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**T**HE Third Session of the Twenty-first Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor-General, 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,—

The necessity for the attendance of my Prime Minister at the Imperial Conference and the Imperial Economic Conference in London last year, which had rendered it desirable to summon the General Assembly to meet at an earlier date than is customary, also led to the session closing before the usual time. In consequence, the recess has exceeded the normal period.

The resignation of His Majesty's Government, as the result of the General Election held shortly after the Imperial Conferences referred to, was followed by the accession to power of an entirely new Administration, which has in some important matters arrived at conclusions differing from the resolutions passed by those Conferences. However much they may regret this result, my Ministers recognize clearly that an Administration whose Prime Minister was not present, and which was not otherwise represented, at Imperial Conferences must necessarily be absolutely free to determine whether it will or will not support in Parliament resolutions passed at such Conferences. The policy of this Dominion which provides special preference to British Empire trade was adopted without request on our part for reciprocal treatment, and remains unaffected. My Ministers will propose an extension of that preference by an increase in the proportion of British production or manufacture which gives title to the advantage in Customs duties.

The Special Service Squadron of the Royal Navy, under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Field, received an enthusiastic welcome from the people of New Zealand. The presence in our waters of so large a number of His Majesty's ships, headed by the magnificent battle-cruiser "Hood," and the generous opportunity granted for public

inspection, enabled many to appreciate the power of the great Service of which those ships form a part, and to which New Zealand has so recently owed the preservation of its trade and commerce during war. In one ship of the Squadron, the light cruiser "Dunedin," New Zealand has a special interest, since that vessel, of the most modern design, has been selected by the Admiralty to replace the "Chatham" in the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy. I was also glad, with my Ministers, to welcome the presence in the Squadron of the "Adelaide," one of the ships of the Royal Australian Navy. The subsequent voyage of the Squadron along the coasts of the Western Samoan Islands, and its stay for a time off Apia, has afforded great satisfaction to my Ministers and to the Administration of the Islands. It was of special importance that the Natives of Samoa should have the opportunity thus provided for them.

The British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, recently opened by His Majesty, is attracting great numbers of visitors not only from the people of Great Britain but also from all the territories of the Empire. The principal object of the Exhibition—to provide specimens of the products of the various parts of the Empire for the inspection of those interested in the relative trades—will be completely served so far as this Dominion is concerned by the efforts of our country to ensure a complete exhibit of its products; and my Ministers have reason to hope that the financial results will not disappoint the Governments who have rendered themselves responsible for the large expense involved. My Ministers availed themselves of the voluntary services of a number of gentlemen in New Zealand who agreed to act as an Advisory Council. The Dominion is much indebted to those gentlemen for the interest they showed and the care and attention they gave to ensure the full representation of our principal industries. On their advice Mr. A. F. Roberts was appointed New Zealand Commissioner to the Exhibition.

The British Nationality and Status of Aliens in New Zealand Act of your last session, which was reserved for His Majesty's assent, has recently received the Royal approval and has become part of the law of New Zealand, and is also now operative under our mandatory authority in Western Samoa.

Very satisfactory progress has been made for the Relief of Discharged Soldier Settlers by the Dominion Board established by the legislation of last session. With the assistance of the District Revaluation Committees the Board has been able to consider a very large number of applications, and my Ministers trust it will be found that the process of revaluation and reduction of rent and interest, and, in some cases, of capital, will enable the majority of our discharged soldiers settled on the land to look forward to success with renewed hope. It has for some time been recognized that the main difficulty arises in cases where the land was purchased by the soldiers themselves from private individuals, with a first mortgage to the Crown for its advance, and subsidiary mortgages to the vendors. In a number of instances of this class the Board has been able to effect satisfactory arrangements as between the mortgagor and the second mortgagee. The policy established by the Act, together with the approaching termination of the general mortgages extension, necessitated the increase (provided by your Act of last session) of the maximum amount permitted under the State Advances Act from £2,000 to £3,500 for settlers, and from £750 to £1,250 for workers, and the increase by £2,250,000 of the authorization of loan for advances to settlers and workers. Applications for advances have been received far in excess of the increased authorization. The success of the efforts of the State Advances Department to cope with the increased demand is exemplified by the fact that during the financial year ended the 31st March loans to the amount of £8,066,202 were authorized, and £6,205,686 actually paid. Further moneys are being supplied to the Office, and constant effort is maintained to deal speedily with all applications.

The effect of the Meat-export Control Act, followed by the Dairy Industry Control Act of your last session, has been satisfactory to the producers. The establishment of Boards with statutory authority to negotiate for shipping and freights, and to control the rate of supply to markets abroad, has already provided many beneficial results. The fruit-producers of the Dominion have indicated a desire for the establishment of a Fruit Industry Control Board with similar powers, and legislation with that object has been prepared and will be submitted for your consideration.

The Main Highways Board has been established, and has done much valuable preliminary work, including the definition of a number of main highways. You will be asked to consider ways and means for providing sufficient funds to enable the important duties of the Board to be carried out.

The Mortgages Extension Acts expire at the end of the present year. It is not considered advisable to continue the automatic operation of extension beyond that period. The present Acts apply only to mortgages executed before October, 1919, and there is reason to believe that the great majority of those mortgages have already been the subject of arrangement between the several mortgagors and mortgagees, having the effect of excluding the statutory extension. But it is also believed that there are a limited number of cases where the immediate removal of all protection might create considerable hardship to the mortgagors. My Ministers will therefore submit to you legislation which, while allowing the general protection to expire at the end of the present year, will entitle mortgagors who can prove special hardship to apply to a Supreme Court Judge for a further extension not exceeding two years. Under the previous Acts the mortgagee has always had the right to apply to the Court for leave to exercise his powers, though very little advantage has been taken of the statutes in that respect. Under the measure to be proposed to you any mortgagor who desires extension is compelled to apply to the Court for an opportunity to prove his case, and to satisfy the Court that there are special reasons in his case which justify a brief extension.

Two measures of special importance, which were in part before you last session, will, my Ministers hope, be agreed to and become law during your present session. The first is a Bill to consolidate and simplify the land laws of the Dominion; and the second a Bill to bring all lands of the Dominion under the provisions of the Land Transfer Act within a definite period, with special provision for the issue of provisional certificates in the case of infirm titles.

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

The Royal Commission appointed to consider the system and incidence of land and income taxation in New Zealand has presented a unanimous report, which in due course will be laid upon the table of your House. The report of another Commission, appointed to consider the effect of forestry reserves upon the revenues of local bodies, has also been received by me, and will be made available for your deliberations.

The receipts of revenue during the last financial year have been satisfactory; economy has been practised in all Departments, the result being that the accounts of the year closed with a surplus of £1,812,366. Proposals for certain remissions of taxation will be submitted.

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

Two specially qualified gentlemen from England are at present engaged in investigating the conditions appertaining to the railways of New South Wales. My Ministers propose to take advantage of their presence in Australia to institute a Royal Commission, of which they will be members, to carry out an exhaustive inquiry into the whole system and control of our New Zealand railways, and to advise thereon.

The subject of fishing rights in the interior waters of the Dominion has been under the consideration of my Government. Legislation is necessary to prevent the sale of such rights, whether in gross or as attached to riparian ownership, and especially to prevent the acquisition by persons not resident in the Dominion of power to exclude others from certain waters. A Bill having those objects will be laid before you. My Ministers anticipate that you may find it necessary to postpone finally settling the whole subject-matter pending special investigation into the nature and existence of the rights, but that you may consider it sufficient in the meantime to prohibit any such dealings.

In addition to the legislation to which I have made special reference, you will have submitted for consideration, along with other measures, Bills dealing with the Stamp Laws, the Chattels Security Acts, Motor-vehicles, Copyright, Public Works, Education, Defence, Local Bodies' Loans, War Funds, Police Offences, Public Debt Reduction.

My term of office as Governor-General of New Zealand will expire at the end of September next, and I shall be leaving the Dominion towards the end of November.

The severance of the ties which have, with ever-increasing strength bound me in close attachment to the people of New Zealand will cause me the deepest possible regret.

Our sojourn here has been a time of great interest and of unalloyed happiness to Her Excellency and myself.

As the representative of His Majesty, I have witnessed with the keenest satisfaction the spirit of fervent loyalty to the Throne and Empire which is so marked a characteristic of the people of New Zealand, and of which so many proofs have been given.

I have watched with great pleasure the increased production and the growth in trade of the Dominion, and the manner in which recovery from the aftermath of war has been effected is a subject for sincere congratulation.

The birth and development of the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy during my term of office, and the high standard attained by the recruits entering the Service, have been of much interest to me as a Naval officer.

To the past and present members of the two Houses of the Legislature with whom I have been associated I beg to express my deep appreciation of their uniform courtesy and consideration, and I should like to take this opportunity also of voicing my warmest gratitude to the people of this Dominion for their exceeding kindness to Her Excellency, to myself, and to the members of our family.

The future prosperity of New Zealand and the welfare and happiness of its people will ever be matters of profound interest to me.

Finally, I express the earnest hope that Divine Providence may guide your deliberations and further the welfare of the people of the Dominion.