

THE
NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE
 EXTRAORDINARY.

Published by Authority.

WELLINGTON, FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 1920.

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

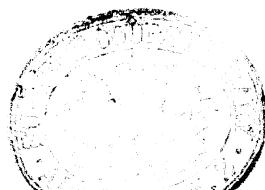
S P E E C H.

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

I am glad that the extension of my term of office as Governor-General has enabled me to meet you at the opening of the first session of the twentieth Parliament of New Zealand.

The visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to the Dominion has happily provided an occasion for a demonstration of loyalty to the Crown and of personal regard for the Sovereign and the Royal Family from the whole people of the Dominion. My Ministers desire to record that while arrangements were necessarily made for gatherings of school-children at every point of His Royal Highness' stay, no such arrangements were made for the assembly of the people generally. The great and orderly assemblies of the people at every place were entirely spontaneous, and their welcome everywhere to the Heir to the Throne was marked by an enthusiasm far beyond anything we are accustomed to witness in New Zealand. The Maori gathering at Rotorua afforded an equal opportunity for our fellow-subjects of the Native race to again demonstrate their loyalty to the Sovereign in a manner consonant with their customs and usages, and to repeat to the Prince the loyal welcome to which they had given expression on the occasion of the visit of the present King nineteen years ago.

Much of the undoubted success of the visit is due to His Royal Highness himself. From the moment of his first landing at Auckland his response to the great popular welcome won for him a personal regard and affection which will continue during the lives of all those who were privileged to meet him. Our soldiers, whom he claimed as his comrades of the war; the crowds of children, whom he delighted by his unaffected kindness and consideration to them; and the whole people, whose loyal greetings he never failed to recognize, will long bear in mind the visit which he himself has done so much to make memorable.



The common allegiance of all parts of the Empire to the Crown is the strong bond of the union of its peoples; and it is fortunate that His Majesty and his Heir have won a personal regard and respect, through and by means of which our loyalty is strengthened and the union of the Empire cemented and assured.

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

The conditions created by the war continue to give great anxiety to my Government and demand your careful consideration. Many of those conditions it is beyond our power to remedy. We cannot to any appreciable extent control the landed prices of imported articles, or the rates of foreign exchange; nor can we materially reduce our public debt, or the burden of the greatly increased interest and sinking fund which drains our revenue and compels the levy of taxation at rates above anything in our experience before the war; nor can we obtain from the English money-market the loan-moneys to meet the demands for works of all kinds, many of which are absolutely necessary. The Government is faced with demands for expenditure far beyond anything which the revenues of the Consolidated Fund can meet, and our only resource is to borrow within our own borders. Each section of the public regards as most urgent the class of work in which it is specially interested. The requirements of our returned soldiers must be met to the utmost limit of possible finance. But the acquisition of land for their settlement alone necessitates provision of moneys many times in excess of the normal borrowing in years when the London market was open. The singular success of the Repatriation Boards in establishing our soldiers in business occupations, and the honourable performance by the men of their engagements for the refund of loans in regular instalments, encourage my Ministers to anticipate larger provision for the purposes of that class of repatriation advances. The demands for schools, housing, the extension of telegraphs and post-offices, and the installation of works to provide electrical power are only some examples of the pressure of public opinion for an increase of expenditure of capital moneys.

The revenues can barely provide the great increases in salaries, wages, and charges which cannot be avoided. It may justly be contended that increases in the salaries, wages, and charges of services such as the Railways and the Post and Telegraph Department may be provided by increases in the charges upon those who use these services. But it must be remembered that all such increases involve corresponding increments throughout the whole Public Service, which can only be met out of general taxation.

It is necessary to bear in mind that in the present year other conditions over which the Dominion has no control may gravely affect the receipts of the people from our industries, and indirectly affect our revenue. The deficiency of ships, combined with the congestion in British ports, has caused much delay and inconvenience, which cannot be obviated by any direct effort of our own, though no opportunity has been lost of impressing the position upon Imperial Ministers; and at the same time the excess of supply of our meat in Great Britain above the demand has been the cause of the gravest anxiety to my Ministers. On the other hand, the supply of wheat for the world's use is computed to be considerably short of the requirements, and my Government has found it necessary to make provision for an increased production of wheat in New Zealand by guarantees of prices to the farmer, and at the same time to prevent a substantial rise in the cost of bread by a large subvention to the millers.

You will have before you, in the financial proposals of the Budget, an indication of the measures which my Ministers propose to enable the Dominion to meet the difficulties here briefly outlined. In many respects they are such as to demand the co-operation of all parties in Parliament; and my Ministers hope to have the benefit of the advice as well as of the assistance of your House in the effort to meet the emergency and overcome the difficulties.

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

The legislation of the two preceding sessions of Parliament relating to the control of trade and the prevention of undue profits has proved in some respects to be defective, and proposals will be laid before you for amendments of the law in this respect. Though there is substantial evidence that further abnormal increases of prices have been prevented by the existing legislation, and that under its influence trade is gradually becoming established on a more reasonable basis, there are strong indications that if the existing prosperity is to be continued extravagance must be avoided, and industry and economy must be encouraged by every possible means.

The date for the coming into operation of the Legislative Council Act, 1914, has been fixed by Proclamation since the last session of Parliament. The Act will come into force on the 31st January, 1921; and you will, in accordance with the promise of my Ministers, have an opportunity of reconsidering its provisions during your present session, when some amendments will be submitted in the form of a Bill by my Government.

Since the consolidation of our statute law in the year 1908 many amendments of the various statutes have been passed. My Ministers think it desirable that compilations of the more important Acts, especially those relating to local government, should be effected to enable those interested to have in their hands the whole law on the subject in one Act in lieu of the present necessity for correction of the original law by the various amending provisions. During the recess compilations of the Municipal Corporations Act and the Counties Act have been prepared, and an opportunity of amendment of the existing law on both subjects and of extending the powers of Municipal Corporations and of County Councils is also thereby provided.

The Public Trustee at present has charge of numerous trusts of Native lands and moneys in addition to his duties as a trustee of public and private European trust estates. My Ministers consider it desirable that a complete separation of the Native from the European trusts should be effected, and that the Native trusts held by the Public Trustee, and also the trust-moneys held by Maori Land Boards, should be vested in a special Native Trustee with a separate Board. A Bill will be submitted to you with this object, and with the further object of enabling Native trust-moneys to be utilized for the benefit of the Natives in a manner which is not at present possible under the statutory powers of the Public Trustee.

Under the powers conferred by the Mandate of the Treaty of Peace with Germany, and by your legislation of last session, the Government of Western Samoa has been initiated in succession to the military rule which has controlled those islands since the occupation by New Zealand troops in the early months of the war. The Orders in Council which have been issued, providing a basis of law for the islands and for their government under New Zealand, will be placed before you.

Bills amending the laws relating to land, education, local government, pensions, taxation, undesirable immigrants, the Public Service, and other matters have been prepared, or are in course of preparation, and will be submitted to you during your present session.

My Ministers invite your serious consideration of methods to obviate the recurrence of industrial unrest. It is becoming apparent that the present provisions of the law for the settlement of industrial disputes are not altogether satisfactory to the unions of workers, who refuse in many instances to adopt the settlement proposed.

It is the desire of the public and of the Government, which holds the public authority, that public employees, whether paid by salary or by wage, should be satisfied as far as is possible with the conditions of their service; and in most cases of private employment the employers are equally desirous of the establishment of methods which will enable friendly discussion of the relations of employer and employed, and a better understanding by each party to the dispute of the difficulties of the other.

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

In accordance with the resolution passed by your House in the last session of the preceding Parliament, proposals will be laid before you for an increase in the payment to members. A Bill consolidating the Civil List will be submitted, the provision for the payment of Ministers and members being transferred from the Legislature Act to the Civil List, and thus the annual-recurring charge will be met without further appropriation.

It is proposed that the salaries on the Civil List shall not be reducible by taxation or be alienable in any manner. By this means definitive sums will be ascertainable as the remuneration of Judges, Ministers, and members of Parliament. The effect of the graduation of incomes for taxation purposes adopted since the war has been, in the case of the Judges, to reduce the salaries, which are, by the Supreme Court Act, declared to be irreducible during their tenure of office.

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

This will be the last occasion on which I shall have the honour of opening a session of the New Zealand Parliament, and I cannot permit the occasion to pass without expressing my most grateful personal thanks to those who, during the years that I have represented His Majesty in this Dominion, have constituted, or who now form part of, the two Houses of the Legislature.

I have held office for a longer consecutive period than any of my predecessors, and during that time the Empire has been confronted with the greatest war that has ever been waged. By the mercy of Providence the crisis has been successfully met, and we live once again under the blessings of Peace. The nation has maintained a united front throughout the years of war, and I am convinced that in the times which are before us our peoples will surmount their troubles in a like spirit.

I assure you that I am leaving the Dominion with the deepest regret. After so long a sojourn among the inhabitants of these Islands my close association with them has made me feel one of them, and when I leave I shall never forget them and the many kindnesses which I and mine have always received at their hands.

My earnest prayer is that New Zealand will always emerge triumphant from any difficulties which may beset her, and that her people will flourish great and true, ever mindful of the traditions which are the heritage and birthright of all who live under the British flag.