south transportation within the province with respect to air, rail, road, and water, together with changes desired in Bill C. 231 of the Parliament of Canada.

My Ministers inform me that the failure to resolve federal-provincial fiscal relations at the recent federal-provincial penary conference in Ottawa in a manner better suited to the national needs has placed the public finances of this province, as, indeed, of others as well, under heavy and serious strain.

Over the past two years my Ministers report that Manitoba has co-operated with the federal government and the other provinces in the work of the Tax Structure Committee. This committee, established by a plenary conference meeting in Quebec City in 1964 and operating under the guidance of federal officials, made a thorough examination leading to a forecast of the expenditures and revenues of the Government of Canada on the one hand and of the provincial and municipal governments on the other. The purpose of the forecast was to establish the trends and to estimate the order of magnitude of the public expenditures and revenues of all levels of government during the five-year period ending in 1972.

The report of the Tax Structure Committee submitted to the recent plenary conference in Ottawa indicated that on the basis of present expenditure policies and present tax revenues, the Government of Canada will probably enjoy by 1972 a relatively easy fiscal situation while the provincial and municipal governments will collectively face extremely large deficits. An annual federal surplus of $300 to $600 million in 1972 was suggested with a total provincial-municipal annual deficit of from $2 to $2 1/2 billion for the same year.

This picture was not materially improved by the federal government's recent decisions to alter its support for post-secondary education and manpower development.

An examination of the reasons for the provincial deficits indicated that the rising cost of education was the single most important factor, with costs of health service also significant. My Ministers observe that by general consent education is reckoned to be one of our most vital national priorities even though a provincial constitutional responsibility.

On the basis of the analysis made by the Tax Structure Committee, my Ministers confidently sought a reapportionment of existing tax sharing in order that the provinces might obtain the means to meet their constitutional responsibilities, particularly in the field of education, and in a fashion consistent with the need of the Government of Canada to continue to exercise its responsibility for the interests of the nation as a whole. My Ministers were also influenced in their views by the obvious desirability of shining education costs within a province at least in part from the local real estate tax base to the wider tax base of senior governments.

My Ministers report that their views were not accepted by the Government of Canada, and that at the same time a new equalization formula, which departed from the sound principles previously adopted, was imposed on the province.

In the situation thus created by the federal government's failure to accept the conclusions of the Tax Structure Committee report, my Ministers must ask you to consider the serious problems of rising costs for education, health and other services, together with the needs for continuing economic investment. The budget proposals to be placed before you will make clear the necessities of the situation, to be faced.

My Ministers also report that since the abortive federal-provincial conference last October, priorities of function within each department are under review under the direction of the Executive Council. This will make it possible to effect the downward adjustments of services and the rescheduling of new programs that may be called for ill the light of the revenues available to the province.

My Ministers remain convinced that a fresh consideration by the Government of Canada of the problems of provincial finances is essential if national priorities are to be recognized and satisfied.

They therefore tell me of their determination to seek a new federal-provincial conference at an early date to secure better terms for Manitoba.

The estimates of revenues and expenditures will be placed before you for your consideration.

In leaving you I pray that Divine Providence may attend your deliberations and decisions.