

At Our Government House, in Our city of OTTAWA, in Our Dominion of Canada, this fourteenth day of August, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three, and in the fourteenth year of Our Reign.

By Command,

A. B. COPP,
Secretary of State of Canada.

The Honourable Mr. Côté came to the Table and took and subscribed the Oath prescribed by law, which was administered by the Clerk of the Senate, one of the Commissioners appointed for that purpose, and took his seat as a Member of the Senate.

His Honour the Speaker informed the Senate that the Honourable Mr. Côté had made and subscribed the Declaration of Qualification required of him by *The British North America Act, 1867*, in the presence of the Clerk of the Senate, one of the Commissioners appointed to receive and witness the same.

His Honour the Speaker informed the Senate that he had received a communication from the Governor General's Secretary, in the following words:—

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SECRETARY

OTTAWA, 28th January, 1924.

SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that His Excellency the Governor General will proceed to the Senate Chamber to open the Session of the Dominion Parliament on Thursday, the 28th February, at three o'clock.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. F. SLADEN,
Governor General's Secretary.

The Honourable
The Speaker of the Senate,
Ottawa.

The Senate was adjourned during pleasure.

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

His Honour 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.

Who being come, with their Speaker,

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:

I am glad to be able to congratulate you upon the many evidences of increased prosperity. Though the general economic situation still reflects the consequences of the World War, the records of production, trade, transportation,

employment and public finance have been uniformly increasingly favourable throughout the Dominion. The state of general employment has been distinctly better. The volume of business has steadily increased. Especially has the country reason to feel gratified at the expansion to a notable degree of its public revenues and decline of its expenditures.

I am persuaded that a reduction in taxation, and in production and transportation costs, such as will encourage the investment of capital in industrial enterprise and attract settlers in large numbers to our Dominion, are all that are necessary to effect an economic development hitherto unparalleled.

My Ministers are strongly of the opinion that a reduction of taxation is of first importance, and that to this end the efforts already put forth to combine strict economy in the administration of the public services with rigorous retrenchment in public expenditures, should be furthered in as many directions as may be possible. This is the more imperative, in that the margin of controllable expenditure within which economies can be effected is necessarily restricted.

My Ministers believe, however, that in virtue of economies already effected they will, when the present financial year closes, be able to announce to the country that for the first time since 1912-1913 the national budget has been balanced. They are further of the opinion that when the budget for the ensuing fiscal year is introduced it will be found that the relation between public revenue and public expenditure is such as to justify some immediate reduction of taxation.

In the opinion of the Government, such reduction of taxation as it may be possible to effect should aim primarily at reducing the cost of the instruments of production in the industries based on the natural resources of the Dominion, thereby aiding materially in the development of our natural resources, and, through cheapened production, effecting a diminution also in the cost of living.

Legislation will be introduced making provision for consolidation of the revenue collecting services of the Government under one administrative head. With a view to simplifying and improving the existing system, it is also proposed to constitute a Board to investigate and study the various modes of taxation.

National unity, not less than national prosperity, depends upon the surmounting of those barriers which have tended to separate Western from Eastern Canada and to discourage permanent settlement upon the land. Foremost in this regard are the problems incidental to tariff readjustments and to the marketing of agricultural and other natural products.

The stabilization and control of freight rates on grain from the head of the Great Lakes to Canadian ocean ports and thence to Liverpool, are receiving the closest attention. It is hoped that the Report of the Royal Grain Inquiry Commission authorized last session to inquire into the subject of the handling and marketing of grain will be available for presentation to Parliament this session, and that legislation based upon its recommendations may be offered for your consideration.

The further development of our magnificent inland water transportation routes, which will result in lower carrying charges for the products of the farms of the West as well as for the products of the mine, the forest, and the diversified industries of the East, is of vital importance. To aid in the accomplishment of this purpose work on the new Welland Ship Canal is being expedited.

A further interchange of correspondence has taken place between my Government and the Government of the United States with reference to the St. Lawrence Waterway. In the opinion of my advisers, the importance of this question

is such that further inquiry should be instituted before a final decision is reached upon the proposals which have been under consideration.

The important subject of Marine Insurance as affecting our ports; the permanent equalization of the rate on Canadian flour, and the removal of discriminations in ocean rates on other Canadian products are receiving attention.

As a stimulus to stock-raising in the Dominion, and a direct benefit to agriculture, the Government has been endeavouring to obtain a lower carrying charge on all shipments of Canadian cattle.

Every effort will be made still further to develop the policy of Canadian trade via Canadian ports.

Particularly satisfactory and promising is the material improvement which has taken place in the financial condition of the Canadian National Railway system.

The Dominion Fuel Board has been created to study and make recommendations in regard to the development of our fuel resources with a view to making Canada independent, so far as possible, of foreign sources of supply. The investigations carried on by this Board have already been productive of important results, and legislation to encourage Canadian production will be submitted for your consideration.

The amendments made to the Bank Act in the last decennial revision of the last session provided better guarantees for the public in banking operations; their wisdom has already been abundantly apparent. The depositors in the Home Bank have asked that they should be recouped the amount of their losses, and in their petition made representations which my advisers regard as so important as to warrant full investigation. To that end a commission has been appointed to inquire fully into the allegations made by these petitioners.

The Redistribution Bill of last session respecting the representation of the House of Commons will be reintroduced at an early date. Among amendments to be proposed to the Dominion Elections Act will be one providing for the use of the transferable vote in single-Member constituencies.

Bills will again be submitted, with respect to the construction of Canadian National Railway lines, the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, and race-track gambling. Your attention will also be invited to amendments to the Government Annuities Act, to provide additional encouragement in the promotion of thrift and self-help, and to amendments to the Militia Act with respect to the calling-out of the Militia in aid of the civil power.

The Imperial Conference and the Imperial Economic Conference held in London in the months of October and November last between representatives of the Government of the United Kingdom and of the British Dominions and India, dealt with many subjects with which the Empire at large is interested. The reports of the proceedings of both Conferences will be presented to Parliament.

Members of the House of Commons:

The public accounts for the last fiscal year and the estimates for the coming year will be submitted at an early date.

You will observe that in the preparation of the estimates my advisers have felt the necessity of continuing the policy of rigid economy with respect to public services and public works, and of postponing until such time as a reduction in taxation has been effected some undertakings, the early consideration of which, are obviously in the public interest.

Honourable Members of the Senate:

Members of the House of Commons:

The prospects for an exceptional harvest, so bright at the close of the last session, have been more than realized. Final information as to the crops of 1923 indicate that they were the most bountiful in Canada's history. In again inviting your careful consideration to the important matters which will engage your attention, I pray that the Divine Providence, which has thus favoured our land, may guide and bless your deliberations.

His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to retire.

The Commons withdrew.

After some time the Senate was resumed.

PRAYERS.

The Honourable Mr. Dandurand presented to the Senate a Bill intituled: "An Act relating to Railways."

The said Bill was read the first time.

The Honourable the Speaker informed the Senate that a copy of the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General had been left in his hands.

The same was read by His Honour the Speaker.

Ordered, That the Speech of His Excellency the Governor General be taken into consideration on Tuesday next.

On motion of the Honourable Mr. Dandurand, it was

Ordered, That all the Senators present during this Session be appointed a Committee to consider the Orders and Customs of the Senate and Privileges of Parliament, and that the said Committee have leave to meet in the Senate Chamber when and as often as they please.

The Honourable Mr. Dandurand laid upon the Table:—

Report of the Canadian Delegates to the Fourth Assembly of the League of Nations, September 3 to 29, 1923.

(Sessional Papers, 1924, No. 35.)

Report of Commission on Industrial Unrest among the Steel Workers at Sydney, N. S.

(Sessional Papers, 1924, No. 39.)

Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year ending March 31st, 1923. (English and French Editions).

Rules and Forms made under the Copyright Act, 1921.

Copy of an Order in Council of date the 9th January, 1924, assigning the Copyright Act, 1921, to the Minister of Trade and Commerce for administration.

(Sessional Papers, 1924, Nos. 9, 40, 41.)

Report of the Minister of Agriculture, for the year ended March 31, 1923.

(Sessional Papers, 1924, No. 16.)

Report of Director of Dominion Experimental Farms, for year ended March 31, 1923.

(Sessional Papers, 1924, No. 42.)