

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.