



THE  
**NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE**  
 EXTRAORDINARY.

Published by Authority.

---

WELLINGTON, TUESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1906.

---

THE Second Session of the Sixteenth 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, and to feel that you must rejoice with me at the prosperity which continues to bless this colony as a whole. The outlook was never brighter or more encouraging. Production has increased, prices are profitable, and the condition of our trade, industries, and finance reflects the prevailing spirit of enterprise and confidence. These happy circumstances notwithstanding, sorrow is still deeply felt at the occurrence that led to the various political changes which have taken place.

In the recent short recess the Hon. Sir Joseph George Ward was asked, and at my request undertook, to form a Ministry, and it is now in office.

It is gratifying to note that our population has grown with our prosperity, and that the last census shows a marked increase both in the white and Maori races of these Islands.

The late Right Hon. R. J. Seddon visited the Australian Commonwealth in May last, and everywhere received a welcome that was at once worthy of his achievements and gratifying to this colony. He crowned his career of splendid service to New Zealand by arranging a provisional reciprocal treaty between this country and Australia. This treaty will be laid before you for consideration, and, if ratified, may form the first step to a closer commercial union with our nearest neighbouring kinsmen. It is unnecessary to emphasize the advantages accruing to both lands from a closer commercial relationship and freer exchange of products. Mr. Seddon also established New Zealand agencies in Sydney and Melbourne.

Following last year's session a Postal Conference was held at Rome. The Hon. Sir J. G. Ward represented the colony, and one of the important results secured by him was the granting to New Zealand of a separate

vote. He used his best endeavours to obtain universal penny postage, but was outvoted. He visited the Marconi works, and the knowledge he gained will, I am satisfied, be of benefit to the colony when considering the question of wireless telegraphy.

The news of the attempt on the life of their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain was received by the inhabitants of this colony with horror, and a message was sent expressing detestation at the dastardly outrage.

The terrible calamity which befel the City of San Francisco by earthquake and fire, appalling in its suddenness and awful in its magnitude, cast a gloom over the whole colony. Messages of sympathy and offers of assistance were sent to America, and the thanks of the President, the Government, and people of the United States have been received.

The Japanese famine and the distress caused by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius also evoked the sympathy of our people, and practical assistance has been rendered in both cases.

Owing to effluxion of time, the present Commandant, General Babington, will retire at the end of this year, and it is with much regret that the Government will then lose the services of this valuable officer, as he is unable to see his way to accept engagement for a further term. When considering the appointment of his successor the whole question of colonial defence will be reviewed and weighed by my Advisers.

I am pleased to inform you that the new flagship, H.M.S. "Powerful," with the Australasian Squadron, recently visited New Zealand. The Admiral and his officers were accorded a very hearty welcome, and, I feel sure, carried away with them kindly remembrances of their visit.

Honourable members will be pleased to hear that a training-ship for boys has been established. The work is at present in its preliminary stages, and my Advisers hope to submit a report to Parliament.

I am pleased to inform you that preparations for the opening of the International Exhibition, on the 1st of November next, are progressing satisfactorily. My Advisers are satisfied that it will be a success, and result in great benefit to the colony. The Imperial Government and the Commonwealth Government have signified their intention of being represented, and have lent some valuable pictures. Other exhibits have been received from all parts of the world. I feel confident that when the extent of the buildings, the number, variety, and importance of the exhibits, and the beauty and interest of the surroundings are disclosed it will be admitted that the New Zealand International Exhibition is worthy to take honourable place amongst similar undertakings of the Old World.

In accordance with the arrangement expressed in the Anglo-French agreement of 1904, a conference was held in London between representatives of the British and French Governments for the purpose of drawing up a scheme for the control of the New Hebrides, which, without altering the international *status quo*, would provide for the personal security of European residents and for the settlement of disputes. A copy of the draft convention adopted at that conference has been forwarded to Ministers, who have had the advantage of consulting the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth with respect to its terms. A communication expressing their views concerning the protection of the Natives and the preservation of Australasian interests in the group has been forwarded to the Colonial Office for consideration.

My Advisers, recognising that among the main industries of New Zealand are the pastoral and agricultural, deem it advisable to encourage the application of scientific methods to productive processes, in order that our farmers may successfully meet the increasing competition of other countries. Though much has been accomplished in this direction, much yet remains to be done.

The mining industry has received the careful attention of my Advisers, and honourable members will be gratified to know that the output of gold and coal for last year has exceeded anything for the past thirty years. You will be asked for authority to enable additional assistance to be given for the development of this important industry.

The land question arises periodically for discussion, and is still, as in all free countries, one of the greatest of unsettled problems. On the whole, our complex system of freehold and leasehold tenures, which has been slowly built up during many years by successive Governments, has worked well, and steadily furthered settlement. It would be imprudent to suddenly attempt any radical change in land laws which have been carefully devised to meet the needs of desirable settlers, whether in good or in bad times. Important amendments are necessary, and my Advisers hope to submit proposals which will bring our system nearer to the ideal of granting the fullest measure of security and stimulus to the farmer consistent with the paramount interests and duties of the State.

My Advisers believe that it will be to the interest of the Maori race, as well as to the great advantage of the whole colony, to provide that all Native lands should be beneficially occupied, either by the Maoris themselves or by Europeans. To accomplish this, it is recognised that Native-land titles must be more expeditiously dealt with and determined, the needs of the owners ascertained, and, where they have surplus and unoccupied lands, these must be acquired by the State for settlement. The creation of an efficient and distinct Department for Native Affairs will, it is believed, expedite the carrying-out of such a policy, and this has already been undertaken.

Proposals will be submitted to you for the improvement of the system of audit in the accounts of Government Departments and public bodies.

The colony is happily attracting an increased number of visitors, many of whom may be regarded as tourists. The value to our people from this source is very considerable, and reasonable efforts will be made to further increase the usefulness of the Tourist Department.

The Commission which was appointed to inquire into the Te Aute and other Native trusts has reported to me, and the report will be laid before you.

Another Commission has been set up, to investigate the causes of fires on board ships laden with our produce voyaging from this colony to England. The frequency of these fires, their danger to life and property, and the importance to producers of minimising all risks by sea carriage, make it imperative to ascertain the sources of these accidents so as to guard against their occurrence. This report will be presented to you in due course.

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

The estimates of expenditure for the current year have been framed with economy, having due regard to the magnitude of the area and interests under control.

The policy of active progress in connection with railways and the completion of lines under construction will be vigorously prosecuted.

You will be asked to make special provision to provide for the extension of roads and telephones to outpost settlements, to facilitate both business and medical-aid communication.

The question of making provision for old-age pensions, as well as that of a separate Endowment Fund for educational purposes and hospitals and charitable aid, is a subject of national importance, and proposals for setting aside suitable endowments for these purposes will be submitted to you.

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

The labour laws have been administered on the whole with satisfaction both to employers and employees. As, however, our industries have developed and multiplied, the number of industrial differences, breaches of award, and workers' compensation claims have necessarily increased, and delays have unavoidably arisen. The arbitration and conciliation system cannot operate satisfactorily unless disputes and claims are promptly and expeditiously decided. To insure this my Ministers are of opinion that the time has arrived for the appointment of a Judge of the Arbitration Court, who should

devote the whole of his time to this special work. Proposals will be laid before you to give effect to this object. Experience has also disclosed some defects and anomalies in our labour laws. Steps will be taken to have these remedied.

The buildings in course of erection at Petone and Auckland for workers' dwellings are being rapidly pushed forward, and others will follow in different parts of the colony as circumstances require.

Maternity homes have already been opened in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin, and one will shortly be opened in Christchurch. The scheme is working satisfactorily.

Effective economical administration of the Government cannot be secured unless the ablest and best qualified men are drawn to the ranks of the Civil Service. The attainment of this will be materially assisted by a classification of the service, and by provision being made for the old age of those who have as public officers served the colony faithfully and well.

The encouragement of thrift should be one of our cardinal aims. The operations of the Post-Office Savings-Bank and the Government Life Insurance Department have done much in this direction, but a more immediate stimulus to thrift is still desirable. My Advisers consider that the creation of an annuity system, accepting contributions from all classes and offering in return the largest annuities the State can afford to pay, deserves careful attention; and my Ministers hope to submit a complete scheme for carrying out this object.

The development of trade by opening up fresh markets for produce will be actively prosecuted, and the importance to producers of having cheap rates of freight, and freedom to avail themselves of them, will not be lost sight of.

My Advisers are of opinion that the San Francisco mail-service and the offer for the Vancouver mail-service should be renewed. Efforts will be made to enable New Zealand to enjoy, along with Australia, the Commonwealth Royal mail-service.

The question of extension of commerce to the East is occupying the attention of my Advisers, and proposals relating thereto will be submitted.

The promotion of trade with the Dominion of Canada and with the United States is receiving every consideration at the hands of the Government.

Another direction in which the efficiency of administration of public affairs can be improved is by simplifying our system of local government, and a measure dealing with this and kindred matters will be submitted to you in due course.

There are many anomalies in the Customs tariff which should be removed. It is expedient, however, to have a revision of the whole question of Customs duties rather than confine attention to small defects or particular items. The formation of treaties with other colonies, and the suggested arrangements with the Mother-country, require to be first considered before any such general revision is made. It is therefore felt better to postpone the review of our Customs duties until after the projected Conference of Prime Ministers, to be held in London next year. Moreover, this will enable the Minister in charge of Customs to personally investigate the general requirements of both producers and consumers in New Zealand. Meanwhile Ministers propose to ask Parliament to renew "The Agricultural Implement Manufacture, Importation, and Sale Act, 1905," which has expired.

Important matters affecting the Empire will be dealt with at a Conference of Prime Ministers to be held in London on the 15th of April next, at which it is intended this colony shall be represented.

A Conference dealing with shipping laws will also be held in London next year, and my Advisers have arranged for the colony to be represented.

I feel confident you will give the position of the colony and the matters I have brought under your notice, together with the measures that are to be submitted, your earnest and careful consideration, and I trust that your labours and decisions may, with God's blessing, result in materially promoting the prosperity, happiness, well-being, and lasting benefit of the people of New Zealand.