

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.