



THE
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 EXTRAORDINARY.

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WELLINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1931.

THE Fourth Session of the Twenty-third Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor-General, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following statement of the causes of the calling of this Session of Parliament together:—

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

It affords me much pleasure to meet you again in Parliament assembled.

On the advice of my Ministers, I have convened this special session in order that your earnest consideration may be given to matters of urgent national importance arising out of the present economic situation as it affects this Dominion.

Since I last had the opportunity of addressing you, the external markets for our products have experienced a world-wide depression, and the values of our wool, frozen meat, dairy-produce, and other primary products, upon which our national prosperity preponderantly depends, have, after continuous depreciation over a considerable period, reached so low a level as materially to affect, directly or indirectly, the economic well-being of all sections of the community. Here, as in other countries, depression of trade and industry has inevitably increased unemployment. Although the measures adopted by my Government, in co-operation with local authorities, have afforded substantial relief, the solution of this pressing problem continues to receive their anxious and sympathetic consideration.

Notwithstanding the exercise of strict care and economy in expenditure, the public accounts of the Dominion seem likely to show a deficit for the current financial year—a deficit which my Advisers consider will be largely increased during the subsequent financial year, unless, with your authority, remedial measures are promptly undertaken.

Faced with the prospect of a falling revenue and the possible continuance of relatively low export values for our primary products, my Ministers desire to stress the urgent necessity for rigid economy in all public

and private undertakings. Although by no means pessimistic regarding the future of New Zealand, in view of its exceptional natural advantages and the characteristic energy and determination of its people, my Ministers are convinced that the difficulties now confronting the Dominion can only be effectually overcome by considerable sacrifices on the part of all sections of the population. Past experience has shown that where such sacrifices are rendered imperative in the interests of national welfare the people of this country have responded patriotically to the call. My Advisers are strongly of opinion that a spirit of co-operation and mutual sympathy will prove a potent factor in enabling the Dominion to overcome the temporary check in its prosperity.

It is with the deepest regret that I refer to the disastrous earthquake which recently occurred in Napier and Hastings and the surrounding district, causing serious loss of life, physical injury, and widespread destruction of property. I desire to associate myself with you and all our people throughout the Dominion in expressing our heartfelt sympathy with those who have been bereaved or injured by this disaster, or who have suffered thereby material loss. You will be asked to consider the best means of solving certain urgent problems which have arisen in connection with the devastated area and its population.

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

The grave economic crisis which this country, in common with most other countries of the world, is called upon to face has occasioned financial difficulties for our farmers, a widespread restriction of trade, and considerable stringency in national finance, involving, unless prompt action be taken, a heavy budgetary shortage in the forthcoming financial year. The difficulties of the present situation have also been accentuated by the catastrophe in Hawke's Bay.

You will be asked to consider forthwith measures for dealing with this problem. Proposals will be placed before you for effecting an alteration in the rate of remuneration of the Public Service, for amending the law which governs the powers of the Arbitration Court, for providing for certain increases in taxation, and for the establishment of a Board to administer the railways, as well as other proposals designed to assist in surmounting the difficulties of the present situation. Legislative measures rendered necessary by the recent earthquake will also be submitted for your consideration. No additional provision for Supply will be necessary during this special session of Parliament, but you will be furnished with information relating to the finances of the Dominion for the first eleven months of the current financial year.

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

At the Imperial Conference which took place in London last year the Dominion was represented by my Prime Minister and my Attorney-General. You will have an opportunity of discussing the transactions of that Conference on papers to be laid before you during your ordinary session later in the year. During this special session my Ministers do not propose to submit for your consideration any legislation other than that of an urgent character.

I earnestly pray that Divine Providence may guide your deliberations, to the lasting benefit of this country and all classes of its people.