

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:

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that certain taxes, imposed in part to check extravagant purchasing, had fulfilled their purpose and might be withdrawn.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

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thorough inquiry, 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.

A Bill for the repeal of the Conservation Act will be submitted to you, there being provision made for carrying on the essential functions of the Commission of Conservation in the appropriate department of the Government. This measure will, therefore, avoid very considerable duplication of services, and permit consequent saving of expense without detriment to the public advantage.

A Bill amending the Dominion Elections Act to provide for necessary revision of the electoral lists applicable to the vote shortly to be held in the province of Ontario respecting the Canada Temperance Act will be submitted to you.

Bills relating to copyrights, the simplification and consolidation of the Income War Tax Act, 1917, and amending Acts, scientific research and other matters will be submitted to you. Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

The accounts of the last fiscal year will be laid before you. Estimates for the next fiscal year will be submitted at an early date, making provision for the various services of government. These have been formed with a view to strict economy, having due regard to the obligations of the country and the exigencies of the public service, and any possible contraction, following the expansion of the period of the war, has been diligently sought.

Honourable Gentlemen of the Senate:

Gentlemen of the House of Commons:

In inviting your careful consideration of the important matters which will engage your attention, I pray that Divine Providence may direct and prosper all your consultations to the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and this Dominion.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Prime Minister): I beg to move, seconded by Sir George Foster:

That the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General to both Houses of Parliament be taken into consideration on Tuesday next, and that this order have precedence over all other business except introduction of Bills until disposed of.

Motion agreed to.

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEES

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN moved:

That a special committee be appointed to prepare and report, with all convenient speed, lists of members to compose the Select Stand-