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THE Second Session of the Eighteenth 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 is with pleasure that I again meet you in Parliament assembled.

During the recess my late Advisers tendered to me their resignation, which I accepted, and a new Administration was formed.

I am glad to be able to congratulate you again upon the continued prosperity of the country; the outlook is promising, and a spirit of enterprise obtains everywhere.

During the last two months death has removed the Hon. James McGowan, a member of the Legislative Council, and a gentleman who had earned for himself the esteem and respect of both branches of the Legislature.

Within the last few days death has removed also Sir John Logan Campbell, an ex-Minister of the Crown, one of the earliest pioneers, and a most respected colonist, whose beneficent gifts to the City of Auckland will ever be remembered with deep gratitude.

It is fitting that I should mention the terrible calamity that occurred in the wreck of the White Star liner "Titanic," so appalling in its suddenness and so disastrous in its results. The profound sympathy of the Government and people of this Dominion was transmitted by me to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was duly acknowledged.

During the recess the Imperial Government suggested that the battle cruiser "New Zealand," instead of serving on the China Station, should be attached to the Home Fleet for service in the North Sea, where she could be matched against vessels of her size and quality, and that in her stead the armoured cruiser "Defence," sister to the "Minotaur," should be sent to the China Station. It was also stated that, if this were agreed to, arrangements

would be made that the "New Zealand" should visit the Dominion in October next to make a three months' stay (extending over Christmas) in New Zealand ports before taking up her duties with the Home Fleet. My Government intimated, in reply, that the "New Zealand" should be stationed where the Home Government was of opinion her services would be of the most value.

In regard to defence, you will be gratified to know that during the past year a large proportion of the youths liable for service under the training scheme have been posted to units of the Territorial Force.

Camps have been held throughout the Dominion for all units of the Territorial Army.

A very high percentage of attendance has been obtained, and the results of the training may be looked upon as most satisfactory. The conduct of the men has been exemplary; the aptitude for military work shown by them, and the spirit in which they have entered into it, have been most gratifying.

The training of the Senior Cadets, in face of considerable difficulties, has made good progress.

Arms and equipment have been issued to all units of the Force, and all ranks have been clothed in the new khaki uniform now universally adopted.

In the future persons not required for the Territorial Forces will be posted to the rifle clubs, which, it is hoped, will become an efficient second line of defence to the Territorial Army.

More rifles have been ordered for the use of rifle clubs, and the admission of these clubs to a fuller share in the defence of the country is hailed with satisfaction.

New field-guns to replace those of obsolete pattern hitherto in use in the Dominion are now on their way to the country, and their arrival may shortly be expected.

Great assistance has been rendered to the Defence Department by employers of labour, farmers, landowners, and all classes of the community in granting facilities to their employees to attend parades and camps, and by placing grounds, &c., at the disposal of the military authorities.

My Advisers deemed it necessary that inquiry should be made into the cost of living, also into matters affecting the education system, and the efficiency of the unclassified Departments of the Civil Service. For these purposes Commissions were appointed, and their reports will be duly placed before you.

The settlement of Crown lands and of estates acquired under the Land for Settlements Act has been steadily prosecuted, and shows satisfactory results. During the past year a greater area of land has been purchased than during the preceding twelve months, and every endeavour has been made to survey Crown lands and subdivide the areas still available for disposal where they are suitable for settlement.

The sustained demand for land is rapidly exhausting the balance of the Crown estate, so that a vigorous prosecution of the policy of acquiring privately owned and Native land for closer-settlement purposes is absolutely necessary, and will be given effect to.

Since the passing of the Native Land Act, 1909, considerable progress has been made in the settlement and opening up of Native land. Over a million acres have been alienated to the Crown and private persons since the coming into operation of the Act, and at the present time three-quarters of a million acres are under survey.

To obviate the delay that has been experienced in obtaining surveys of lands after they have been dealt with by the Native Land Court, it is intended to expedite such surveys by allowing the Maori Land Boards to arrange work by private contract.

The agricultural industry has never presented more encouraging prospects in the history of the Dominion. Our fertile lands are being more closely settled every year. The country in occupation is being cultivated to greater advantage, thereby increasing the individual and national wealth. Our farmers are passing the stage when they depended solely upon the natural fertility of the soil, and are coming to realize and appreciate more fully the importance of the application of scientific treatment to their lands.

During the past twelve months continued progress has marked the operations of the Department of Agriculture; the usefulness and scope of the experimental stations have been widened, and the number of demonstration plots greatly increased. Instruction for youths has been successfully initiated at our experimental farms, and students now have an opportunity of obtaining on easy terms practical and scientific training in agriculture. Herds of deep-milking strains have been introduced from abroad, supplementing the present valuable stock; and considerable scientific investigation has been carried out with respect to dairy-produce. Satisfactory progress has also been made with the bringing into use of what may be termed the refractory soils of the Dominion.

The year's production of agricultural commodities has been on an expanding scale. Efforts are being made to open up new markets for New Zealand produce, and to give better facilities for the transit and marketing of our productions. With the increasing diversity of rural activities the possibilities of the agricultural resources of the Dominion are steadily expanding.

My Advisers are devoting themselves to making country life more attractive, and, to this end, an extended parcels-post, increased facilities for telephonic communication, and a daily rural mail-delivery are being provided, thus bringing some of the advantages of city life within reach of the country dweller.

My Ministers have lately extended the scope of meteorological reports. It is recognized that this Department can be made of further value not only to the seafaring community, but also to those engaged upon the land.

My Advisers, recognizing the desirability of affording every facility for transit to workers living away from the congested areas of the larger cities, and residing in their homes under more healthy conditions, have arranged for more rapid and regular suburban railway services at low fares.

The question of making higher education more accessible to young men and women of moderate means has been under the consideration of my Advisers. By the extension of the system of bursaries, increased facilities have been provided by the Government for those who have proved themselves worthy to receive free university education.

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

The estimates have been framed with every regard to economy consistent with efficiency.

My Ministers have devoted considerable attention to the conditions of employment of members of the Railway service, and, as a result of careful investigation, proposals will be submitted in the direction of further improving the position of the First and Second Divisions of the service.

In view of the fact that it has been successfully demonstrated that our fruit can be landed in an excellent condition on the London market and that there is also a demand for it in South America, Parliament will be asked to vote a sum of money for the purpose of taking up and planting areas of gum-country, and subdividing such land into areas sufficient to provide homes and fruit farms for those desiring to follow that industry. These farms can, if desired, be disposed of under the occupation-with-right-of-purchase tenure.

My Advisers recognize that the time has arrived for some revision of the Customs tariff in order to reduce the duty on many articles in daily use.

Concessions will be made in railway-passenger fares for children. Up to five years of age they will travel free, and from five to fourteen years at quarter-rates. This, my Ministers feel sure, will be appreciated by heads of families. A revision of the railway freight rates with a view to reduction on certain articles is also contemplated.

Amendments will be introduced relating to the incidence of the land and income tax.

The system of graduating the land-tax will be altered so that the rate shall increase uniformly with the value of the estate. The initial rate will be reduced so that the lands of low value will receive an abatement. The system

of graduating the income-tax also will be amended on similar lines. To provide for the loss of revenue that would ensue from these amendments, the rate of graduated tax on the higher valued estates will be increased. There will also be a slight increase in the higher rates of income-tax.

The graduated land-tax will be adjusted and made more uniform, the rate being increased from the point of £30,000 unimproved value upwards. The main purpose of the new graduated land-tax will be to compel subdivision in order to ensure closer settlement of the lands.

Legislation will also be introduced to distinguish for taxation purposes between earned and unearned incomes, so that earned incomes shall bear a smaller burden of taxation than those which are unearned.

Increased exemption in land-tax will be allowed to widows and others in straitened circumstances. A concession will also be made to parents who have to support families.

The workers' dwellings scheme has met with a very large degree of popularity throughout the whole of the Dominion, and it is proposed to ask your authority for an increase in the sum that has hitherto been set apart for the purchase of land and the erection of buildings for workers' dwellings. It is the desire of my Advisers to afford every worker an opportunity of living in a home which he may call his own.

From practical experience it has been shown that land hitherto considered unproductive is admirably adapted for fruitgrowing. It is therefore proposed to set aside areas of what has hitherto been regarded as poor land for disposal on easy terms for fruitgrowing under co-operative associations in small holdings, and in order to enable these farms in the early stages to be profitably worked reasonable financial assistance will be afforded those taking up such areas.

My Advisers realize the great importance of local bodies being assisted to carry on the work of colonization and settlement, and, whilst recognizing that the fluctuations of the money-market may from time to time compel care in the raising of money for the purpose stated, are of the opinion that the Dominion should steadily pursue the policy of assisting the outer districts by advancing money to the local bodies for long periods and at low rates of interest, preference being given to loans that are intended to provide access to the backblocks. Assistance may also be given to other local authorities by the State guaranteeing their loans.

I am gratified to be able to announce that the financial position of the Dominion still continues satisfactory. Full information as to recent loan transactions will be placed before you upon receipt of details from the Home-country.

The need for better facilities of transport in many dairying and other districts is becoming abundantly apparent with the increased productiveness of those districts, the traffic being too heavy for the maintenance of adequate road facilities by local bodies. It is proposed to meet this difficulty by an energetic prosecution of light railway branch lines, which would serve as feeders to the main arterial lines and to ports. These would be a great aid to settlement, and a profitable investment for the State. A measure will be introduced to authorize and prosecute these lines of railway, and you will be asked for authority for this work.

My Advisers realize fully the great importance of roads and bridges as the means of permanently and effectively settling the outlying districts, and consider that the financial operations of the Dominion must be primarily directed to these ends. The development of our railway system to give access to lands at a distance from the seaboard must be steadily pursued, in order that our producers may not be unduly handicapped by heavy land freights.

Last year a number of highly respected Members of Parliament were compelled by advancing years and failing health to retire from public life. With a view to meeting cases such as these, a measure providing for establishing a retiring-allowance for men who have served a lengthy period in Parliament will be submitted to you.

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

Our manufacturers and merchants, as well as the workers of our country, are to be congratulated. There has been no lack of employment, while our industries, with few exceptions, have been in full operation, and traders are enjoying steady and assured business.

Facts have come before my Advisers which show that trusts and combines are operating to some extent in this Dominion, and, as the existing legislation may prove insufficient to suppress the evil, a Bill extending the present law will be introduced.

The Arbitration Act has in the past secured important and valuable results, and it is hoped the future will witness a continuance of its benefits. Measures will be introduced providing for certain amendments in the Act.

It is proposed this session to introduce measures providing for the better accommodation of flax-mill workers, shearers, and sawmill employees.

It is proposed to amend the Valuation of Land Act so as to provide a more equitable assessment of "Improvements" and "Unimproved value."

The question of a State-owned cable across the Atlantic continues to receive attention. Failing assistance from the Imperial Government, it is proposed to open up negotiations with the object of having a cable laid by the three remaining partner-countries in the Pacific cable.

The erection of wireless stations is making reasonable progress. My Advisers are fully alive to the importance of this method of communication as a means of saving life and property, and it is hoped that before long the seas surrounding the Dominion will be ranged to a considerable distance from the shore.

Negotiations have been commenced between the Commonwealth and New Zealand with a view to considering proposals in regard to reciprocal tariffs in connection with certain products and articles. This, it is believed, will lead to the advantage of both countries.

My Ministers have under consideration a scheme for the establishment of rest-homes, where persons who are suffering from temporary mental aberration may be dealt with, instead of being placed in the ordinary mental hospitals; and it is also intended to establish Boards of Advice to assist the Medical Superintendents in considering whether liberty should be granted to those inmates who are on the borderland of recovery. At the same time it is proposed to develop the central institution at Tokanui on the North Island Main Trunk line, and to extend the existing institutions in the large centres upon permanent and modern lines.

One of the most important factors in national development is the safeguarding of the public health. Every encouragement is therefore being given to the various Hospital Boards to equip the base hospitals with the latest developments in science. It is also gratifying to know that the public are recognizing the value of the hospital system, and that both the voluntary contributions and the payments by patients have steadily increased. You will be pleased to know that a regular supply of qualified nurses is being drawn from both the ordinary and the maternity hospitals of the Dominion, and it is proposed to extend the present popular system of trained nurses to the wives and families of the workers and to those who cannot otherwise avail themselves of such services. The advantage of our public hospital system in also providing nurses for the out-districts is being steadily and increasingly felt, and my Ministers hope that in course of time, by following out the policy that has hitherto been so successfully initiated, the settlers in the remoter parts of the Dominion will receive many of the benefits in the way of medical attendance, nursing, hospitals, &c., that were for many years regarded as the exclusive privilege of the dwellers in our cities. It is hoped, also, at an early date to extend the maternity hospitals to four other centres, two in the North Island and two in the South Island.

A Legislature Amendment Bill will be submitted for your consideration, providing an alteration in the method of electing members of the House of

Representatives by introducing preferential voting as a substitute for the system of second ballots.

My Advisers consider that the time has arrived for so arranging the business of Parliament that it can be done during reasonable hours and with more expedition. Proposals to give effect to this will be submitted.

A Local Government Bill was introduced last session, and circulated during the recess to local bodies throughout the Dominion. Subsequently a Conference of delegates from local authorities was held in Wellington. As a result of their deliberations an amended Bill will be submitted this session, which it is hoped will effectually deal with this difficult and important problem.

It is proposed to amend the Defence Act in the direction of substituting military detention in a camp or barrack in lieu of imprisonment in the case of failure or refusal to parade, or for similar breaches of the Act. This is the practice in Australia. Other miscellaneous alterations in the Act are proposed.

To further facilitate the settlement of the surplus Native lands, my Advisers consider that it will be necessary to make amendments to the Native Land Act, 1909. The functions of the Maori Land Boards will require to be extended, so as to give the presiding officers the powers of Commissioners of the Native Land Court. This, by allowing these officers to deal with questions of succession, will facilitate the working of the Native Land Court, whilst the Judges will be able to continuously carry on the larger sphere of work, such as partitions and the completion of titles to customary lands.

Provision will also be made for strengthening the staff of the Native Land Courts, and, if found necessary, additional Judges will be appointed.

Steps will also be taken to ensure a more expeditious method of dealing with "papatupu" or customary lands, and a number of other amendments will be made in the Act. Care will be taken to prevent speculation in Native lands, and every possible facility will be given in the direction of assisting *bona fide* settlement.

In order that the areas reserved for the use and occupation of the Maori owners shall be effectively occupied by them, special provision will be made under proper safeguards to assist them financially, and also with advice and instruction in modern methods of farming.

It is the intention of my Advisers to restrict the trafficking in Crown leases that prevails in some parts of the Dominion, and to insure that Crown land is selected and occupied by *bona fide* settlers. It is also their intention to introduce legislation to prevent speculation in Crown lands, and to promote closer settlement by all practicable means.

It is proposed to introduce important amendments providing for the limitation of areas of land that may be disposed of by will or settlement. Every landowner will be permitted to dispose of a fair proportion of his estate to such eligible devisees as he may select, but it is felt that the time has arrived when large estates capable of subdivision and settlement in smaller holdings should not continue in the possession of individual owners.

Provision for preventing undue aggregation of estates, and restoring the compulsory acquirement clauses by arbitration in the Land for Settlements Act will be submitted.

Legislation will also be introduced providing for the limitation of areas of land that in future may be held and occupied by any one company, person, or family.

In the event of owners of large estates not subdividing their land, power may be taken by the State to resume possession. The land so resumed shall be disposed of under the Land for Settlements Act, with provision that the deferred-payment system will be added.

In the opinion of my Advisers the time has arrived when there should be established central bureaux of information, which will gather the particulars of all the Crown and Native lands open for settlement or about to be opened for settlement, and also collect information regarding private properties that may be for sale or for lease in different parts of the Dominion. The bureaux would be in touch with land agents throughout the country, and could supply all

particulars of land and their values, thus affording valuable aid to those interested. If bureaux of this description were established, they would first of all place those in search of land in possession of many important facts, and they could at once proceed to that locality which contained the class of land they were seeking. Legislation will be submitted accordingly.

In view of the great importance of agriculture, my Ministers propose to make provision for the establishment of agricultural colleges and additional experimental farms, and also for the further introduction of dairy stock from abroad.

Legislation will be submitted in the direction of providing that workers in the different centres may acquire cottage farms from the State sufficiently near their usual work to enable them to profitably employ their spare time in fruit-growing, dairying, and market gardening.

Having regard to the great influence the railways of the Dominion exercise on the general progress and settlement of the country, and on the development of its natural resources and commerce, my Advisers are of opinion that the time has arrived when it is desirable and expedient to modernize the management of this great State enterprise. The successful management of an undertaking of such magnitude demands the employment of an expert, who, as well as being thoroughly familiar with the utilization of the railway as a means of stimulating land-settlement, is also closely acquainted with and experienced in modern railway management as practised in other countries. As the age-limit of the present General Manager of the Railway Department and other responsible officials is approaching, it is proposed to reorganize the management, and to take steps to invite from abroad applications from gentlemen qualified to fill the position of General Manager. Legislation will be required to give effect to these proposals, and an amendment to the Government Railways Act will be submitted accordingly. This will make provision for the payment to the General Manager of an adequate salary which, it is hoped, will induce first-class railway officials to compete for the position.

My Advisers recognize the necessity for securing the greater safety of those who travel by sea, and the better protection of those who are engaged in loading and discharging steamers at our ports. Several new measures in that direction will be submitted for your consideration.

The first year's operations of the National Provident Fund have led my Advisers to consider the desirability of enlarging the scope of this measure of social insurance. The system will be extended to enable local bodies to secure superannuation or other benefits of the Act for their employees; and employers generally will be granted facilities to assist their employees in taking advantage of the Fund.

The efforts of the friendly societies in providing for their members and their families will be encouraged, and it is intended to introduce legislation to enable a subvention to be paid by the State to friendly societies upon terms that will encourage the operations of these beneficent organizations.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Mining, which was laid before you last session, has been considered, and Bills embodying the recommendations made are being prepared and will be duly laid before you.

Legislation dealing with old-age pensions will be submitted, fixing the age for women at sixty years.

A Bill will be introduced amending the Police Force Act in certain directions, and remedying omissions in the original Act of 1886.

Recognizing the important bearing that the health of children has not only on the efficiency of the instruction given in the schools, but also on the future development of the race, my Advisers have resolved to initiate a system of medical inspection of school children.

In order to promote further educational progress, proposals to amend the Education Act will be submitted.

My Advisers hope to make further extensions in the direction of free university education, so that the clever children of the Dominion will be able, by reason of intellectual ability alone, to climb, without cost to themselves or their parents, from the lowest to the highest rung of the educational ladder,

Proposals will be submitted in the direction of demilitarizing the Junior Cadets, and of insuring that more attention be paid to the physical instruction of boys and girls attending primary schools. The ideal of personal development is a sound mind in a sound body, and all possible means of securing this ideal should be taken in the interests of the rising generation and of the State.

The desirability of uniformity of the Law of Copyright was agreed to at the last Imperial Conference, and an Act with this end in view, as well as the consolidation and simplification of the law on the subject of copyright, was recently passed by the Home Government. A Bill on the lines of this measure will be introduced during this session.

It is proposed to make certain amendments in the Justices of the Peace Act and in the Magistrates' Courts Act, for the purpose of simplifying the procedure in connection with appeals to the Supreme Court.

My Advisers recognize the necessity for improving the law dealing with companies, and legislation on the subject will be introduced.

Measures will also be introduced providing for Seed Sale Control, Farmers' Co-operative Banks, and for amendments of our Land Laws, Agricultural and Pastoral Societies Act, Noxious Weeds Act, and other measures.

In commending these matters to your attention I assure you of my heartfelt wish to aid your efforts to further the interests of the country, and I pray that your labours may, with the blessing of God, promote the happiness and welfare of New Zealand.