

ADDRESS
OF
HIS HONOR
THE SUPERINTENDENT

ON OPENING THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE PROVINCIAL
COUNCIL OF CANTERBURY, N.Z.

22ND OCTOBER, 1861.

CHRISTCHURCH :
PRINTED AT THE UNION OFFICE, GLOUCESTER STREET.

ADDRESS

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A D D R E S S .

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
COUNCIL,—

IN opening this, the first session of the third Provincial Council of Canterbury, it is my privilege to state to you that the general condition of the Province is eminently prosperous.

Commerce and agriculture are alike steadily advancing, while the products of our splendid natural pastures are rapidly swelling the value of our exports.

Our revenues are abundantly equal to the age and present necessities and engagements of the Province; indeed, at no period since the advent of the first settlers has there existed such just cause for present contentment, or such manifestly solid ground upon which to base calculations for the future.

The past year has added greatly to our scanty

knowledge of the vast field of unexplored subterranean resources.

The labours of science have disclosed the presence in the Province of considerable mineral treasures.

As these latter are gradually developed, so also will be sufficiently established new centres of settlement and labour, and fresh fields for the exertion of private capital in divers public enterprises, such as the construction of branch railways, and other kindred aids to the development of that active commerce which is the truest test of national health.

During this session I hope to be in possession of such information relative to discoveries of coal as may justify my inviting your assistance in devising some means for immediately acquiring the great benefits that ought to result from such a discovery.

To this end I shall probably request your co-operation in an endeavour to induce the employment of private capital under such conditions as

will harmonize with a concurrent expenditure of public monies.

The accounts of the past financial year I shall cause to be immediately submitted to you.

You will be gratified to find that there remains a general balance in the Treasury amounting on the whole to near £30,000; and I am advised that there exists a reasonable prospect of the recent and present rate of revenue being steadily maintained.

You will therefore be in a position to sanction a very considerable outlay in the improvement of the country—present prosperity, however, also suggests and justifies the propriety of reducing and consolidating the debts of the Province; accordingly I purpose asking you to sanction the immediate redemption of the Canterbury Association Debentures; this being effected, would leave the proper debts of the Canterbury Government comprised within two items only, viz.: The Emigration Debentures, amounting to £30,000, and the Railway Loan Debentures, not yet sold. With respect to the former amount of £30,000, I may state that a considerable sum is secured by

unpaid notes of Assisted Emigrants; and that with regard to the Railway Loan, there has been as yet expended only £10,000 * in anticipation of its negotiation.

Before indicating in detail the leading items into which I shall recommend you to distribute the public income, I must earnestly ask your assistance in an endeavour to firmly engraft on the system that shall govern the future appropriation of the revenues of this Province, a great fundamental rule, to the effect that the land revenues shall be materially devoted to such works and outlays as are directly calculated to facilitate the beneficial use and occupation of the waste lands whence the revenue is derived.

In order to the effective maintenance of such a rule, it will every year be necessary to make a special allocation of a specific proportion of revenue to rural roads, bridges, and drainage. The comparatively high price of waste lands in Canterbury was clearly intended by the Legislature,

* To make the ordinary Provincial Treasury Credit amount to the sum stated above, the Draft on the Railway Loan Account should be shown to be £20,000 nominally, whereas £10,000 only has as yet been drawn.

and is paid by the land purchaser as a provision not for the establishment of luxurious cities, but for the purchase of those roads, bridges, and means of drainage which are necessary to the reasonable enjoyment of the lands sold. A just proportion of expenditure having been fully made in any particular district, such district should thenceforward mainly support the expenditure consequent on disrepairs, and also of such additional works as the inhabitants thereof might deem it desirable to entertain. While, on the other hand, it might be held as just that municipal revenues—for example, the provincial three-eighths of the Customs duties, and various other resources of a kindred nature—should be applicable principally to assisting the local efforts of town municipalities.

I am assured that there exists no reason for entertaining doubts as to your entire willingness to ordain an equitable apportionment of revenue in favor of those to whom it is morally due. I am aware that it will be perfectly unnecessary for me to urge reasons of policy in this behalf. I may state, however, that complaints, in themselves

natural enough, have from time to time reached me from certain outlying districts, alleging neglect of the claims of the inhabitants of those districts upon the Treasury. These complaints, although often quite inconsistent with a liberal judgment on past attempts to effect a fair balance of conflicting demands, and the great difficulty, nay impossibility, hitherto of their adjustment by reference to abstract rules or axioms never as yet formally recognised by the Legislature, yet those complaints have, I believe, generally arisen out of circumstances that have excited a galling belief that the land revenue has not been administered fully in accordance with the uses to which they (the complainants), before they became land purchasers, justly considered the land revenue to be mainly limited.

I believe, gentlemen, that after your deliberations of this session there will be an entire absence of any substantial ground for discontent of the nature I have indicated, and am hopeful that any impulsive tendency towards dismemberment of the Province, encouraged as it has been by the existence of a law called the "New Pro-

vinces Act," may entirely disappear from Canterbury.

Since the last extension of the number of the Provincial Council in 1857, the population has not only very materially increased, but the respective populations and interests of the different districts no longer bear the same relative proportion one to the other as formerly. It has therefore become desirable to effect a re-adjustment of the representation. For this purpose I shall cause to be presented to you a bill providing additional members for both the northern and southern districts of the Province, and thus increasing the number of the Council from 26 to 33.

Recent advices from the Northern Island justify a strong hope that the late native disturbances have definitely ceased, and that therefore Canterbury, in common with the other Provinces of this island, at any rate, will not be called upon to defend their claim to entire exemption from all charges in respect of an internal war, that may perhaps be regarded, under recent circumstances, as having been necessary on various

grounds. Possibly it may be held by some to have been indispensable to the security of the northern landed estate, but it could not be held as in any degree essential to the conservation of any interest of this island. I certainly see no reason why the Government of New Zealand should be called upon to pay the costs of a war, induced by a long train of circumstances, which the Imperial Government had specially retained to itself the sole right to deal with.

It is worthy of remark that there is no mention in the constitutional civil list of any provision for the cost of maintaining an army, or for the suppression of a native rebellion. Had the Imperial Government, by the Constitution, handed over to the people of New Zealand the government of the country without excepting the Maories, it is possible in such a case that the late necessity for an appeal to arms might not have arisen. Certainly, opportunity would have been given to the settlers to attempt a peaceful solution of all difficulties. The Crown did, however, solely govern the Maories; under its government causes of war arose, and that Government cannot consistently

with liberal principles coercively exact indemnity from the colonies against the expenses and risks of an administration, neither erected nor desired by them. In the very limited space allotted for brief mention of this subject, it is impossible to touch upon many reasons in support of the opinion I have expressed in reference to the cost of the native war. A discussion of the policy of the late war would be extra-functional on your part, nevertheless it is not only within the limits of your proper functions to discuss the legality or policy of any and all rumoured general financial arrangements likely to affect the revenues of the Provincial Government as settled by existing statutes and customs, but it may also not unfrequently be your duty to give effect to your opinions on such matters by way of memorial or resolution.

The recent discovery of gold in the adjoining Province of Otago will, I anticipate, be productive of immediate as well as great ultimate advantage to Canterbury. Notwithstanding that great numbers of our ablest and most respectable working settlers have visited the gold fields, I am well

advised that no injury will result to us on that account, as it is probable that nearly every man will return to his home with increased means. Further, we may expect a very useful addition to our capitalists and labouring population from Australia, by way of Otago.

From representations made by the Provincial geologist, Mr. Haast, I am prepared for the discovery of a gold field in the northern and one also in the southern district of Canterbury.

The Lyttelton and Christchurch Railway is progressing satisfactorily. Papers relating to the purchase of the site, together with a statement of all disbursements on the railway works, will be submitted to you.

With reference to the ocean postal service of Canterbury, I will only remark that its past and present condition render it desirable that the Province should make immediate provision for the more speedy transmission of its own mails. The Otago English mail was delivered in Dunedin a week ago; the Canterbury mail had not this morning arrived in Lyttelton, notwithstanding

both mails arrived in Australia per same vessel.

The greatly increased and rapidly increasing population of the principal towns of the Province has brought with it a daily increasing necessity for the outlay of very considerable sums of money upon numerous works and appliances indispensable both in a social and sanitary point of view. As it would be eminently unjust to charge the general revenue of the Province with the sole maintenance of the towns, it is a matter of imminent necessity that they should at once assume the management of their own internal affairs. All the machinery at present required for this end is to be found in the Municipal Councils Ordinance, Sess. XIV., No. 2, it is perfectly evident that the major portion of the outlay on public works within the boundaries of towns in New Zealand, as in all other parts of the world, must be charged on the inhabitants and properties therein. However distasteful or alarming the word taxation may be to colonial ears, yet it will be found that taxation is a condition inseparable from health and comfort in towns.

From facts within the knowledge of Government, I am firmly of opinion that with regard to the inhabitants of the two principal towns in Canterbury, their choice of alternatives will very shortly be limited to taxation or typhus fever. It is my intention to ask your concurrence in a scheme for the endowment of such towns as shall accept Municipal Government.

I shall request your deliberation on certain measures for improving the organization of the armed police force, making better provisions for the diversion of roads, and the suppression of the dog nuisance—an English Agents' Bill—House-keeper's Bill—Roads Diversion—Road Ordinance, and Public Hospital Amendment Bill. In the course of this session I shall ask you to make provision for steam communication with Melbourne; also for coastal service between the different parts of this province and Otago; for the erection of a beacon or lighthouse on the heads of Lyttelton harbour; a Lunatic Asylum; also a great number of minor requirements.

The estimated expenditure of the present

financial year has been, together with the estimated revenue for the same period, carefully compiled.

Gentlemen,—Having very briefly adverted to the leading matters of business to be presented for your acceptance this session, before leaving you to the commencement of your labours, I beg to assure you of my confidence that nothing will arise to interrupt the good understanding with the Council which is necessary to promote the effective transaction of public business. Gentlemen, I have now to declare this Council to be duly opened.

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Christchurch : Printed at the Union Printing Office, Gloucester Street,
for the Proprietors, by Charles Lucas, Official Printer to the
Provincial Government of Canterbury.

ADDRESS

HIS HONOR

THE PRESIDENT

OF THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

1862

NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM'S