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**T**HE Fifth Session of the nineteenth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor-General, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following

SPEECH.

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

When I addressed you on the 9th April of the present year at the opening of last session the position of the allied armies on the western front was such as to give grave cause for anxiety. In that speech, after stating that the then present moment probably marked the crisis of the war in which the Empire had so long been engaged, I said, "We are well assured that the courage and endurance of our armies, now tried to the uttermost, will not fail in the present or the future. We have the record of the past three years to justify that confidence." Soon after the termination of that session the strategy of Marshal Foch and the splendid valour and endurance of the allied armies under his single command changed the course of the war from defence to continuous attack upon the enemy's positions, and thenceforward victory has followed victory until there has come first the unconditional surrender of Bulgaria and then urgent proposals for peace from the other enemy countries, while the Allies occupy large parts of Belgium and of France which for four years had been under the domination of Germany. In the operations on the western front our New Zealand Division has been constantly in action, and has given the Dominion renewed cause to be proud of our soldiers' record of courage and discipline. In the East also our mounted forces have had part in the wonderful series of successes by which the army under General Allenby's command has driven the enemy far beyond the bounds of Palestine.

The position to-day is one of extreme tension, and there are strong reasons for believing that peace will not be long delayed, but any relaxation of effort on our part could only have the effect of endangering our satisfaction with the Dominion's war effort. Our enemies must be convinced that there will be no termination of the war until they submit to just and adequate proposals for reparation, and give sufficient guarantees against renewed attempts to ignore the law of nations and disturb the peace of the world.

The Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference which my Prime Minister and Minister of Finance attended during the recess, together with representatives of all the Oversea Dominions and India, mark a great development in the constitutional history of the Empire. Opportunity was thus given for the views of this Dominion on many subjects to be fully considered from the standpoint of the whole Empire. My two Ministers were also enabled to advance the interests of New Zealand in many important respects.

Measures will be submitted for your consideration granting power to local bodies to initiate hydro-electric schemes for their respective districts; for the prevention of the aggregation of land; for the prevention of the acquisition of land in New Zealand by persons of enemy origin; for the better protection of soldiers, and their wives and dependants; for the prevention of traffic in military decorations, and the unauthorized use of badges assigned to soldiers' associations; for the necessary preservation of New Zealand forests; and for the limitation of export of timber.

It is intended to submit to Parliament certain necessary legislation relating to the present constitution of the Legislative Council.

You will also be asked to consider the subject of the increase in the cost of living consequent on the war, and to devise such remedies as may be possible.

In order to promote educational progress proposals will be submitted.

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

I desire to congratulate you upon your removal into surroundings more in accordance with the dignity and importance of your deliberations than the rooms you have occupied since the destruction of the Parliamentary Buildings.

The public accounts and the estimates which will be laid before you will afford proof that economy has been and is being exercised in the various departments of the State. The increase in expenditure is largely due to the cost of the war and the growing interest and sinking fund on the Dominion debt.

A comprehensive scheme for demobilization and repatriation has been prepared and will be submitted during the present session.

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

I trust that in your deliberations Divine Providence may guide you to the advantage of our Sovereign, of his Empire, and of this Dominion.