

## CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

### OFFICIAL REPORT

Thursday, February 20, 1919.

The Parliament which had been pro-rogued from time to time to the 20th day of February, 1919, met this day at Ottawa, for the dispatch of business.

The House met at three o'clock, the Speaker in the Chair.

Mr. Speaker read a communication from Lt.-Col. the Hon. Harold Henderson, Governor General's Secretary, announcing that His Excellency the Governor General would proceed to the Senate Chamber at 3 p.m. on this day, for the purpose of formally opening the session of the Dominion Parliament.

A message was delivered by Colonel Ernest J. Chambers, Gentleman-Usher of the Black Rod, as follows:

Mr. Speaker, His Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly the House went up to the Senate Chamber.

And the House being returned to the Commons Chamber:

#### THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend His Excellency the Governor General this day in the Senate Chamber, His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of Parliament. To prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy which is as follows:—

*Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:*

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons:*

Since the last session of Parliament events have transpired of the highest consequence to the Empire and to Canada. After withstanding with steadfast valour repeated assaults pressed with the utmost vigour and determination, the Allied Forces, taking the offensive in all theatres of action, advanced to decisive and overwhelming victory. Upon terms of practically unconditional surrender on the part of the enemy, armistices were arranged and are now in effect, under which ex-

tensive strategic territories have been evacuated, guns, munitions and other war material and supplies surrendered on a vast scale, and the greater part of the hostile fleets delivered up to the Allies. A Conference is now being held at Paris to determine the conditions upon which peace will be concluded. As the decisions of this Conference will be of vital importance to Canada as well as to other parts of the Empire, it is being attended by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, accompanied by others of my advisers.

In the notable victories leading to the glorious issue accomplished by the arms of the Allies, none of the forces engaged bore a more valorous or heroic part than those of Canada, whose achievements throughout the entire war have won imperishable renown for their country. It is most gratifying to be able to state that, in the final and decisive stages of the mighty struggle, our divisions in the field were maintained at over-strength, and equipped in the highest degree with all the requirements of modern warfare. The appreciation and gratitude of the nation cannot be too earnestly and sincerely expressed to the gallant members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, whose sacrifices, sufferings and heroism have played so effectual a part in vindicating the cause of world-liberty and civilization.

Prior to the armistice, plans and preparations had been made for the return, demobilization and re-establishment in civil life, after the close of the war, of our soldiers with their dependents overseas. These are now in operation, and while this great undertaking presents, owing to after-war conditions, many difficulties and complications, it is confidently expected that it will be accomplished speedily and satisfactorily.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the armistice, which necessarily involved the cessation of operations in the manufacture of munitions and in other essential war industries, steps were taken by my advisers to facilitate the readjustment of business, and to provide employment. Orders in Council embodying the measures adopted will be laid before you without delay.

A Bill relating to the franchise, with such provisions as are necessary having regard to existing conditions, and providing among other things for effectually enabling women to vote, and conferring upon them the privilege of sitting in Parliament, will be submitted for your consideration.

Your attention will also be invited to Bills providing for aid in the construction of highways; for assisting returned soldiers in establishing themselves upon the land, and for promoting desirable immigration and farm settlement.