

Hon. Mr. GRAHAM: The last part of that question is unkind. I expect to have an interview with the heads of the railways to-morrow. It is not a conference as referred to by my hon. friend, or as understood by him, but I have asked the heads of the railways to meet me to-morrow to ascertain what they have to say on the matter.

AUSTRALIAN TREATY

On the Orders of the Day:

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Leader of the Opposition): Is the Acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb) able to make any statement to the House with respect to the Australian treaty? If his answer is to be that matters are as they were when he spoke last, will he explain what relation the point in question has to the terms of the treaty itself, and whether in the meantime we might not have laid on the table the actual treaty as already signed, though not ratified. It would be of some advantage to the House for the purpose of study even if we are not allowed to act upon it.

Mr. MACLEAN (York): I received a letter yesterday from a firm there largely interested in the export of paper, and they want to see the proposal go through. If the minister wants to see the letter I will send it to him.

Mr. GRAHAM: We all received such a letter.

Hon. J. A. ROBB (Acting Minister of Finance): I have received a lot of such letters. I have nothing further to add to the statement made a few days ago more than this. I would like to correct my right hon. friend (Mr. Meighen). He knows that there is no such thing as a treaty between the two dominions. The term used is an agreement. There has been no treaty signed as my right hon. friend suggests.

Mr. MEIGHEN: An agreement signed?

Mr. ROBB: No, nor an agreement. I have nothing to add to the statement I made a few days ago.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Why could the agreement not be laid on the table? The minister said there was an agreement.

Mr. ROBB: No, I said there was no agreement signed.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Then it is still in the negotiation stage?

Mr. ROBB: Yes.

THE BUDGET

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE ACTING MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from Tuesday, April 14, consideration of the motion of Hon. J. A. Robb (Acting Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the House to go into committee of Ways and Means, and the proposed amendment thereto of Sir Henry Drayton.

Mr. L. W. HUMPHREY (West Kootenay): The reasons for my rising to take part in this debate are based principally upon three grounds: first, to give if possible a true account of present and past conditions in the province of British Columbia with particular reference to my own district; second, to impress upon the government some legislation in which my province and more particularly my constituency are interested, and third, to place before this House my position in regard to the present budget. I wish to base my remarks, few though they may be, on a spirit of confidence. I rise in a spirit of optimism, with the utmost confidence in my province and in this country. I have listened very attentively to practically all the speeches that have been delivered during this debate. I have been greatly impressed by many of them, and I have noticed that the majority have been characterized by a strong infusion of the spirit of pessimism. I have often said to myself in the course of the speeches made during this debate that I am indeed glad, and consider myself fortunate, to live in a district and a province in which, in my opinion, there is not such a wave of pessimism. That is my first purpose in rising to take part in this debate.

Going on further, I might say that most of the speeches that have been made during this debate have referred to either protection or free trade, and the same thing is true of speeches delivered during many of our debates, the contention being that either protection or free trade is the cure for all our troubles and ills in Canada. In fact, I think during this debate we have heard the budget speech which was delivered by the Acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Robb) called nearly everything a budget speech could be called. It is my intention, not to take issue with regard to those remarks, but if possible to put on record in this House my views as to what are the paramount or first issues in this country, or in other words, what I would consider questions of the greatest importance. My position is that I do not consider the tariff question altogether the most important issue in Canada to-day. I know quite well there are in this Dominion people who have made