

Mr. CHEVRIER: Yes.

Section agreed to.

Sections 8, 9 and 10 agreed to.

On section 11—Exemptions by minister.

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): We are going so rapidly that we cannot even read the sections.

Section agreed to on division.

Sections 12 to 16 inclusive agreed to.

On section 17—Repeal.

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): We are putting through this bill and I do not think anyone has the foggiest idea of what it is. It is going through and that is all.

Section agreed to.

On section 18—Certificate of discharge.

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): I should like to speak on this section although I have not read it. I shall read it for the edification of hon. members of the committee. It reads:

18. Subsection one of section one hundred and eighty-two of the said act is repealed and the following substituted therefor:

182. (1) The master shall sign and give to a seaman discharged from his ship, either on his discharge or on payment of his wages, a certificate of his discharge in a continuous discharge book in a form approved by the minister, or any form approved by the proper authority in that part of His Majesty's dominions in which the ship is registered specifying the period of his service and the time and place of his discharge, but not containing any statement as to his wages or the quality of his work unless requested by the seaman.

Progress reported.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

THE BUDGET

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. DOUGLAS ABBOTT (Minister of Finance) moved:

That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of ways and means.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in the budget speech last year I was able to say that the circumstances of the time were much more favourable than in any of the immediately preceding years. This year I can again report, so far as

[Mr. Hazen.]

Canada is concerned, an unprecedented rate of economic activity and a new record of progress in our government accounts. But no minister of finance can survey world events of the last twelve months without thinking more in terms of problems and difficulties than of progress and achievement. From the time of Stalingrad and El Alamein until last year the western world had seen its fortunes improve year after year, first in war and then in reconstruction. Last year brought a check to this advance and for many countries a series of troubles and misfortunes. As between nations, strife and bickering increased and once more the threat to political security became a real one. There is still cause for optimism, both in regard to the great political issues and in economic and financial affairs, but it must be an optimism tempered with a realistic appreciation of the formidable difficulties that must be overcome if we are to achieve peace and prosperity for the world and for Canada.

It has clearly been this international background that has exerted the dominant influence on our own affairs during the past year. Of its political aspects I need not speak tonight. They have been on the tongues and in the hearts of us all in the last year and we have recently had in this house a masterly exposition of their bearing upon Canada's external relations by my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In the economic field, adverse weather in western Europe of an extreme surpassing the records of centuries, following upon the losses and destruction of war, greatly intensified troubles of a more persistent nature. Britain tried without success to re-establish the convertibility of the pound and to forgo discrimination in her import controls. One country after another was forced to reduce consumption and restrict imports in order to conserve rapidly dwindling exchange resources. This gathering crisis in international finance and trade led not only to the recasting of reconstruction plans on less ambitious lines but also to an intensive re-examination of the economic position and prospects of Europe and ultimately to the formulation and enactment of the Marshall plan, or, as it is now called the European recovery program. The enactment of this large-scale, well-thought-out, great-hearted approach to the restoration of international economic health represents, in my opinion, a triumph not only for the individual statesmen who conceived and moulded it but also for the United States congress which rose to this occasion as it has risen to other great emergencies.

