

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.