

PREFACE

The publishing of the Debates and Proceedings for the 1947 and 1949 Sessions of the Legislature will now complete the series. It has now been twenty-eight years since the mechanical recording of the debates was initiated. The reasons for not publishing these two years until now merits an explanation.

In the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, the main speakers in the Address-in-Reply and the Budget debates were recorded by hand from 1918 onward and printed in the Journals.

In 1947, the Legislative Assembly decided to experiment with electronic recording equipment for the purposes of recording the Legislative debates. A temporary sound system was installed in the Chamber in advance of the 1947 Session. Sixteen microphones were installed in the Chamber which meant that some Members had to leave their own desks and walk over to a microphone in order to speak in the Assembly. A recording device was also installed with the record being kept on wax cylinders. The cylinders were to be kept as a temporary record with the possibility of the debates being typed at a later time.

The experiment during the 1947 Session was considered to be a success. This experiment marked the first instance in the Commonwealth where the debates of a Legislature or Parliament were recorded by machine. For a fuller account of the early development of the Hansard in Saskatchewan, see an article by George Stephen entitled "Machine-Made Hansard: Saskatchewan" in The Table, Vol. XV, p. 171.

Since the experiment was such a success, it was decided to continue recording some of the debates by machine. Six thousand dollars was spent on the installation of the recording system which had a total of thirty microphones.

The 1947 debates were eventually transcribed in rough form but were not printed or distributed. The formal proceedings of the 1948 Session were recorded on the new equipment and were transcribed and published. This marked the first official "Hansard" for Saskatchewan.

The cost of transcribing and publishing the 1948 "Hansard" far exceeded any expectations or budgets. It was for this reason that the 1949 Session was recorded but not transcribed or published.

By 1950, the cost of producing a "Hansard" was accepted and rationalized and the recording, transcribing and publishing of the formal debates of the Saskatchewan Legislature became a regular and annual practice.

Meanwhile the 1947 debates were still in rough copy and were put away in an old store room. The 1949 "Hansard" was not transcribed until approximately 1960 but was again put away and was not published.

By late 1974, it was decided that the 1949 "Hansard" should be published before the record disappeared forever. A search for the 1947 rough copy was initiated and most of the debates were found. The staff of the Legislative Assembly Office, in their spare time, pieced together and edited as much of the debates as were available. Small portions of the debates were not located and some of the copy was illegible. The "Hansard" for 1947 and 1949 is as complete and as accurate as possible

bearing in mind the time lag between the recording and the publishing of these debates.

I want to particularly thank Ms. Gwenn Ronyk, Mrs. Vivian Doan, Mrs. Joyce Rublee, Mrs. Rose Zerr, Mrs. Francis Gerlach and Mrs. Barbara Schmalenberg for their diligent efforts in producing these two "Hansards."

It is with a sense of accomplishment that it can now be said that the collection of recorded debates of the Legislative Assembly is now complete.

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