



THE
NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE
 EXTRAORDINARY.

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THE Third Session of the Thirteenth 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,—

It affords me great pleasure again to meet you, and to be able to congratulate you upon the steady progress, continued prosperity, and general contentment of all classes of the community.

Shortly after my assumption of office I met you for the first time, and expressed my gratification with what I had seen since my arrival in the colony. Conceiving it to be my duty to make myself fully acquainted with the people and the resources of the colony, I have now visited the principal centres and have journeyed through many parts of both Islands, and everywhere loyalty to the Throne and devotion and attachment to our Most Gracious Sovereign have been expressed, and a welcome to me as her representative has been cordially tendered. The experience gained by my journeys has fully confirmed the favourable impressions first formed, and there can be no doubt that, with its productive soil, splendid scenery, extensive mineral deposits; and rising manufactures, and with the industry and enterprise of its inhabitants, this fair colony has a bright future before it.

In response to your invitation to their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York that they should visit New Zealand, Her Most Gracious Majesty has commanded me to express her high appreciation of the loyal sentiments actuated by which my Ministers and the Houses of Parliament have requested a visit from her grandchildren, and to express her deep regret that circumstances preclude the possibility of the invitation being accepted. The despatch will in due course be laid before you.

In consequence of most pressing invitations, I have visited several Maori settlements, and from the chiefs and their people have received profound and sincere assurances of their loyalty to the Throne, and of their affection and devotion to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and a hearty welcome to myself, personally, as Her Majesty's representative.

At Rawene and Waima a number of misguided Natives, labouring under a supposed grievance respecting the payment of the dog-tax, lately armed themselves, and threatened open resistance to the law. Mr. Hone Heke, M.H.R., and many other Native chiefs were much concerned at their ill-advised action, and urged them to make voluntary surrender to the law. Adequate, prompt, and decisive measures were taken by my Ministers, and the principal wrong-doers surrendered, and were arrested.

I am pleased to say that, with the exception of the local trouble at Waima, the most cordial and friendly relations between the two races prevail.

The Jubilee of Otago marked a pleasing epoch in the history of the colony, and the enthusiasm and patriotism shown by the vast concourse of people assembled in Dunedin expressed a warm and hearty feeling towards those in Otago who had performed the good work of colonisation. In connection with the Jubilee an industrial exhibition was held, and the display of manufactures, minerals, natural products, and works of art was of great interest and value as an evidence of the wonderful progress that had been made in fifty years.

I am glad to be able to state, with respect to the Defence Forces and harbour defences, that a Defence Committee presided over by the Commander of the Forces has been set up, and as a result of their labours my Ministers hope to be in a position shortly to submit a scheme of defence for the colony to the Imperial Colonial Defence Committee. The disturbed condition of international relations throughout the world has caused my Advisers to deem it expedient to increase the number of Volunteer corps, and the supply of small-arms of modern type, munitions of war, and armaments. The response to the demand for an increased number of Volunteers has been beyond all praise. In connection with the Volunteer movement, proposals for increasing the number of cadet corps in connection with the primary schools, under improved conditions, are under consideration.

With respect to the Cook Islands, towards the close of last year I received communications from the British Resident, the Arikis, and a section of the settlers intimating that difficulties had arisen among them, and that a deadlock existed between the Resident, the Federal Government, and the Legislature. Mr. Moss desired that an inquiry should be held. Sir James Prendergast, the Chief Justice, at great personal inconvenience, proceeded to the islands, held an inquiry, and reported upon the situation. From the report it will be seen that the condition of affairs is unsatisfactory, and that the Resident has lost the confidence of the natives. Under the circumstances, while it is fully recognised that Mr. Moss has, in his position as Resident, rendered valuable services, his retirement is deemed advisable, and it will be necessary to appoint a successor. The report of the Chief Justice will be laid before you.

The Victoria College Council has been elected, and the initiatory steps have been taken to open the College and promote higher education in the central parts of the colony. A suitable site for the College building is required, and assistance in this direction is necessary. Legislation and financial assistance in the interests of technical education is most desirable, and this subject is highly deserving of your attention.

During the year, and since I last met you, considerable areas of land have been purchased in different parts of the colony under the Land for Settlements Act, notably the Starborough Estate in the Provincial District of Marlborough. Negotiations for the purchase of large estates in several parts of the North and Middle Islands are proceeding satisfactorily; and the success that has attended the close and successful settlement of the people upon the land by such means encourages my Advisers to believe that the necessary funds provided last year for acquiring additional lands were a prudent provision, and will confer lasting benefits upon the people of the colony.

The fullest information will be placed before you respecting the removal of a portion of the Parliament Building and the partial erection of a new building. Within the limited time available every effort has been put forth to make satisfactory provision and accommodation, so as to enable the work of the session to be carried on with as little inconvenience as possible.

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

Estimates showing the receipts and expenditure have been prepared ; and with respect to the expenditure proposed in connection with the public service, fair economy, consistent with efficiency and the growing requirements of the colony, has been observed. As compared with last year's returns there is an increase from railways, Customs, and Excise, affording evidence of an increase in the spending-power of the people.

The construction of railways and other public works has proceeded in accordance with requirements. It is with great difficulty that the strain caused by the abnormal increase in the traffic on our railways has been fairly met, and the excess of receipts over expenditure is the highest obtained for the last fourteen years. The ever-increasing demand for land, and the necessity for more roads to open up lands for settlement, and to give access to lands already settled, still continue to be urgent, and you will be asked to approve the necessary expenditure to meet these all-important requirements.

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

My Advisers have great confidence that the colony has every reason to expect increasing and more equally diffused happiness and wealth, and a continuance of industrial and commercial activity, from a policy which provides for the development of the natural resources of the colony ; the promotion of settlement by opening up the waste lands and by acquiring large private estates ; the construction of roads by means of enlarged powers to local bodies ; the completion within a reasonable time of such of our railways as will open up the country, multiply its productiveness, and facilitate access to our beautiful scenery ; the conservation of water for irrigation and gold-mining purposes ; and the encouragement of local industries, and the advancement of the interests of those engaged in them.

You will again be asked to devote your attention to that most complicated social problem—the provision, under certain conditions, of a pension for the deserving among our aged colonists. A Bill to make such provision will be submitted for your earnest and careful attention.

A Bill will be submitted to you with the object of putting the municipal franchise on a more equitable basis, and giving the residents in the boroughs a voice in the management of affairs most vital to their welfare. Other Bills for consolidating and amending local government, and for the removal of restrictions which prevent a fair decision being obtained in respect to loans to local bodies, will also be placed before Parliament.

The inspection of meat for home consumption and export, and also the inspection of stock, are matters deserving your attention ; and where it is found necessary to destroy cattle, my Advisers deem it equitable that the State should to some extent compensate the owners thereof. It is also considered advisable that dairies should be inspected ; that dairy produce should be graded ; and that financial assistance, duly safeguarded, should be rendered to the dairy industry. The export of products under Government supervision and inspection has, where tried, proved beneficial. Bills treating of these matters will be submitted.

You will also be invited to consider a Bill to enable the people to pronounce at the ballot-box by vote their decision upon resolutions of both Houses, and upon rejected Bills, thus preventing deadlocks such as have occurred in the past, and have delayed the progress of important reforms.

Important amendments of the law affecting Native lands and the method of dealing with them will be brought under your notice.

Bills dealing with the protection of young persons, accident insurance, compensation to workmen, master and apprentice, the hours of labour, wages protection, industrial conciliation and arbitration, payment of jurors, the jury system, technical education, irrigation, the gum industry, and other important matters, will also be laid before you.

A reform of the constitution of the Legislative Council is deemed necessary in view of an obvious existing anomaly. To effect this you will be asked to legislate so as to place all the members on an equal footing by conditionally abolishing the life-tenure. An amendment of the law to prevent minorities returning members to Parliament is considered necessary, and a Bill remedying a defect in our electoral system in this respect will demand your earnest attention.

Complaints have been made, and with some reason, that the Stamp Act presses unduly on mining companies whose articles of association contemplate other operations than those directly involved in mining, inasmuch as, even while carrying on mining operations only, they are called upon to pay stamp duties. You will be asked to amend the law in the direction of giving the relief sought.

At the Conference held last year between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Colonial Premiers it was understood that, for reasons there given, the question of preferential duties on goods manufactured in the Mother-country would be brought by the respective Premiers before their colleagues. This has been done, and my Ministers are of the opinion that an opportunity should be given to Parliament to discuss this important question, believing that, if the finances of the colony permit it, an alteration in the Customs tariff might be made in this direction, with advantage to the Mother-country and to this colony.

The volume of exports has been maintained, and commercial prospects are cheering. There has been a fair increase in the imports, and investments generally are satisfactory. The drought in some parts of the Middle Island diminished to some extent the yield of grain, but the prices obtained have partially compensated for this.

With confidence I commend to your earnest attention the matters that may be brought under your consideration. You may ever rely upon my co-operation and assistance; and I trust that, with the blessing of Almighty God, your labours may prove beneficial to the country, and promote the well-being, comfort, and happiness of its inhabitants.