



THE
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 EXTRAORDINARY.

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THE First Session of the Twenty-second 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,—

In November of last year the people of this Dominion learned with deep sorrow of the death of Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, who during her long life was beloved and revered in all parts of the Empire. On behalf of the people of this Dominion I sent a message of condolence to His Majesty the King.

In view of the fact that an Imperial Conference has been called for October, Parliament has been summoned at an earlier date than usual, to facilitate the departure of my Prime Minister to attend the Conference. It is certain that questions of great importance affecting international and Imperial affairs must arise for discussion and decision. Harmony and co-operation between all parts of the Empire are essential if we are to fulfil our high destiny, and towards that end the Imperial Conference is a potent and vital agency.

Important assemblies of delegates to the League of Nations at Geneva have been attended by my Government's representative, and at the next meeting the Right Hon. Sir Francis Bell, who for some time administered the Department of External Affairs, will represent New Zealand.

I am pleased to have been able this year to make an extended tour in the Cook Islands, Niue, and Western Samoa. Everywhere I was met by warm demonstrations of loyalty and of satisfaction at the efforts which are being made by New Zealand to maintain and improve the welfare of the Native population.

In the Mandated Territory of Western Samoa I had opportunity of making myself acquainted with all sections of the population, and of studying the system of administration generally. The evidence of progress in every direction is remarkable. The satisfaction displayed by the Natives in their conditions of livelihood, their ever-increasing efforts to improve their land, their interest in sanitation and education, and the complete confidence which they express in the Administration are most gratifying. I am firmly convinced that the Territory is being governed under a wise, just, and far-seeing policy, and in accordance with the best traditions of British rule.

I also paid visits to Pago Pago (in American Samoa), to the Tongan Group, and to His Excellency the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific at Suva. I trust these visits may have been useful in promoting and maintaining friendly relations with those who are associated in administering the affairs of the Native races in the Pacific.

I have also had the opportunity of visiting various parts of the Dominion, and have been deeply touched by the strong Imperial sentiment which was manifested, not only in the large centres of population, but equally in the most remote parts. The generally prosperous conditions prevailing conveyed to me the impression that this Dominion is by application and industry rapidly recovering from its post-war difficulties.

During the year a battleship squadron of the United States Fleet visited New Zealand, and the friendly relations which were manifested between the officers and men of the squadron and the citizens of the Dominion must prove beneficial in promoting mutual good will and understanding between the United States of America and this Dominion. I also welcomed, on behalf of the people of New Zealand, His Majesty's Australian Squadron, the Japanese training-ship "Iwate," and the French sloop "Cassiopée."

The arrival of His Majesty's cruiser "Diomede" to form part of the New Zealand naval unit aroused widespread interest, and, while the addition of this cruiser means an increase in our expenditure on naval defence, my Advisers are of the opinion that still more must be done before New Zealand can claim to be bearing her fair share of Imperial naval defence.

The New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, which I opened at Dunedin in November last, proved a remarkable success from every point of view. The results must prove beneficial to the whole of New Zealand. The Exhibition should procure more adequate recognition of the value of our industries, both primary and secondary, and also produce good results in promoting trade within the Empire.

During the month of February I visited the Waiapu district, and was met by a very large gathering of the Native race on the occasion of the consecration of a Maori carved church erected by the Ngatiporou Tribe in memory of their sons who fell in the Great War. I noted with great satisfaction the expression given to the deep loyalty to the Throne which animates the Maori race of New Zealand. I was also much impressed with the earnest desire of the Maori people to improve their lands, and to promote industries which will enable the rising generation to find adequate scope for its energies and aspirations.

My Native Minister, in accordance with the provisions of section 29 of the Native Land Amendment and Native Land Claims Adjustment Act of last session, entered into negotiations with the Natives for an agreement in respect of fishing rights in Taupo waters, and it is considered that the arrangements which were decided upon will be satisfactory to all concerned.

Early in this year the Right Hon. Sir Robert Stout retired from the office of Chief Justice. During his long and illustrious career he rendered eminent public service to this Dominion, and carries with him in his retirement the good will of the whole community. The Hon. C. P. Skerrett has been appointed to fill the vacancy.

The Hon. Sir James Allen, who for six years has filled, with conspicuous zeal and ability, the position of High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, retires on the 31st July next. The Hon. Sir James Parr has been appointed to succeed him.

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

The results of the financial year ending on the 31st March last have been very satisfactory. The surplus of actual revenue over expenditure was £1,150,000. Part of this surplus has been utilized to reduce the public debt, and £500,000 has been transferred to the Public Works Fund. My Ministers are of opinion that, in view of the general financial and commercial outlook, every economy will require to be exercised this year, and that it would be unwise to make further reductions in taxation in view of the probability of a substantial fall in the revenue.

My Ministers, with a view to providing for any possible reaction in the public finance of the Dominion, have arranged for a special Committee to investigate and report as to what measures may be taken in connection with economy and control of expenditure during the current financial year.

In order to furnish further capital and overtake arrears of advances to settlers, subscriptions were invited to a 5½-per-cent. loan for this purpose. I am pleased to state that the amount of £5,000,000 which was received will enable the desired result to be obtained. A loan of £6,000,000, issued at £98 10s., for 5 per cent., has been successfully floated in London for purposes of development and for the furtherance of the productive power of the Dominion.

The impending changes in the conditions relating to goods entitled to preference under the Customs tariff, referred to last year, were brought into operation at the beginning of the year. I have every reason to believe that these changes will, on the whole, promote increased employment of labour within the Empire without adversely affecting the revenue.

Legislation dealing with finance and the annual taxing provisions, and amendments of the existing law relating to public revenues, local bodies' loans, and National Provident Fund will be submitted to you for consideration.

Information is now being collected for the purpose of preparing legislation to assist people with large families and small incomes, and it is hoped that a Bill dealing with this important matter will be presented to Parliament.

Members will also be asked to consider various proposals dealing with industrial and social legislation.

The importance of finance to the farmer and settler has been the subject of special attention, and in September last I appointed a Commission to investigate conditions regarding rural credits and agricultural banks operating in other countries. The Commission has almost completed its inquiries, and its report will be duly laid before you.

The subject of agricultural education has been engaging the attention of my Ministers, who are impressed with the need for a greater extension of scientific farming methods among our primary producers. Proposals for the establishment of a central agricultural college, for the development of farm training schools for lads, and for increasing the number of agricultural instructors throughout the Dominion are at present receiving earnest consideration, and legislation, where necessary, to give effect to these proposals will be laid before you.

The question of closer settlement is engaging the attention of the Government. The gradual reduction of land values to a basis giving a greater measure of stability has enabled my Ministers to purchase areas for subdivision.

Satisfactory progress is being made in connection with irrigation schemes, particularly in Otago. By this means, large tracts of country, otherwise unproductive, are being made available for settlement.

Legislation will be submitted dealing with the settlement of pumice and gum lands.

In the opinion of my Ministers some further supervision should be imposed over borrowing by local authorities, and a Bill dealing with the question will be introduced.

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

I note that the gross trade of the Dominion has been fairly well maintained in the past year, although the value of exports, owing to a fall in prices, does not balance favourably with imports, which show a substantial increase. I have no doubt, however, that with a realization of the position the adjustment of the trade balance will be gradually brought about.

My Ministers have arranged for the Dominion to be represented at the Toronto Exhibition in August next, thus recognizing the importance and desirability of inter-Empire trade and communication.

By arrangement with the Government, Sir Frank Heath, Secretary to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in England, visited New Zealand in February last to advise on the question of scientific organization for the assistance of primary and secondary industries. My Ministers have carefully considered the proposals contained in the report, and legislation in this connection will be submitted.

A measure dealing with the important subject of town-planning will be laid before you for consideration.

Bills will be submitted to you for the purpose of compiling and amending the existing law with regard to mining, hospitals and charitable institutions, and fire brigades.

A Bill will also be laid before you for the purpose of effecting improvements in the licensing law.

You will be asked to consider legislation designed to make better provision for University education in the Dominion. A comprehensive measure has been prepared on the lines suggested by the Royal Commission whose report was laid before you last year. It is intended to repeal all existing legislation relating to the University of New Zealand and its affiliated colleges, and to reconstitute the University as a federal University.

Other Bills will be laid before you dealing with amendments to the law relating to lands, dairy-produce export control, census and statistics, destitute persons, scenery-preservation, and other matters.

In commending these various matters to your consideration, I trust your deliberations will be directed by Divine Providence.

By Authority: W. A. G. SKINNER, Government Printer, Wellington.