

The further development of our magnificent inland water transportation routes, which will result in lower carrying charges for the products of the farms of the West as well as for the products of the mine, the forest, and the diversified industries of the East, is of vital importance. To aid in the accomplishment of this purpose work on the new Welland Ship Canal is being expedited.

A further interchange of correspondence has taken place between my Government and the Government of the United States with reference to the St. Lawrence Waterway. In the opinion of my advisers, the importance of this question is such that further inquiry should be instituted before a final decision is reached upon the proposals which have been under consideration.

The important subject of Marine Insurance as affecting our ports; the permanent equalization of the rate on Canadian flour, and the removal of discriminations in ocean rates on other Canadian products are receiving attention.

As a stimulus to stock-raising in the Dominion, and of direct benefit to agriculture, the Government has been endeavouring to obtain a lower carrying charge on all shipments of Canadian cattle.

Every effort will be made still further to develop the policy of Canadian trade via Canadian ports.

Particularly satisfactory and promising is the material improvement which has taken place in the financial condition of the Canadian National Railway system.

The Dominion Fuel Board has been created to study and make recommendations in regard to the development of our fuel resources with a view to making Canada independent, so far as possible, of foreign sources of supply. The investigations carried on by this Board have already been productive of important results, and legislation to encourage Canadian production will be submitted for your consideration.

The amendments made to the Bank Act in the last decennial revision of the last Session provided better guarantees for the public in banking operations; their wisdom has already been abundantly apparent. The depositors in the Home Bank have asked that they should be recouped the amount of their losses, and in their petition made representations which my advisers regard as so important as to warrant full investigation. To that end a commission has been appointed to inquire fully into the allegations made by these petitioners.

The Redistribution Bill of last Session respecting the representation of the House of Commons will be reintroduced at an early date. Among amendments to be proposed to the Dominion Elections Act will be one providing for the use of the transferable vote in single-Member constituencies.

Bills will again be submitted, with respect to the construction of Canadian National Railway lines, the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, and racetrack gambling. Your attention will also be invited to amendments to the Government Annuities Act, to provide additional encouragement in the promotion of thrift and self-help, and to amendments to the Militia Act with respect to the calling-out of the Militia in aid of the civil power.

The Imperial Conference and the Imperial Economic Conference held in London in the months of October and November last between representatives of the Government of the United Kingdom and of the British Dominions and India, dealt with many subjects with which the Empire at large is interested. The reports of the proceedings of both Conferences will be presented to Parliament.

Members of the House of Commons:

The public accounts for the last fiscal year and the estimates for the coming year will be submitted at an early date.

Hon. Mr. SPEAKER

You will observe that in the preparation of the estimates my advisers have felt the necessity of continuing the policy of rigid economy with respect to public services and public works, and of postponing until such time as a reduction in taxation has been effected some undertakings the early consideration of which are obviously in the public interest.

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

The prospects of an exceptional harvest, so bright at the close of the last session, have been more than realized. Final information as to the crops of 1923 indicate that they were the most bountiful in Canada's history. In again inviting your careful consideration to the important matters which will engage your attention, I pray that the Divine Providence, which has thus favoured our land, may guide and bless your deliberations.

His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire, and the House of Commons withdrew.

Prayers.

RAILWAY BILL

FIRST READING

Bill A, an Act relating to Railways.—Hon. Mr. Dandurand.

CONSIDERATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH

On motion of Hon. Mr. Dandurand, it was ordered, that the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General be taken into consideration on Tuesday next.

The Senate adjourned until Tuesday next at 3 p.m.

THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 4, 1924.

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE

MOTION

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND moved:

1. That a Special Committee of this House be appointed to inquire into and to report from time to time upon—

(a) The efficiency of the Civil Service;

(b) The number of persons employed in each branch of the several departments of the Civil Service, and the places where they are so employed;

(c) The possibility of reducing such number so as to effect economy without impairment of efficiency;

(d) Generally, all questions, matters and things arising out of or incidental to the foregoing.

2. That the said Committee be composed of the Honourable Messieurs