

SECOND SITTING

2.30 p.m.

The Senate resumed.

The Senate adjourned during pleasure.

After a while, His Excellency the Governor General having come, and being seated on the Throne,—

The Honourable the Speaker commanded the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to proceed to the House of Commons and acquaint that House that,—

It is His Excellency the Governor General's pleasure that they attend him immediately in the Senate Chamber.

The House of Commons being come,

His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to open the Session by a Gracious Speech to both houses, as follows:—

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

Since my arrival in Canada, I have visited all nine provinces. Today, for the first time, I meet with you at the opening of a session of Parliament. I should like at once to say how greatly I value this new association. I prize it the more in that it permits, in a time of peace, a continuance of the memorable association I had with Canada's armed forces at a time of war.

This new year has happily been marked by a lessening of international tension. During 1946, despite many disappointments, a notable advance was made towards world recovery. In the making of peace and in the tasks of world reconstruction, Canada has assumed a full share of responsibility. No country holds, today, a higher place in the esteem of other nations.

The establishment of enduring peace continues to be the first concern of all nations. It is the corner stone of our external policy.

Unsettled world conditions, following inevitably in the wake of war, have rendered the making of the peace exceedingly difficult. Some progress has been made. After prolonged conferences, treaties of peace with Italy, Finland, Roumania, Hungary and Bulgaria have been agreed upon, and are about to be signed. You will be asked to approve the treaties to which Canada becomes a signatory.

The Allied Nations have now entered upon the task of determining the future of Germany and Austria. Canada has recently made clear our constructive attitude with regard to these settlements.

In international action for the relief of the destitute, and for the rehabilitation of areas desolated during the war, Canada has been much to the fore. We may indeed be grateful that our country has been able to take the part it has in the relief of human suffering, in the provision of food for the hungry, and in the restoration of devastated countries. Canada is joining with other nations in seeking to solve the perplexing problem of the displaced persons, and in the development of international cooperation in many fields.

It is the policy of the government to have Canada give wholehearted support to the United Nations. Special attention is being given to the deliberations respecting atomic energy and the regulation and reduction of armaments. My Ministers are also following with interest the activities of the United Nations with regard to the question of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the manner in which those obligations accepted by all Members of the United Nations may best be implemented. It is the intention of the government to recommend the appointment of a select committee of members of both Houses to consider and report upon these matters.

The General Assembly of the United Nations concluded, last month in New York, its first session begun in London a year ago. Canada's delegation both in London and in New York was representative of the government and the opposition, and of both Houses of Parliament. The Canadian delegation took an active and constructive part in the work of the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Atomic Energy Commission and other international organizations. You will be invited to consider legislation to enable Canada to carry out our country's obligations under the United Nations Charter, and to approve other agreements arising out of the growing structure of international organization.

Canada welcomed the action of the United Nations in convening a World Conference on Trade and Employment. It is hoped that the Conference may bring into being an international Charter which, by the removal or reduction of restrictions, will result in the continuous expansion of world trade. During the autumn, preparatory trade discussions among the nations of the Commonwealth were held in London. Discussions are being continued with other of the United Nations. Canada's delegation to the Conference will be instructed to further to the utmost this combined effort on the part of the United Nations to liberate trade and thereby to assist in the maintenance of a high level of employment.

In our own country, the change-over from wartime conditions has proceeded rapidly. The repatriation and demobilization of the armed forces have been practically completed. Almost all dependents of veterans have now arrived in Canada. The three armed services have been brought under the jurisdiction of one Minister of the Crown. The navy, army and air force are being reorganized on a post-war basis.

Industry has been converted almost entirely from wartime purposes to peace-time production. Over a million persons have been transferred from the armed forces and war industry to regular civilian occupations. Employment is higher than it has ever been. It is over thirty per cent higher than it was in 1939. During 1946 Canada's external commerce reached heights unprecedented in peace-time. The national income is at its highest peace-time level. The outlook for trade and employment for 1947 is most favourable.

Despite the high volume of output in all the primary industries, the demand for the natural products of the farms, the fisheries, the mines and the forests continues to exceed production. Through marketing agreements, the government is seeking to give security and continuing stability to the incomes of primary producers.

Many of the controls and restrictions in force during and immediately after the war are no longer in existence. Others have been considerably relaxed. Controls over wages and salaries and over many prices and commodities have been removed. Other controls are being removed in an orderly manner.

The policy of the government is to maintain only such price and commodity controls as may be required to protect consumers from a sudden and drastic rise in the cost of living, and to ensure the fair distribution of essential goods and services which are in short supply. You will be invited to consider what measures may be necessary to continue this policy after the expiry of the National

Emergency Transitional Powers Act. Where it may appear advisable to continue these or other transitional measures, the required legislation will be submitted for your approval at the earliest possible date.

Where measures enacted under wartime powers may be required for a considerable period, bills necessary to give statutory form to their provisions will be introduced without delay. This procedure will bring under your review a number of measures relating, among other matters, to labour relations, agriculture, marketing, immigration, defence, finance and export trade.

Progress is being made in overcoming the shortages in building supplies, thereby accelerating the provision of additional housing. Despite all obstacles, the number of housing units completed in 1946 approximated the objective set by the government. The co-operation of provincial and municipal authorities greatly contributed to the provision of emergency shelter.

Since the last session of parliament, negotiations for tax agreements have been carried on with certain of the provinces. In the course of these negotiations, modifications were made in the Dominion proposals to meet problems of individual provinces, and to ensure comparable treatment for all.

Tax agreements have now been reached with several of the provinces. The government is prepared to conclude agreements on a similar basis with the remaining provinces. You will be asked to approve such tax agreements as may be concluded.

Once suitable financial relationships have been arrived at with the provinces, my Ministers have undertaken to seek in a general conference or otherwise, to work out satisfactory arrangements with the provinces in regard to public investment and social security measures. Amendments to the Old Age Pensions Act will be introduced at the present session.

You will be invited to consider a measure to provide for the readjustment of representation in the House of Commons, in accordance with the provisions of the recent amendment to the British North America Act. Amendments to the Dominion Elections Act will also be submitted for your consideration.

In the course of the session, additional measures will be submitted for your approval.

Members of the House of Commons:

The Public Accounts for the last fiscal year and the Estimates for the coming year will be laid before you. The estimates will disclose substantial and gratifying reductions in public expenditures.

You will be asked to make financial provision for all essential services.

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

May Divine Providence bless your deliberations and guide the nations in their efforts to establish a just and lasting peace.

The Commons withdrew.

His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire.

The Senate was resumed.