

just received a telegram: Is a member permitted to occupy a seat in the gallery reserved for senators?

(Text):

In case the minister concerned did not understand, I should like to ask this question arising out of several telegrams I have received, like the hon. member for Cape Breton South, just before entering the house: Has a member of parliament the right to sit in the senate gallery?

WORLD TRADE CONFERENCE

INQUIRY AS TO PROGRESS OF PROCEEDINGS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. H. BLACKMORE (Lethbridge): May I direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs? Is the minister in a position to give the house any report concerning the proceedings of the international trade conference at Geneva?

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker. All I can say is that the conference is still proceeding. It has not broken down, and while it proceeds there is hope for its success.

THE BUDGET

DEBATE ON ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The house resumed from Tuesday, May 13, consideration of the motion of Hon. Douglas Abbott (Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of ways and means, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Macdonnell (Muskoka-Ontario), and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Coldwell.

(Translation):

Mr. W. M. BENIDICKSON (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, may I at the beginning of my remarks say a few words in the beautiful French language, to congratulate my hon. colleagues who have already given the house and the country a fine example the Canadian parliament. That example should be followed in all sections of the country. I hope to improve my command of French, so that some day I may speak at greater length in that language during our debates.

(Text):

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): Does the hon. member take his French lessons from the same person who teaches the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank)?

(Translation):

Mr. BENIDICKSON: There takes place during the summer holidays, an exchange of

[Mr. Cruickshank.]

students desirous of learning both our official languages. Students from Ontario register at various centres in the province of Quebec, while those from Quebec study English under highly qualified teachers.

It is perhaps the best means to know and to appreciate one another. That degree of national unity so much sought after, I am sure, by all Canadians will be attained more readily and more rapidly, because the knowledge of both languages will promote better understanding between the two groups.

And now, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I shall continue my remarks in my mother tongue.

(Text):

We are now discussing the admirable budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott), a budget which has brought a considerable reduction in taxation to a substantial number of our taxpayers, and we are faced with amendments by both opposition parties. I propose to deal this afternoon with two sections of the amendment of the Conservative party.

In his amendment the financial critic of the Conservative party said:

This house regrets that the proposals of the Minister of Finance

(b) offer no encouragement to those engaged in the development of our natural resources, especially mining and agriculture . . .

I shall deal with the subject of agriculture, but I do wish to say something about the record of this government with respect to mining, and the record of the official opposition when they had the chance to administer the affairs of the country. I shall deal also with that section of the opposition's amendment which regretted that there was failure to provide for reconvening the dominion-provincial conference in order to complete satisfactory agreements with the provinces and a dominion-provincial programme of social security, health and public investment.

I think it will be admitted on all sides that mining has certainly been a war victim. The gold mining industry, particularly during the war years, had to take second place to almost every other industry in this country. Now that the war is over, every possible encouragement that can be given to that industry must be given to it, because there is hardly any enterprise which does not receive considerable benefit from the production of our gold mines. Transportation, industry, agriculture, forestry, professional and trained personnel all derive great benefit from the production of gold in this country. Then, an exporting country surely must be thinking in terms of its exchange policy.