



NEW ZEALAND  
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE  
PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY.

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Published by Authority.

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By His Honor's Command,  
EDWARD JOLLIE,  
Provincial Secretary.

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FRIDAY, MAY 7, 1869.

[No. XVIII.]

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ADDRESS  
OF  
HIS HONOR THE SUPERINTENDENT  
ON  
OPENING THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL  
OF CANTERBURY.

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MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN—

I have called you together in accordance with an understanding entered into at the time of your last session to give you an opportunity prior to the meeting of the General Assembly of discussing alterations in the Roads Ordinance, the Fencing Ordinance, and some other Ordinances which require modification.

A Bill will also be submitted to you for the reduction of the present number of the Members of the Provincial Council and the redistribution of the representation of the Province. The reasons for the introduction of this measure require some explanation on my part. I believe that the time has come when considerable modifications must be made in the form and dimensions of Provincial Institutions if they are to continue their local usefulness and the weight in the general economy of the colony which it is desirable they

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should retain. The machinery which has been created in more prosperous times has, I think, outgrown the necessities of government in the Province now that its legislative powers have been curtailed and its functions have devolved, to a great extent, upon the Municipalities and Road Boards, and the funds which it has to administer have been largely pledged in permanent charges for works of local benefit.

The Province has still a great work to do in the promotion of immigration, in the bridging of rivers, and other public works, and in maintaining and developing the systems of education, police, gaols, and charitable institutions, which have, under existing legislation been placed in working order, and I should most strongly deprecate the abdication of its functions in favour of a Central Government, which does not and cannot for years to come represent or adequately promote the interests of the people in these matters. I think, however, that we should do wisely not to wait for legislation from without, or until reform is forced upon us by straitened circumstances, but at once to simplify within the limits of the Constitution the general machinery of administration, and I am assured that efficiency no less than economy would be consulted by such a course.

A further, and, as it seems to me, most desirable result to be aimed at is the bringing of the Superintendent into more direct communication than is at present the case with the Provincial Council. This may be effected under the existing form of the Constitution by frequent conference with committees of the Council, to be appointed for the purpose, and so long as I retain office it will be my desire to meet the Council in this way and to give every information and assistance in my power in the conduct of the public business. The same object might perhaps be attained by the Superintendent taking a seat in the Council, as under the New Provinces Act, though this course would require legislative sanction from the General Assembly, and is, I incline to think, open to objection so long as the Superintendent is elected as at present. On this point I would here express my belief that hereafter, when a greater identity of interest prevails throughout the colony than can be hoped for under existing circumstances, the administration of the Colonial and the Provincial Government within the Province may be entrusted to a nominated officer of the General Government, but I am persuaded that for some years the public good will be best consulted by maintaining the present form of election by the people. However this may be, I am satisfied that the establishment of a more direct and unfiltered responsibility to the Council is most desirable if, as I understand to be your wish, the Superintendent is to actively supervise the departments and assist in carrying out the votes of the Council. At the present time a considerable amount of routine work is being done by the Superintendent, and such must continue to be the case, possibly to a greater extent than at present. What I should wish personally, and what I believe would conduce to the public good, would be that he should have the opportunity of explaining his action to the Provincial Council, and should be more directly responsible for it.

The restraints now placed upon the action of the Superintendent by both colonial and provincial legislation, and the fact that he is chosen by the whole people of the Province, and is removable on the motion of the Provincial Council, appear to me to be a satisfactory guarantee that he will carry out the wishes of the people as expressed by their representatives. The fixing and defining of responsibility is what is required to secure in the chief officer care and promptitude in the conduct of business which properly falls upon him. Under the existing order of things, as was pointed out by my predecessor, "the Superintendent has none except a merely political responsibility."

In these observations I have expressed my own personal views, so far as they are formed, on a question of great difficulty, with no wish to assert them dogmatically, and with a desire to promote discussion of a subject which is of great importance.

I am glad to be able to state that the Estimates of Receipts for the current year laid before you in December last, have been generally verified up to the present time in respect of Ordinary Revenue. But the land sales have not reached the average amount for the past four months, having amounted to only £6077. During the past few weeks there has been a gradual increase of the amounts received, but I can scarcely hope that the receipts for the year will come up to the estimate. On the other hand, the receipts of Ordinary Revenue will probably exceed the estimate.

The probable decrease in the Land Revenue and the uncertainty which still overhangs the adjustment of the debt between Westland and Canterbury will render the utmost caution necessary in incurring any further liabilities. The provincial moiety of the Consolidated Revenue during the first three months of the year is more than £500 in excess of the estimate, and the provincial charges are more than £300 less for the same period; and taking into account the fluctuations of the revenue over the whole year, it is probable that the estimate under this head will be somewhat more than realised. The other estimates of Ordinary Revenue may also be expected to be realised, with the exception of £500 for the Timaru Landing Service, and the amount of £500 for sheep fines. With regard to the former item I have, in accordance with a resolution passed by you in the month of July last year, made an arrangement subject to your approval by which the receipts and management of the landing service will be handed over to the Timaru and Gladstone Board of Works from the beginning of this year. Correspondence on the subject will be laid before you.

The absence of a return from sheep fines, and the almost total extinction of disease among sheep in the Province, is a matter of congratulation.

The returns from the Railway have up to the present time been in excess of the amount they were estimated to yield. The gross income of the year was estimated at £39,350, and the actual income for the past four months has amounted to £17,280, or £4164 more than one-third part of the estimate for the year. But this period includes the greater part of the wool season and an important part of the grain season; and the present income will not be maintained during the winter months. It is reasonable, however, forming a calculation upon the relative income for the different months of last year, to anticipate an excess of the estimated amount of receipts over the whole year; but on the other hand there will be expenditure necessary in the Tunnel which was not previously contemplated, and which will more than absorb any such excess. The stores paid for in last year and consumed during the present year, and a per centage for depreciation are not taken into account in the above observations.

You will learn from papers which will be laid before you that the Provincial Debentures converted into Colonial 5 per cents. on the 31st December last were:—Of the Emigration Loan £19,100 out of £30,000; of the Railway Loan, £162,900 out of £250,000; of the Canterbury Loan, £476,300 out of £500,000. The unconverted Debentures being respectively—Emigration Loan, £10,900, bearing 8 per cent. interest; Railway Loan, £87,100, bearing 6 per cent. interest; Canterbury Loan, £23,700, bearing 6 per cent. interest. The effect of these conversions is to increase the principal debt by £35,539 10s., and to diminish the annual charges for interest and sinking fund by £7034 16s. 7d. The annual charges to be borne by the Province for interest and sinking fund on Loans stand at present time:—Loan of 1856, payable to Colonial Treasury, £4440 per annum; Provincial Debentures converted, payable to Colonial Treasury, £41,630 3s 5d; unconverted Debentures, payable to holders—interest £7520, sinking fund £2415—£9935; or a total of £56,005 3s. 5d.

Under Schedule B to the Appropriation Ordinance of last session payment of 25 per cent. of the amount of the votes has been made to the several Road Boards. Further payments

must depend upon the receipts from the sales of land. I trust that it will not be necessary materially to curtail any of the contemplated expenditure under the heads Education and Immigration. With regard to the last, in the absence of any intimation to the contrary, I have assumed that it is your intention that liabilities to the amount of the vote should be incurred within this present financial period.

I cannot but reiterate my conviction that it is to a steady system of immigration, more than to any other cause, that we have to look for a restoration of prosperity to the Province.

Letters to Mr. Selfe, showing the action I have taken in accordance with your resolution of last session will be laid on the table.

You will learn from the letters of last month from the Emigration Agent how largely the difficulty of obtaining suitable immigrants has been increased by the accounts which had reached home of the massacre in Poverty Bay, and the other disastrous incidents of the Native War. I trust that the united counsels of the Colony during the approaching Session may lead to measures which will remove this obstacle to the progress of all parts of the Colony, and to the relief of the distress in which so large a number of our fellow colonists are involved.

I now declare this Council open for the dispatch of public business.

WM. ROLLESTON,  
Superintendent.

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