

On the return of the members to their own Chamber, Mr. Speaker read a copy of the address delivered to the Assembly by His Excellency the Governor:—

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

1. Various causes prevented the last Assembly from legislating on many subjects materially affecting the welfare of the Colony, and it has been reserved for you to undertake that important duty.

2. Questions involving numerous conflicting interests remain for your consideration and adjustment, and in the solution of these difficulties an arduous task awaits you.

3. To enable me to call to my councils advisers possessing the confidence of the General Assembly, is naturally a subject which will engage your earliest attention. This may be considered the corner stone on which all other legislation should be built; and I now repeat, in the most explicit terms, the assurance which I gave on the prorogation of the last Assembly, that I would give my confidence to the gentlemen who possess that of the Legislature, and that whenever changes become necessary, I would allow no personal feelings to influence my public conduct.

4. I doubt not that the gentlemen who accept from you a responsibility conferring such an honorable distinction on themselves will consign to forgetfulness all of the past which has no reference to the future; that they will arm themselves with a determination to disregard all private interests, and, devoting themselves heart and soul to those of New Zealand, they will declare what ought to be enacted for the welfare of the Colony at large.

5. Such conduct will ensure respect from opponents and the esteem of Englishmen, not only in this Colony but throughout the Empire;—not only at the present time, but in the future, when party feelings and local interests have been obliterated or forgotten, and history records the strength or weakness of those who guided the infant steps of a great country.

6. If, on the contrary, the men chosen for this honorable trust should prove unequal to it, looking for the applause and preferring the interests of a party or a Province to that of the Colony at large, then will the power they are unable to wield remain but a moment in their nerveless grasp, and, once released, it will oscillate backward and forward until seized on by some statesmen worthy of their adopted country, strong in the rectitude and integrity of their intentions, and regardless of all considerations which can in any way hinder the progress of the public weal.

7. Such are the men whose counsel I desire and by whose advice I hope to be guided.

8. I rely entirely on your patriotic aid, and feel assured that, however divided you may be by political or party feelings, your best efforts will always be directed to secure the interests of the inhabitants of this country, mindful that their welfare depends on our efficient and faithful exercise of the powers vested in us by the Imperial Government.

9. My recent visit to the different Provinces has enabled me to bear testimony to their general prosperity, and to the evident signs of progress and improvement in each and all of them.

10. I have witnessed with great satisfaction the strong feelings of attachment and loyalty entertained throughout the Colony to the throne and person of our Gracious Sovereign, and I feel deeply grateful for the cordial reception every where accorded to myself as her Majesty's Representative.

11. Information has been prepared on various subjects, with a view to enable the gentlemen honored by your confidence to lay before you certain measures of importance:—among them I may mention a proposal to extinguish the claim of the New Zealand Company on terms which are therein explained; another for an uniform postal communication with the Mother Country; the improvement and extension of our own overland posts; and an alteration in the Customs Laws; and I trust you will lose no time in authorising the formation of a Commission with full powers to settle the many vexed questions connected with Land Claims, and for the quieting of disputed titles.

12. Another subject will I trust engage your early attention, namely, the propriety of adopting some plan of final audit for the accounts of the General Government, which will be more satisfactory to the Assembly than the one at present in force.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

13. The utmost economy has been practised in the expenditure of the funds placed at my disposal by the late House of Representatives. The fullest accounts shall be submitted for your approval, and the most complete information afforded to your enquiries.

14. I have to request you to make an early provision for the repayment of £14,086 11s. 5d., advanced by the Union Bank of Australia, being part of a sum of thirty thousand pounds obtained under sanction of a resolution of the late House of Representatives.

GENTLEMEN OF THE ASSEMBLY,—

15. Your deliberations will be viewed with interest in the Mother Country; for whether in Great Britain or the Colonies, Englishmen watch the proceedings of their legislative bodies with the greatest attention.

16. But the Legislature of this Colony has no reason to shrink from such a scrutiny, for while adopting all that is good in the laws and usages of our Native Land, it has a cause for congratulation of which few other lands colonized by Europeans can boast.

17. In order to form this flourishing and rapidly increasing Colony, no property has been wrested from its Native owners; no hospitality has been violated; no laws of humanity or justice have been trampled under foot. The land enriched by the sweat of our brows has been honestly acquired and is rightfully enjoyed. Nor, when we consider that in place of a dreadful form of idolatry, we have communicated to the Natives a knowledge of the blessings of Christianity, and of the arts and appliances of civilization, can it be urged that the advantage has been exclusively on the side of those who gave money and received land alone in exchange for it.

18. These are considerations which make England proud of her youngest Colony—and she has reason to be so. Situated in the same relative position in the Southern Hemisphere, similar in size to Great Britain, like her separated from other lands by broad seas, possessing the same natural advantages and colonized by the same hardy race, New Zealand cannot fail to become the Britain of Australasia.

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