



THE  
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**T**HE Second Session of the Tenth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following

SPEECH.

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

It affords me much pleasure to again meet you in Parliament assembled.

Although I am not able to congratulate you upon any decided change in the condition of the great industries of New Zealand, or of the trade of the country, it is satisfactory to know that signs of improvement are not wanting. While some classes of produce are unfortunately low in price, the increase which has taken place in the value of wool must beneficially affect the people.

There are also encouraging indications of a revival in the mining industry throughout the colony. Considerable sums of money have been lately invested in the acquisition and development of mining properties, which can only be rendered profitable by a large expenditure of capital. It is believed that, through the introduction of machinery suited to the treatment of the refractory ores found on our goldfields, large tracts of country now lying useless will be profitably worked. Through the use of new appliances large portions of the sea-beaches of New Zealand will be rendered available for working, and thus an almost limitless source of wealth will be opened up.

During the recess my Advisers earnestly endeavoured to give effect to the will of the country by reducing the public expenditure. The task imposed upon them involved much anxious consideration. They have sought to make every reduction compatible with maintaining the efficiency of the public service.

The question of the classification of the Civil Service of the colony is intimately connected with that of retrenchment. My Government believed that it was necessary, in order to put the service permanently upon a proper footing, that the subject should be dealt with comprehensively. Notwithstanding the difficulties which have grown up through the absence in the past of any uniform plan in its different branches; a Bill has been prepared dealing with the Civil Service in a manner

which it is believed will meet with your approval. It is hoped that the classification which it is proposed to effect under it, while rendering economy more easy of attainment, will act beneficially upon the service itself.

My Ministers wish to place upon record their appreciation of the manner in which the Civil servants as a body have aided in carrying out changes necessary to effect economy. They have readily furnished information and advice, and have displayed a willingness to fall in with an altered system, although it, in many instances, entailed reduced remuneration and increased duties. The task imposed upon the Government has thus been much facilitated.

You will be gratified to learn that the building of the war-vessels to be supplied under the provisions of "The Australasian Naval Defence Act, 1887," is being carried on by the Imperial Government with all possible expedition. The time is therefore not far distant when we may expect to see in Australasian waters a naval force which, acting in concert with our land defences, will insure the safety in times of war of this part of the Empire, and protect its trade.

The Harbour Defence Works, which form a necessary part of any scheme for the protection of the colony against external danger, have been so far completed as to render it unnecessary to maintain the past heavy expenditure. My Ministers have, therefore, been able to effect large reductions in the annual cost of the Defence Department. They believe that, notwithstanding such reductions, the colony is now fairly well prepared for any emergency which may arise.

The thanks of the country are due to Major-General Schaw for the very valuable assistance and advice which have been given by him in connection with the completion of these works and the reorganization of the forces of the colony. His experience, the benefit of which was freely given to my Government, has proved of great advantage.

The anticipations of my Advisers as to the beneficial effects of the Land Act of last session have so far been verified by events, and relief has been afforded to many hard-working holders through the operation of its clauses. Considering the time which has elapsed since this Act came into force, the number of desirable settlers who have been placed upon the waste lands by means of its operation is very satisfactory. Full information will be afforded you with regard to this and other matters connected with the settlement of Crown lands.

My Ministers are pleased to be able to state that the economies rendered necessary by the reduced vote for Education have been carried out without impairing the system. They regard its maintenance in a vigorous condition as essential to the public well-being. Papers on this subject will be laid before you.

I have much pleasure in informing you that the attitude of the Maori race is marked by much good feeling toward the Government. It must be a matter of congratulation to both races that Tawhiao should at last have seen that it was to the interests of himself and his people that the two races should be united under one Government. The action taken by them may be regarded as the final abandonment on the part of Natives of their wish to establish a separate authority for their own government.

My Ministers believe that the time has arrived when the whole question of dealing with Native lands should be treated upon a basis in accord with the advancing knowledge of the Native race. Bills will be submitted for your approval which have been prepared with due regard to this consideration.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The estimates of the revenue and expenditure for the current year will be brought before you at an early date, when I have no doubt they will receive your careful consideration.

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

The Chinese question is becoming one of serious difficulty, and my Advisers consider that, until some common ground of agreement is arrived at between the Imperial Government and the Government of the Chinese Empire, this colony must join with the other Australian Colonies in enacting measures of a restrictive character. A Bill dealing with the subject will be laid before you.

The rabbit pest, which has long been a matter of the gravest importance to this colony, has received careful attention. Although the means which have been in use have, I am happy to state, proved sufficient to keep it in check, they are not calculated to completely remove this pest. My Advisers have therefore taken steps to have the question of a thorough remedy considered by competent gentlemen in the colony, and they have joined with the other colonies in causing the subject to be investigated in Australia. In furtherance of this object they deputed a New Zealand settler of experience and high scientific attainments to attend the experiments which were arranged to be made by the representatives of M. Pasteur and others. The results of these experiments and the report of the New Zealand representative will be placed before you as soon as possible.

Time has not permitted the carrying-out of the reforms contemplated by "The Government Railways Act, 1887." Applications have been invited from those desirous of filling the office of Chief Commissioner, but a selection has not yet been made. Until this has been done it is impossible to have the Act put in force.

In accordance with the undertaking given by my Ministers during the last session of Parliament, alterations in the tariff will be submitted for your consideration. By a readjustment of duties it is hoped to remove certain anomalies which periodically appear in the tariff. One of the objects of this readjustment will be to afford further financial aid in carrying on the departments of Government, while due regard will also be paid to the effect which the alterations will have upon the trade and manufactures of the colony.

The question of creating a means of adjusting from time to time the rents payable by deferred-payment settlers, and by tenants of the Crown, and of municipal and other public bodies has received careful attention. A Bill dealing with this subject will be laid before you.

The Midland Railway contract, after much deliberation, has been prepared upon the lines decided by Parliament, and now awaits confirmation by the company in England.

The attention of my Government has been directed to questions relating to the establishment and preservation of Fisheries, upon which subject a consolidating and amending Bill, dealing with many important points, has been prepared.

Bills for the amendment and consolidation of the Electoral Laws, for the maintenance of discipline in the Naval and Military Forces, for remedying defects in the Municipal, Rating, and Land Transfer Acts, and for the repeal of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, will be submitted to you. These and the other important measures to be laid before Parliament I commend to your careful consideration.

I earnestly hope that, with the blessing of God, you may be enabled to discharge your arduous duties with advantage to the interests of the colony.

