



THE
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THE Second 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 statement of the causes of the calling of this Session of Parliament together:—

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

It is with pleasure that I again meet you in Parliament assembled.

Since your last session I have had further opportunities of visiting various parts of the Dominion and have been deeply impressed by the spirit of loyalty which is everywhere in evidence, as well as by the warmth of the welcome extended to me as His Majesty's representative.

The visit of Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of York aroused great enthusiasm throughout the Dominion, and provided an occasion for a demonstration of loyalty to the Crown and personal regard for the Sovereign and the Royal Family. The welcome to our Royal visitors was in every way as whole-hearted as that which was accorded in previous years to Their Majesties the King and Queen and to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

At the Maori gathering at Rotorua our fellow-subjects of the Native race again strikingly demonstrated their loyalty to the Sovereign in accordance with their customs and usages.

The visit of Their Royal Highnesses, I am confident, will still further strengthen the ties which bind the citizens of this Dominion to the Motherland.

The Imperial Conference, at which this Dominion was represented by my Prime Minister and the Right Honourable Sir Francis Bell, last year was notable for many important resolutions, some of which affect the Colonial Laws Validity Act, reserving of Bills, and extra-territorial operation of Dominion legislation. These subjects have been referred by the Imperial Conference to a committee which, after consultation with the Dominions, will advise whether special legislation is necessary to give effect to the resolutions.

Other matters dealt with at the Imperial Conference are defined in a report of the proceedings which will be laid before you at an early date.

At the conclusion of the meeting of the Imperial Conference my Prime Minister visited the graves of our soldiers in France and Belgium. He was deeply impressed by the care and attention which have been exercised by the Imperial War Graves Commission in carrying out the work entrusted to their charge.

The opening of the Federal House of Parliament at Canberra in May last was an event of outstanding importance in the history of the sister Dominion of Australia. New Zealand was represented at the ceremony by the Honourable the Minister of Lands, through whom New Zealand's congratulations to the Commonwealth were transmitted.

At the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva last year the Dominion was represented by the Right Honourable Sir Francis Bell and by the High Commissioner. The most important event at this meeting was the admission of Germany as a member of the League, with a permanent seat on the Council. A report of the proceedings has been prepared and will be laid before you in due course.

During the recess the Minister of External Affairs has visited the Mandated Territory of Samoa and personally discussed with the Administrator and the inhabitants of the Territory matters pertaining to the welfare of both races. The continued progress of the Native population in their conditions of livelihood, their general prosperity, and their confidence in the administration of their affairs are matters for satisfaction. It is gratifying also to know that the reports furnished to the League of Nations in accordance with the terms of the mandate held by New Zealand have earned the commendation of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League.

At the instance of President Coolidge a Disarmament Conference has commenced its deliberations at Geneva. My Ministers have arranged for the Dominion to be represented by the High Commissioner, Admiral of the Fleet Earl Jellicoe, and Rear-Admiral Beal.

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

The results of the financial year ended on the 31st March last are very satisfactory, especially so in view of the uncertainty of the financial position during the period. The surplus of revenue over expenditure amounted to £587,000. Part of this surplus has been utilized to reduce the public debt, and the balance carried forward to meet any extraordinary demands that may arise during the present year. My Ministers are of opinion that in view of the general and financial outlook for the current year rigid economy must be maintained. To this end my Ministers have again arranged for a special Committee to scrutinize carefully the estimates and report as to the measures to be taken to ensure economy and strict control of expenditure.

A further loan of £6,000,000, issued at £99 10s. per cent., bearing interest at 5 per cent., has been successfully floated in London, and the proceeds will be devoted to the construction and improvement of railways, hydro-electric-power stations, and other public works designed to assist in the development of the productive power of the Dominion.

I mentioned in my speech at the opening of the last session of Parliament that in connection with naval defence my Advisers were of the opinion that more should be done before New Zealand could claim to have taken her fair share of the burden of the defence of the Empire. In the discussion at the Imperial Conference the Prime Minister of Great Britain stated emphatically that the best form of assistance that the Dominions could give would be by way of a contribution to the cost of the naval base at Singapore, and my Advisers intend to submit proposals in that respect for your consideration.

For the purpose of co-ordinating and regulating the borrowing of local authorities, and of giving local governing bodies the benefit of expert advice, a Local Government Loans Board Act was passed last year. In pursuance of the Act a representative Board has been appointed and has taken up

the duty of investigating the loan proposals brought forward by the local authorities. It is anticipated that the operations of the Board will be of great benefit to the local authorities concerned and to the Dominion generally.

Following the report of the Commission which investigated the question of rural credits in other countries, a Rural Advances Act was passed last session, and came into operation on the first of April. Loans are now being granted, and as soon as sufficient mortgages have been created for the purpose it is proposed to issue bonds secured on the mortgages, and it is hoped that investors will take up the bonds and thereby assist in financing the farmer.

During the recess a Royal Commission of departmental experts was appointed to consider and report upon the revision of the Customs tariff. This Commission has been taking evidence in various parts of the Dominion, and its report should shortly be received. A new tariff will then be prepared and submitted for your scrutiny and revision. You will appreciate that the intended introduction of a tariff prohibits any intimation being given at this stage of the session of the proposals of my Ministers with regard to alterations in the methods or subjects of taxation.

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

It has been the aim of my Advisers to improve the trade relations of this Dominion with other countries, and especially to foster trade within the Empire. With this end in view various conferences with representative people were held by my Prime Minister during his visit to England and to Canada, and also by the Minister of Industries and Commerce during his recent visit to Australia.

The question of land-settlement has been receiving the earnest consideration of my advisers, whose difficulties in this respect have been greatly accentuated by the prevailing unfavourable economic conditions.

The protracted instability in the prices of our primary products in the world's markets, together with the increased cost of development, has been reflected in a corresponding uncertainty in land-values, and has so seriously affected the position of many of the country's settlers that available resources have been severely taxed in an endeavour to place them on a sound footing.

The Maori Arts and Crafts Act, which was included in the legislation passed last session, was brought into operation during the recess. As honourable members are aware, the main principles of the Act are to foster and encourage the study and practice of Maori arts and crafts. The Board set up to administer the Act has entered upon its duties with enthusiasm. I am pleased to give due acknowledgment to the Maoris themselves for their interest in the legislation passed and in its administration.

One of the principal Acts passed last session was that providing for town and regional planning schemes. It is encouraging to note the interest and spirit which local governing bodies have shown in the legislation. It has been recognized that in this young and fast-growing country regard must be had for the future in making provision for the laying-out of closely-populated areas.

My Ministers think that in accordance with the new spirit existing in international relations the time is now opportune to review some of the legislation passed during the war period. An Act was passed in 1922 removing certain disabilities arising from nationality, and it is now proposed to introduce a Bill removing disabilities imposed on subjects of enemy races, relating to employment in educational work, the acquisition of land, and immigration. It is also proposed to repeal the special provisions of the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act, 1919, whereby a British woman being the wife of a person of enemy origin may petition for divorce in certain cases.

Bills will also be submitted to you for the purpose of compiling and amending the existing law relating to Public Service superannuation, public

works, Justices of the Peace, Magistrates' Courts, divorce and matrimonial causes, and education reserves.

The establishment of Children's Courts under the Child Welfare Act has proved of great benefit in dealing with juvenile delinquents. Certain amendments, however, have been found necessary to improve the working of the Act, and an amending Bill will be laid before you.

A Bill to amend the Bankruptcy Act will also be introduced. It is proposed to include in this Bill provisions which will further secure the position of those making advances to dairy-farmers on the security of their milk cheques, and thus make easier the finance of those engaged in this important national industry.

Bills will be submitted dealing with amendments to the law relating to industrial disputes, shops and offices, Legislature, motor-vehicles, stock, property law, land, mining, licensing, and other matters.

I commend these various matters to your careful attention, and I earnestly hope that Divine Providence may guide your deliberations to the furtherance of the happiness and welfare of the people of this Dominion.

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