



THE
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 EXTRAORDINARY.

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THE Sixth Session of the nineteenth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor-General, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following

SPEECH.

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

I last addressed you at the opening of your fifth session of the present Parliament on the 24th October, 1918. Though the victory of the Allies appeared to be assured, one only of our enemies, Bulgaria, had then laid down its arms and submitted to accept any terms which the Allies might dictate. From that date onward until the 12th November, 1918, when the news was received of the signing of the Armistice with Germany, our enemies in swift succession sued for peace. The invitation of the Imperial Government to this Dominion to send its representatives to the Conference constituted to determine the terms of peace to be imposed met with a ready response from both Houses of this Parliament, and my Prime Minister and Minister of Finance left immediately after the close of your last session to attend that Conference and to take a not unimportant part in the deliberations of that great assemblage of statesmen. You will be able to gather from papers which will be laid before you that New Zealand, with the other great self-governing Dominions of the British Empire, has been accorded a status by the Allied nations which marks the beginning of a new era in our national history.

Your present Parliament, the members of the House of Representatives for which were elected in the year 1914, a few months after the beginning of the Great War, would have in the ordinary course expired at the end of the year 1917. Its existence has been prolonged by statute until the end of this year, and therefore, with the exception of the occupation of German Samoa and of the despatch of the

first Expeditionary Force to Egypt and Gallipoli, all the great events of the war specially affecting New Zealand have taken place during the existence of the present Parliament, which has been called upon to deal with the affairs of the Dominion under unexampled difficulties. By the extension at the wish of the Sovereign of my own term of office I have had the honour of being His Majesty's Representative during the whole period of the war, and, looking back with you over those years of trial, I feel that I may join you in the proud memory that this Dominion has never faltered in its determination to give and continue its support to the utmost of its power to the cause of the Empire, that no promise made by New Zealand to the Imperial Government remains unfulfilled by this Parliament and the Government of this Dominion, and that our soldiers have by their splendid courage, discipline, and conduct won a name for themselves and a place for New Zealand in the annals of the greatest of wars. I am sure you will join with me in the deepest sympathy with those whose sons and relatives have fallen, and with the many who have returned maimed and wounded to their homes. My Ministers recognize that the first duty of Government and of Parliament in the new era of peace is to the men who have fought for us and to the relatives of the men who have fallen in our service.

You will be invited at as early a date as possible, by resolution of both Houses, to ratify the treaty with Germany and to accept the mandate of the League of Nations for government and administration by New Zealand of that part of the Samoan Group which was formerly under German rule. My Ministers are confident that you will not fail to undertake the responsibilities which those provisions of the Treaty of Peace impose upon a mandatory Government, and they hope to be able to submit during your present session in statutory form the methods proposed for the establishment of a new scheme of government for those islands under the control of New Zealand.

During the past three years your legislation has been confined to urgent matters arising from the war and to minor amendments of existing general and local statutes. My Ministers recognize that, as there remain only four months of the life of the present Parliament, and as your session must therefore be of short duration, the legislation to be submitted for your consideration should be limited to matters of urgency which cannot be postponed for the consideration of the new Parliament. Although the work of repatriation and training of returned soldiers has proceeded smoothly and satisfactorily, the measures which you have passed in previous sessions providing for repatriation and for assistance to soldiers in various occupations, and especially for the acquisition of land for their settlement, have in some respects proved to be insufficient, and amendments of the existing laws on these subjects have been prepared and will be submitted to you. The Mortgages Extension Act and its amendments expire on the 31st of the present month and require immediate attention, and you will be asked to pass with as little delay as possible an Expiring Laws Continuance Act, which will extend the operation of those Acts for a further period. You will later be requested to consider an amending and consolidating Act continuing for a certain period the existing limitations upon the powers of mortgagees, and defining a time when these limitations may be safely removed. Bills amending the Government Railways Act, the labour laws, the Workers' Dwellings Act, the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, the land laws, the Mining Act, the Coal-mines Act, the Chattels Transfer Act, the Post and Telegraph Act, and others have been prepared for your consideration.

You will doubtless be pleased to learn that the Lake Coleridge hydro-electric scheme continues to be a success. Steps are being taken to complete those works to enable the extension of the benefits throughout Canterbury. Initiatory steps are being taken in regard to the Mangahao and Arapuni schemes. The purchase of the Horahora plant and transmission-lines from the Waihi Gold-mining Company has been satis-

factorily completed. The acquisition of the Horahora installation will enable the farmers of the Waikato and surrounding districts, and the boroughs and factories, to be supplied with electric power as soon as reticulation-lines can be erected.

New Zealand has not entirely escaped the unrest which is prevalent in many other countries of the world and which is the aftermath of the Great War, but I am confident that the good sense and industry of the citizens of the Dominion will more than counteract any attempts to spread the pernicious doctrines which have proved so mischievous in certain European countries.

The failure of supply of coal has caused my Government much anxiety during the recess, and my Ministers trust that you will find time sufficient to enable you to consider fully the position. The shortage has been due to two causes: Firstly, the reduction of the output from New Zealand mines; and, secondly, the difficulty of supplementing that supply by cargoes from Australia. There is now good ground for hope that one of the reasons which has prevented import from Australia may be shortly removed, but deficiency of shipping exists, and to a certain extent must for the present continue. My Ministers view with anxiety the conditions which leave this Dominion dependent upon sources of supply of coal from other countries. At the present moment the freezing-chambers are full of meat the property of the Imperial Government, on account of which millions of money have been paid by that Government, and every obligation of honour and duty requires that while such meat remains in store coal shall be supplied for the efficient continuous working of the freezing machinery. It has been found absolutely necessary to cut down the railway service to an extent which has caused great inconvenience to the public and loss to the industries of the Dominion. The loss of revenue consequent upon that reduction has been most serious, but that loss constitutes by no means the principal ground of the present anxiety of the Government. The supply for every household has been necessarily curtailed to a limit which has caused general inconvenience and considerable suffering during the winter months. My Ministers hope that some satisfactory basis of arrangement may be arrived at under which, by increasing the production of existing mines and opening new mines, the Dominion may become self-reliant in the provision of coal for its industries and its homes.

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

The sums granted by Parliament for repatriation and land-settlement of our soldiers have been found to be wholly insufficient to meet the requirements. My Ministers have felt that it is impossible to delay the process, and they have therefore in anticipation of your support expended moneys and entered into obligations largely in excess of the amounts authorized. My Ministers do not doubt that you will confirm that action and will grant the very large further supply which is necessary to enable the country to fulfil its obligations to the men of the Expeditionary Forces and to the relatives of those who died in our service. The public throughout the Dominion has united in the endeavour, by the cordiality of welcome to every transport carrying returned soldiers, to emphasize the general sentiment that what our soldiers have done for us demands in return from us the utmost that we can do for them. Such obligations cannot be met wholly from revenue, and my Ministers do not doubt that you will cheerfully grant them the borrowing-powers they will propose, and confer your authority to raise the necessary moneys.

With regard to the ordinary revenue and expenditure, you will find that the authority granted in your last session has enabled my Government to carry on the business of the country beyond the period when in ordinary years supply ceases. Fortunately both the collection of revenue and the expenditure on public services till a late day in the present month

have been under the control of the Government formed in the year 1915 by agreement of the two principal political parties, and my Ministers therefore confidently anticipate your confirmation in respect of that past period. The estimates for the remaining part of the year ending on the 31st March next have been largely prepared under the supervision of the Ministers lately controlling the several Departments, and will be submitted to you by my present Ministers, subject to such revision as is possible within the very close limit of time available to them for the purpose.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,—

I congratulate you on the occasion of your assembling for the first time in this chamber. Though you will not be able to hold your deliberations of the present session here, I trust that this place may, before your next session, be so fitted and equipped as to be fit for the due performance of your important duties.

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

The visit of the Admiral of the Fleet, Viscount Jellicoe, to New Zealand is an event of far more than ordinary importance. One part of the great trust imposed upon him by the Imperial Government is that of considering the subject of the naval defence of the Commonwealth and of this Dominion and offering advice to the respective Governments. The wider subject of the British interests in the Pacific, and provision for their general defence and protection, will also have his consideration. The appointment of one so distinguished for the purpose marks the importance of the duties entrusted to him. My Ministers trust that his inquiries and reports will have the effect of removing many difficulties, and of enabling both the Imperial Government and the Dominions concerned to more clearly appreciate the dangers of the present and the future and the best means of united preparation to meet them.

During the recess I paid an official visit, accompanied by the Hon. Dr. Pomare, Minister in Charge, to the Cook Islands, including Niue. I was received everywhere with great cordiality both by Natives and Europeans, and was glad to note many improvements effected in the Islands since my first visit in the year 1914, especially in the increase of facilities for education of the Natives. At the request of the Imperial Government I proceeded thence to Samoa, where I also met with a cordial reception from the Natives of those Islands. I desire to record the gratitude of myself and my Government for the hospitality accorded to me and to the Hon. Dr. Pomare by the Governor of American Samoa at Pago Pago, and by His Excellency the Governor of Fiji at Suva. It was necessary to call at both of those ports for coaling purposes.

I commend the matters to which I have referred to your earnest consideration, and I trust that Divine Providence may guide you in your deliberations.