



THE
NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE
 EXTRAORDINARY.

Published by Authority.

WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, JULY 26, 1878.

THE Third Session of the Sixth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following

S P E E C H.

HONORABLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

It affords me much pleasure again to have recourse to your advice and assistance; and I confidently anticipate that your deliberations will tend to promote the prosperity and good government of the colony.

Since the last Session, I have been uniformly received by the colonists with the utmost loyalty and cordiality, as the Queen's Representative, wherever I have been able to visit; and it has been with the greatest gratification that I have observed the marked progress in material prosperity which is everywhere taking place, and which testifies so manifestly to the industry of the people of this country.

I congratulate you on the fact that peaceful relations have at last been established with the Waikato and Ngatimaniapoto tribes. Complying with the pressing and frequently-received invitations of the leading Chiefs of those tribes, the Premier and the Native Minister visited them on several occasions in their own districts, and met them also at the Waitara. Papers on this subject will be laid before you. They will show that the long period of serious difficulties with the Native race may reasonably be considered to be approaching a termination. There is now a fair prospect that, before long, European enterprize and settlement will be welcomed by those great tribes; and that they will gladly avail themselves of the advantages which roads, railways, and telegraphs will bring to their magnificent territory, by which its value, and consequently the wealth and happiness of that portion of the Native race so long estranged from us, must be largely increased.

In consequence of the disposition thus recently manifested on the part of these Natives, you will be asked to consider the question of extending the North Island Trunk Railway from Auckland to Taranaki. It is probable that blocks of land of great value will be acquired upon reasonable terms along the line. While negotiations with these tribes have been progressing, the interests of those that have long been loyal to us have not been neglected, and many of the principal Native settlements have, during the recess, been visited by the Premier or the Native Minister. Several long-pending questions, out of which more or less ill-feeling has arisen, have been finally and satisfactorily settled. The question of the survey and settle-

ment of the West Coast of this Island has been firmly taken in hand. One large block has been surveyed, and will shortly be opened for sale; and the immediate survey of the Waimate Plains has been ordered. Whilst the utmost consideration for the former Native owners will be shown in dealing with these lands, a large extent of valuable country will be available for sale and settlement.

My Advisers have found the position of the Government Native land purchases to be very unsatisfactory; and, but for the legislation of last Session, which enabled the Government temporarily to protect lands under negotiation by the Crown, many blocks upon which large sums of public money have been spent would have passed into the hands of private speculators. This is a question with which you will be called upon to deal; and information sufficient, it is hoped, to enable you to conserve the interests of the colony in this respect, will be afforded you.

Measures for simplifying the procedure in investigations of title to Native lands, as well as their alienation, will be submitted to you. The principles of those measures have been discussed with many sections of the Native people; and it is believed that the effect of them will be to place upon an equal footing all the Queen's subjects who may desire to purchase Native lands.

The threatening aspect of European affairs caused the Imperial Government to assemble in London a committee of scientific officers to consider the question of colonial harbour defence. Those officers made recommendations for the defence of the chief harbours of New Zealand, and the substance of those recommendations was telegraphed to me by the Secretary of State, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the colony would carry them out. On the advice of my Ministers, I have replied that New Zealand accepts the duty; and the necessary armament will shortly arrive in the colony. Papers on this subject will be submitted to you.

Measures have been prepared, and will be brought before you, dealing with Electoral Reform, which, it is hoped, will tend to place the franchise, and the method of electing members of the House of Representatives, upon a satisfactory basis.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The Estimates which will be laid before you have been prepared so as to promote economy and effective administration in the several departments.

You will find that there is a large increase of revenue, which indicates the prosperity of the Colony; and its progress is rendered more certain by a marked extension of the export trade.

The successful issue of the Loan authorized last Session is a further proof of the opinion entertained in other countries of the stability of our financial position, and of the general prosperity and peace which prevail in New Zealand.

Authority has been given to the Agents under the Consolidated Stock Act, to convert New Zealand securities of a miscellaneous character into long-dated debentures bearing a uniform rate of interest.

Measures will be introduced to place the taxation of the colony on a more equitable basis, apportioning the public burdens according to the capacity to bear them; and the Tariff will be submitted to revision, tending to relieve commerce of some restrictions which retard its growth.

HONORABLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The Government have found that, in order to carry out any real administrative reform, there must be an amalgamation of offices, as well as a simplification in their administration. This has been specially felt in the Department of Justice. To effect a saving of departmental expenditure, and at the same time to increase the efficiency of the administration of justice, a Bill extending the jurisdiction of the inferior Courts has been prepared, and will soon be laid before you. My Ministers have endeavoured by this Bill to simplify the proceedings in the local Courts. Steps have also been taken to obtain a simplification of the Supreme Court procedure; and the Government hope that the benefits obtained in other countries from amending the procedure of the higher Courts of Judicature will be secured for this colony.

A Report will be laid before you showing the effect, so far, of the Education Act passed last session. The time that has elapsed since its passing has been too short to allow a fair estimate of its working to be arrived at, but the Government do not believe that any material amendments are at present expedient. The question of higher education deserves most careful consideration; but, as a preliminary thereto, it is necessary that the mode of working and the effects of existing institutions should be ascertained. It is intended, therefore, to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the operations of the New Zealand University, and its relations to the secondary schools of the colony. The report of this Commission will, if legislation be necessary, enable Parliament to deal effectively with the subject next session.

Arrangements have been entered into with the Government of New South Wales for modifications in the San Francisco Mail Service contract, and as to coming within the terms of the Postal Union. In conjunction with New South Wales, the Government have also negotiated with Colonel Glover, the representative of the Eastern Extension Australasia and China Telegraph Company, for a duplication of the cable from Port Darwin to London, and for a reduction of the tariff on the New Zealand cable. The present state of these negotiations will be shown by papers that will be laid before you.

The gold fields of the colony are still prosperous, and there can be no doubt that there are yet numerous and extensive auriferous deposits that only require population and enterprise for their development.

You will, I have no doubt, join with me in the hope that the proposal to establish direct steam communication between New Zealand and the United Kingdom may prove successful.

The results of the gradual extension of the railway system have been such as to justify the colony in undertaking its large indebtedness for the prosecution of those public works. It is gratifying to find that the District Railways Act of last session is being taken advantage of, and that the faith of the people of New Zealand in railway extension is being shown by many important lines in different parts of the colony being undertaken by private and local enterprise. This spirit of self-reliance, my Ministers think, should be fostered; and you will be asked to make some slight amendments, with the view of offering facilities which experience has shown to be desirable.

During the recess various changes have been introduced into the management of the Public Works and Railways Department—changes which I venture to hope may prove beneficial to the public service.

I commend to your serious consideration the various measures and subjects that may be brought before you for your advice and action; and I pray that the Spirit of Divine Wisdom may so order your deliberations, that peace and happiness may be promoted throughout the length and breadth of the colony.

