



THE

NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE

EXTRAORDINARY.

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THE First Session of the Fifteenth 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,—

When I last addressed you the intelligence of His Majesty's illness cast a gloom over our proceedings. Thanks to Almighty God, His Majesty's health has been restored, and the Coronation ceremonies took place on the 9th August last, amid the general and enthusiastic rejoicing of his loyal and devoted subjects throughout our vast Empire.

When delivering my first Speech on the opening of Parliament I expressed the assurance that with careful administration and reasonable opportunities this colony had a great future before it; that I would visit the different parts of the colony, and obtain a personal knowledge of the richness of the soil, note the industrial and commercial enterprises, and the wealth and extent of the mineral deposits.

During my stay with you I have visited almost each and every part of this great and beautiful colony, and the favourable impressions first formed have been fully confirmed. I am proud to say that the prosperity I so much admired on my arrival on your hospitable shores has continued, and to-day I feel assured that the Colony of New Zealand is one of the most flourishing within the great British Empire.

On the 10th day of August next my original term of office expires. My Advisers, however, expressed the desire that I should remain for a longer period; and, believing it to be consonant with the general wish, I consented, and His Gracious Majesty prolonged my term of office.

The people of New Zealand have extended to me that loyal friendship that was to be expected from a colony so deeply imbued with devotion to their Sovereign and attachment to their Empire, and I have everywhere met with the warmest and most enthusiastic welcome in my travels throughout their boundaries.

Ere another session opens I shall be far away, and shall have severed my connection with your colony. You may, however, rest assured that every effort will be exerted by me to promote the welfare of a country to which I have become so deeply attached, to draw attention to New Zealand's position and progress, and to explain, to the best of my ability, the causes which have led in so marked a degree to the general prosperity and happiness undoubtedly now existing within these shores.

New Zealand, together with other oversea dominions within the Empire, was invited to be represented at the Coronation ceremonies and Colonial Conference, and in my principal Adviser, the Right Hon. Mr. Seddon, New Zealand was fittingly represented. The resolutions passed at the Conference and the recommendations made are far-reaching in effect; they have attracted considerable attention, and will in due course be submitted to you.

It will be known to honourable members that the coastwise laws of other nations have proved inimical to the commerce and shipping of this colony, and to the trade of the United Kingdom. My Advisers are of opinion that the time should not be far distant when our laws should be brought into line in this respect with those nations whose laws are prejudicial to New Zealand and the Mother-country.

The Empire-girdling British-owned Pacific cable is completed, and the almost lightning-like rapidity with which messages have been despatched and received establishes its efficacy. With proper energy and due regard paid to obtaining business on the part of the Board the estimated revenue should be realised. The proposal of the Australian Commonwealth Government to grant by agreement concessions favourable to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company my Ministers consider regrettable, and fear the result will prove inimical financially to the Pacific cable.

The Judicial Committee of the English Privy Council, in delivering judgment in the Porirua Trust case, Wallis and others *versus* the Solicitor-General, cast aspersions on the New Zealand Courts, to which a formal protest and complete refutation was made by the Chief Justice and other Judges. It is sincerely hoped, in the interests of justice and the highest Courts of the Empire, that the unmerited and uncalled-for departure of the Judicial Committee may never occur again. My Ministers are of the opinion that amendment in the constitution of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council is imperative; and that unless a satisfactory change is made confidence in that great central tribunal of the Empire will within the colonies be shaken.

I am pleased to inform you that the greatest good feeling exists with the Maori race; that Mahuta Tawhiao Potatau te Whero Whero has been called to the Legislative Council and appointed a member of the Executive Council. The estrangement of several of the Maori tribes which has too long existed is now closed, and Mahuta's influence will be of value to the colony, especially in the early settlement of the lands of the Rohe Potae. The Maori Lands and Sanitary Councils are working satisfactorily, and evidence is daily being given that the Maoris have a complete knowledge of what is necessary to educate, improve, and preserve their race.

Whilst being pleased with the great and increased productiveness of the colony, which close settlement has materially assisted, my Advisers consider that settlement can be largely augmented, provided adequate means are available to road Crown lands: this class of road-construction to be paramount, seeing that the expenditure on such roads is out of borrowed money.

I have to congratulate you upon the very satisfactory development of the agricultural and pastoral industries and on the land-settlement system generally.

Several defects in the Land for Settlements Act require to be rectified. The law providing for the acquiring of land for workmen's homes is practically a dead letter, and requires amendment.

The large increase and the amount of capital invested, as well as the increased number of persons employed, in manufacturing pursuits warrant my saying that satisfactory progress has been made, and the outlook is very cheering. The largely increased output of gold and coal also proves that the mining industry is in a flourishing condition.

The excess of arrivals over departures gave the colony a large increase in population last year. The low birth-rate in some urban parts of the colony is, however, a matter for grave concern. A largely increased population is needed, and my Ministers are of opinion that if immigrants of the farming class of the United Kingdom were to come here, instead of swelling the population of alien countries, it would be to their advantage, to the benefit of the colony, and add stability to our Empire.

The Honourable William Campbell Walker, C.M.G., has, after nearly seven years' faithful service, resigned the portfolio of Education and his position as a member of the Executive Council, and the Honourable Albert Pitt has been appointed Attorney-General and a member of the Executive Council.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The estimates have been carefully considered, and, consistent with providing for an efficient service, strict regard for economy has been observed. With an increased population, extension of departments, and development of resources there must necessarily be an expanding cost. The estimated increase in the expenditure is proportionate to the estimated revenue.

The owners of large areas of land resident outside the colony are not taxed through the Customs, and, seeing the aggregation of large estates continues, my Ministers conclude there will not be any serious objection to increasing the present absentee-tax. The graduation of the land-tax, as now assessed under the existing law, also requires adjustment to make the same fair in its incidence.

You will be invited to enter into a new agreement under which the New Zealand and Australian Squadron is to be strengthened, and under which New Zealand officers and men are to be trained under favourable conditions.

To enable a reasonable preference to be given in favour of certain goods produced in the Mother-country, important fiscal changes are necessary: how and in what manner it will be for you to consider and determine. Paying due regard to our own industries, the lines adopted by Canada would best help British manufacturers without causing undue irritation to other nations.

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

During the recent elections several defects were found in our electoral system, and my Advisers are of the opinion that it would be consonant with democratic principle if the now existing anomaly was removed and single electorates alone obtained.

The wisdom of assisting by way of subsidy to steamers the placing of our produce in South Africa has been clearly demonstrated by the stupendous growth of trade with that country. Stock from the Argentine being prohibited owing to disease, further extension and development of trade may reasonably be expected, and for some years to come South Africa will be a good market for the staple products of New Zealand. Further, my Ministers consider it would be to the advantage of the colony should the sale of New Zealand meat be extended to the manufacturing centres of the United Kingdom, and that assistance to this end should be rendered. 'Tis well the British-bred should be British-fed.

Satisfactory progress in the placing of the people on the waste lands of the Crown has been made during the year. A large area of land is now open for selection. In respect to bush lands, proposals will be submitted allowing tenants to be rent-free for a time, and other conditions which, owing to want of proper communications, are now restrictive will be relaxed, and special efforts are being made to settle co-operative men and returned troopers on the land.

During the year a large area of land has been acquired under the Land for Settlements Act; the demand is unabated, and should be met. The sons of farmers in one part of the colony should not be compelled to leave their homes to settle elsewhere while large estates exist in the vicinity of their parents' homesteads.

The Defence Forces are in a much-improved condition, the number is maintained, and fair discipline observed. The cadet movement is very popular, and the training of our youth in the public schools and ordinary cadet corps will materially assist the Volunteer movement. The ordinary Defence charges will be less than last year, and our liabilities and permanent cost entailed by the sacrifice made in South Africa is now almost ascertainable. As the law exists, officers and troopers whose health was impaired, and who were permanently injured otherwise than in action, can receive neither pensions nor gratuities. Proposals to remedy this defect in the law will be submitted.

My Ministers are of the opinion that a State Fire Insurance Department could with advantage to the colony be established, and that, by enabling those insuring to participate in the profits, good business would ensue.

Legislation assigning a proper position to fire brigades, and insuring them the revenue necessary to carry on their good work, my Advisers deem necessary.

The existence of trusts and combines is inimical to the producer, for such organizations limit the sale to the one buyer, and this tends to keep below fair market value the price of products. The consumer is injuriously affected by the selling-price being raised, the object for which these combines are formed—namely, to purchase cheaply and to sell at extortionate prices—is attained, and the trusts are enabled to obtain large profits for shareholders. My Ministers deem it in the best interests of the colony that in respect to the housing, food, and clothing of the people, legislation should be passed insuring fair competition.

The guarantee given by the colony to the Bank of New Zealand expires by effluxion of time next year, and it will be necessary for legislation respecting this question to be passed this session. Proposals in respect to this and the issue of bank-notes will be submitted.

The hospitals for mental diseases are, in the opinion of my Ministers, unfitted for children or the aged and infirm. The condition of things now existing in this respect is worthy of investigation.

The erection of the industrial-school building at Levin will soon be finished; and complete classification of the children in the Government industrial schools is advisable. To attain that end, my Advisers propose to obtain additional land and erect the necessary buildings; and a well-equipped training-ship for boys will also help to solve a difficult problem.

Measures providing for the direct reference to the people of issues on large questions; for dealing with shops and offices, compensation for accidents, arbitration and conciliation, and for improving the present system of land-valuation; for the extension of the rating on unimproved value of land; for improving the position of Civil servants and school-teachers; and for amending the law and system of weights and measures—these, with others, will be submitted in due course.

Next year there is to be a great exposition at St. Louis, and New Zealand has been cordially invited by the United States to exhibit its products thereat. My Ministers consider that good would result therefrom; and, further, that an exhibition at no distant date, on an extensive scale, in New Zealand, would be to the advantage of agriculture, commerce, and the industries of the colony.

I fervently trust you may strenuously perform your arduous duties, so that, with the blessing of God Almighty, the result may be to the advantage of New Zealand, and promote the happiness and well-being of its people.