



THE
NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE.

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THE third Session of the Fourth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor, in State, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following

SPEECH.

HONORABLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS,—

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

Since your last Session I have, in obedience to Her Majesty's commands, assumed the Government of this country; and it is with great satisfaction that I now meet you in Parliament, and resort to your advice and assistance in the consideration of measures which affect the welfare of the country.

During the recess preparations were made, not merely by the Government, but by the country at large, to give that hearty reception to His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh which was due to the son of our beloved Queen, and to a distinguished representative of the British Nation upon the occasion of a visit to a loyal branch of the Empire. The news of the insane and wicked attempt upon his life in a neighbouring Colony called forth throughout New Zealand, as in every part of the Queen's dominions, declarations of indignation and horror at the attempted crime, and of deep sympathy for Her Majesty. His Royal Highness was forbidden by his medical advisers to prolong his tour, but has charged me to express to the people of New Zealand the deep regret with which he yielded to that advice, and the hope that some other opportunity may be allowed him of making the promised visit.

Since my arrival I have been enabled to visit all the principal settlements of the Northern Island except Taranaki and Wanganui, and have received in every place conspicuous proofs of the attachment of the inhabitants to the Throne and the Empire. I propose, after the completion of your labours, to continue my visits, and to make myself acquainted, without delay, with the various settled districts of these Islands which I have not yet seen.

Papers will be laid before you relative to the action taken by the Colonial Treasurer, who has been appointed, under the authority of the Loan Acts of last session, agent in England for the purposes specified in those Acts. I have the

satisfaction to inform you that one of the questions which has engaged his attention—that of the complicated accounts between the Imperial and Colonial Governments—has been settled, and a source of prolonged controversy and constant irritation consequently removed.

The Act passed during your last session, erecting the District of Westland into a County, and making temporary provision for its government, was brought into operation on the 1st January last. While the working of this measure since that date has shown the necessity for considerable amendments, which, from its provisional character, might have been reasonably anticipated, the result of this important experiment may, on the whole, be considered satisfactory. A Bill will be submitted to you for effecting the various amendments which experience has shown to be necessary.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The Estimates for the ensuing year will shortly be submitted to you. These Estimates have been resolutely reduced to the lowest amount required to maintain the Public Service.

The Public Accounts will be laid before you.

I am happy to be able to inform you, notwithstanding the commercial depression which this country, in common with other portions of the Empire, has laboured under, that if the resources of the country are not further anticipated by loans, there will be no need to impose additional burdens on the people in order to maintain the public credit and an efficient Government.

HONORABLE GENTLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN,—

A Bill will be submitted to you for securing to rural districts powers for effecting Public Works necessary for their progress, and for allotting to them a fair share of the Land Fund.

My Government have not thought it advisable to exercise the very large powers conferred by an Act of last Session for legalizing the manufacture of spirits, but a Bill will be introduced which will include all necessary legal provisions for enabling distillation to be carried on.

Several very important Bills will also be submitted to you for declaring, amending, and consolidating the Law relating to Real Property, the Registration of Deeds, Police Offences, Frauds in Trade, and other subjects, and for assimilating the Law of Treason to that of Great Britain.

In accordance with your desire, a Commission has been appointed to enquire into the operation of the laws now in force relative to the custody and treatment of Prisoners, especially of those sentenced to long periods of imprisonment. The Report of the Commission will shortly be laid before you.

Although labouring under many difficulties, and charged with the solution of intricate political problems, which cannot be dealt with summarily, I have every confidence that the good sense, patience, and mutual forbearance of the people of these Islands will secure the happiest results, and will gradually adjust the finances and the political constitution of the Colony to the progressive requirements of the people.

I commend to your wisdom the consideration of the many important subjects which may claim your attention, and I pray that the blessing of God may guide your counsels to the promotion of the happiness of the people of New Zealand.