



THE
NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE
 EXTRAORDINARY.

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WELLINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1887.

THE First Session of the Tenth 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.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

I have great pleasure in meeting you in Parliament assembled.

It affords me much gratification to be able to announce to you that the ceremonies on the occasion of the fiftieth year of Her Most Gracious Majesty's reign were celebrated with a splendour unsurpassed in the annals of our country, and evoked the most cordial feelings of loyalty, enthusiasm, and public reverence and respect in all parts of Her Majesty's dominions.

The Imperial Conference held in London to discuss subjects relating to the prosperity, advancement, and protection of all interests affecting Her Majesty's colonial possessions concluded its sittings on the 9th May last. The results of its deliberations are regarded by the Imperial Authorities and by the Colonial Representatives as being of a satisfactory nature. The most important point of agreement is the determination to provide for the more efficient defence of Her Majesty's distant possessions against external attack. Papers relating to the subject will be laid before you.

In its results the general election just concluded points to a firm resolve on the part of the people of New Zealand to ensure effective, and substantial retrenchment in the cost of the public service. My Ministers feel that it is their first duty, and it is their intention, to propose to Parliament large reductions in the public expenditure of the colony. These reductions will be made in the manner least calculated to produce inconvenience and hardship.

To the subject of land administration my Ministers attach great importance. I am assured that they will make unceasing efforts to secure the location of a prosperous class of settlers upon the lands of the colony. It has been well said that New Zealand stands unrivalled among British possessions as a field for settle-

ment, and the aim of all, of whatever political creed, should be to promote the establishment of a numerous and prosperous agricultural community, whose industry cannot fail to add to the material progress of the colony.

As a first step, and as soon as practicable, proposals will be submitted to you to render the land system less complicated, and to make the lands of the colony more easy of acquirement in small holdings, and upon such tenure as selectors may prefer.

My Ministers also recognise the difficulties under which some small holders of land from the Crown are struggling, and they will consider what can be done to afford them reasonable relief.

In regard to our railways, it is the opinion of many competent to judge that the system under which the railways are worked is unsatisfactory, and it is believed that judicious changes can be made whereby public convenience may be more consulted and a better revenue obtained.

My Ministers recognise that alterations in the tariff are required to remove the anomalies which have been brought into existence by the altered condition of things. They were anxious to have laid before you proposals for a readjustment of duties, but, until you give your opinion upon their measures for effecting retrenchment in the public service, they feel that alterations of a thorough and satisfactory nature cannot be made. They will, however, during the coming recess give the matter their careful consideration, and will bring before you measures dealing with this important subject. As the recess will necessarily be a short one, the time lost will, in the opinion of my Ministers, be more than compensated for by the subject being dealt with deliberately and thoroughly.

My Ministers have under consideration the necessity of amending the laws relating to Native lands, and it will probably be necessary during the present session to pass some measure of a temporary character to allay the feeling of dissatisfaction which at present exists. After ascertaining during the recess the views and wishes of the Native people, and after weighing the subject carefully in all its bearings, comprehensive measures will be submitted for your consideration.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The estimates of revenue and expenditure will show in detail the reductions to which I have already referred. I regret to say that at the present time our principal source of revenue—the Customs—shows no signs of improvement; but my Advisers trust that, by limiting the public expenditure, it will be possible to avoid placing further burdens upon the people.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

This the second session of the year being necessarily held at an inconvenient period, and under extraordinary circumstances, it is proposed to submit for your consideration only such measures as may be urgently required.

Negotiations relative to the construction of the Midland Railway are still pending, and you will be required to express your opinion upon certain important points which yet remain to be settled. Consistently with their duty to the colony, my Ministers will use every effort to enable Parliament to arrive at a fair and reasonable solution of existing difficulties in connection with this important work.

My Government view with satisfaction the strong feeling manifested by the people of the colony generally in favour of our educational system; and desire to convey an assurance that, whilst its expense will be curtailed wherever practicable, no step will be taken by them which would have the effect of impairing its efficiency.

I commend to your attention the important questions that will be brought before you, and I hope that, under the blessing of God, your labours may prove of great service to the colony.