

CANADA

The Debates of the Senate

OFFICIAL REPORT

THE SENATE.

MONDAY, February 14, 1921.

The Senate met at 2.30 p.m., for the first time in the Chamber of the Senate in the new Parliament Building, the Speaker in the Chair.

OPENING OF THE SESSION.

The Hon. the SPEAKER announced that he had received a communication from the Governor General's Acting Secretary informing him that His Excellency the Governor General would proceed to the Senate Chamber to open the Session of the Dominion Parliament on Monday, the 14th February, at 3 o'clock.

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

At three o'clock His Excellency the Governor General proceeded to the Senate Chamber and took his seat upon the Throne. His Excellency was pleased to command the attendance of the House of Commons, and that House being come, with their Speaker, His Excellency was pleased to open the Fifth Session of the Thirteenth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada with the following Speech:

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

On your return to your Parliamentary duties, I am glad to be able to congratulate you on the relative prosperity of the country and its comparative freedom from the feeling of unrest which has agitated countries not so fortunately situated. Following the conditions of expansion due to the war, a period of contraction was inevitable. Restriction of credit involving a certain limitation of production and business has been universal, but this Dominion has been less affected than other countries, and a feeling of confidence prevails. A general reduction of the cost of living has set in, and the country, save in certain limited areas, has been blessed with a bountiful harvest.

In spite of this contraction, the annual revenue of the country has been well maintained,

and my advisers considered that certain taxes, imposed in part to check extravagant purchasing, had fulfilled their purpose and might be withdrawn. Accordingly, with a few exceptions, these taxes have been remitted, freeing industry and business and thus promoting employment.

Unemployment, the world-wide result of the conditions to which I have referred, though less widespread in Canada than elsewhere, has received the most anxious consideration. Of the charges for the relief of general unemployment, measures have been taken to bear a substantial share, and special measures have been taken to assist disabled and partially disabled ex-service men. These will be submitted to you for approval.

An investigation is being conducted by the Department of Labour into systems of Unemployment, Insurance and Old Age Pensions.

There will be submitted to you for approval the important agreement concluded last year with the Governments of the British West Indian Colonies for the purpose of drawing still closer the trade relations between Canada and these Colonies and of improving the means of communication and intercourse.

The First Assembly of the League of Nations was recently held at Geneva. Representatives of forty-one nations, including those of Canada, met and deliberated together in a spirit of harmony that promises much for this great experiment. Much time was necessarily devoted to the work of organization, but other measures were also agreed upon which are calculated to promote stability and good will in international intercourse. Most important of these is the draft scheme for the establishment of a Permanent Court of International Justice which will be submitted to you for approval at an early date.

My advisers are convinced of the necessity for revision of the Customs tariff. In order to secure the most complete information a Committee has conducted an extensive and thorough enquiry, and has secured the views of all parties and interests in every Province. The hearings necessary for this purpose have now been completed, and the conclusions founded thereon will be submitted to you in due course. It is the opinion of my advisers that in such revision regard must be had to the necessities of revenue and as well that the principle of protection to Canadian labour and legitimate Canadian industries, including agriculture, which has prevailed for more than forty years in this country, must be consistently maintained; but that the Customs duties imposed to that end should be no higher than is essential to ensure good standards of living among our working population and to retain and make possible the normal expansion of the industries in which they find employment.