



THE  
**NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE**  
 EXTRAORDINARY.

Published by Authority.

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WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 1915.

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THE First Session of the Nineteenth 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 meet you in Parliament assembled.

During the session of 1914 Parliament was suddenly called upon to pass enactments of an exceptional nature to provide for circumstances which immediately arose or were anticipated consequent upon the outbreak of war. I am able to inform you that most of such legislation has been proved by experience to be efficient, and has enabled my Government to meet and deal with the emergencies which have arisen up to the present. But in some respects it has been found that this special legislation requires amendment and extension, and measures will be submitted to you with that object.

The preparation and consideration of the legislation to which I have referred formed but a small part of the novel and urgent duties which the existence of a state of war cast upon myself and my Ministers. The administration of the ordinary and regular business and affairs of the Dominion of New Zealand has been attended to with care, but my Ministers felt that their duty and obligation to the Empire had become the paramount consideration, and that the Parliament of New Zealand would recognize that the Imperial functions which in time of war devolve upon the Governments of the various Dependencies of the Crown must claim their first and most urgent attention. As the representative of the Sovereign, my time and that of my personal staff has been largely occupied in communication constantly necessary between the Imperial Government and that of the Dominion; and many duties not ordinarily incident to the work of the Governor of a self-governing Dominion have fallen to be performed by myself. Each of my Ministers has been called upon to undertake duties foreign to the Departments which he ordinarily controls. The officials of the Public Service, and especially the Heads of Departments and the Public Service Commissioners, have also been required to undertake much arduous and difficult work, of the nature of which there has been no previous experience in New Zealand. My Ministers desire to acknowledge the loyal and public-spirited support which has been given by all the servants of the Crown.

The work of the military authorities and of the Department of Defence has been the most strenuous and difficult, as it has been the most important. My Ministers feel that a special debt of gratitude is due from the Dominion to all those officers and non-commissioned officers of the Imperial and of the New Zealand Services who have yielded to their request to remain in New Zealand to guide and direct the training of our recruits. Only through their constant and diligent care has it been possible

to bring the officers and men of the Expeditionary Forces to the state of real efficiency which I am happy to inform you they have attained.

The response of men of both races in this Dominion to the Empire's call has been a source of pride to the people of New Zealand, and of satisfaction to myself and my Ministers. Not only have the men come forward in the numbers required, but they have cheerfully accepted the drudgery and hardship of training, and have been only too anxious to be ready at the earliest possible moment for active service. You will remember that a section of the first Expeditionary Force was despatched in August last to Samoa. The German authorities surrendered to our Force on the 29th day of August, and German Samoa has since been administered under the direction of the Imperial Government, Colonel Logan of the New Zealand Forces being Administrator, in command of a garrison of New Zealand troops. The second part of the first Expeditionary Force travelled via Australia to Egypt, where the men were in camp for some months completing their training. Large reinforcements have been sent at intervals. The Fifth left our shores during the present month, and further reinforcements in large numbers are now training at the Trentham Camp.

Of the conduct, efficiency, and courage of our troops in action we have every reason to be proud. Shortly after the New Zealand and Australian troops were landed at the Dardanelles a gracious and most welcome message was received from His Majesty the King in the following terms:—

“I heartily congratulate you upon the splendid conduct and bravery displayed by the New Zealand troops at the Dardanelles, who have indeed proved themselves worthy sons of the Empire.—GEORGE R.”

To which I replied as follows:—

“On behalf of myself, my Government, and the people of New Zealand I desire respectfully to thank Your Majesty for your most gracious message. We are all proud of the manner in which the New Zealand troops have acquitted themselves, and we eagerly look forward to hearing further details of the operations in the Dardanelles.—LIVERPOOL.”

There has been a long list of casualties, but we may rest assured that those who have fallen have done, and those who are still in the line will continue to do, their duty gallantly and fearlessly.

You will be asked to make due provision by pension and otherwise for the families of those who have given their lives, and for the men who have become disabled, in the service of their King and country, and for their dependants; and I commend this subject specially to your careful and generous consideration.

It has been our privilege to take part with all the Dependencies of the Crown, and with the armies of the United Kingdom and those of our brave Allies, in the struggle for liberty and free government. But we could not have taken that part, we could hardly have sent any Force from our shores, had not the safety of our transports on the seas been ensured by the protection of His Majesty's ships of the Imperial and Australian Squadrons, conjoined with the navies of our Allies. To the Navy we owe also our present sense of safety and security, and the practical immunity of the highways of our commerce from danger.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The estimates have been prepared for your consideration with due regard to economy, but the abnormal expenditure consequent on the war has been, and will continue to be, very large. Doubtless you will determine that some proportion of the cost should be provided from loan-moneys. You will be called upon to consider measures for the provision of that part which should be supplied from revenue.

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

My Ministers are satisfied that at the present juncture, when we are all united in our determination to prosecute the war until an honourable peace is arrived at, no legislation the discussion of which would involve party strife should be submitted to you. In addition to legislation arising out of and consequent on the war, to which I have previously referred, you will be invited to give your attention to such amendments of the existing statute law as appear to be urgently required. You will have, in addition, the measures of purely local interest which may be submitted to you from the various districts of the Dominion.

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