



NEW ZEALAND
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE
(PROVINCE OF NELSON).

Published by Authority.

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By His Honor's command,

S. L. MULLER, Provincial Secretary.

VOL. V.

NELSON, MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 1857.

No. 2.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL.

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 1857.

The Fourth Session of the Provincial Council was opened at the Council Chamber this day, at one o'clock, upon which occasion his Honor the Superintendent delivered the following speech:—

MR. SPEAKER AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL—

1. It would have afforded me much pleasure to have deferred to your wishes, as expressed in a resolution which you forwarded to my predecessor, by not convening you at this period of the year—a period which I am fully aware is to a considerable number of you highly inconvenient. The exigencies, however, of the public service will, I feel assured, sufficiently impress you with the necessity for the course now taken, and lead you cheerfully to give all necessary consideration to those subjects which require immediate attention.

2. In the efforts made by the people of this province to obtain representative institu-

tions, there was, I believe, a cherished hope that such institutions would ultimately lead to cheap, efficient, and responsible Government. To realize this hope, and increase their attachment to the representative features of the constitution, I shall feel much pleasure in co-operating with you.

3. The circumstances of the province appear to me to be such as to require, at present, no very extensive legislation. The few subjects which I shall submit for your consideration arise chiefly from acts passed by the General Assembly during its last session, and a few alterations which I conceive to be necessary in some of the acts passed at the last sitting of this Council; and which, although of great importance, will, I apprehend, present few difficulties in dealing with them.

4. A copy of the acts passed in the last session of the General Assembly will be laid before you, from which you will perceive that the power of legislating upon and administering the waste lands is conferred on this Council and the Government of the Province. Heavy obligations, however, accompany the transfer: a sum of about £4,000 will annually be

abstracted from our land revenue for a period of about thirty years, for the purpose of liquidating the claim of the New Zealand Company, which, with the cost of surveys, and the administration of the department, cannot, I consider, be estimated at less than £6,000 annually.

5. Should it appear to you that in the apportionment of the liabilities of the colony to the New Zealand Company, a larger portion of the debt is imposed upon this province than is required either by the justice or the circumstances of the case, I shall cordially unite with you in any effort to obtain a more equitable share of the burden.

6. An act, entitled the "Local Posts Act," will require your immediate attention, as no means exist at present for carrying out its provisions. It will therefore be necessary to fix the rates of postage to be charged, and to make provision for defraying any deficiency that may occur in the revenue in carrying the act into operation.

7. The want of available funds for the purposes of immigration has induced me to cause instructions to be forwarded to the Emigration Agent now in England, acquainting him that his services will not be required after the expiration of the shortest notice stipulated for by his engagement. I am nevertheless deeply impressed with the importance of keeping up a moderate and properly-regulated supply of labour; but the limited means which for some time are likely to be at the disposal of the Government, require that some less expensive system should be resorted to for that purpose. A considerable number of applications are recorded by the Immigration Commissioners from persons resident within the province who are desirous of having their friends brought hither by means of assisted passages. To aid in promoting this object is the earnest desire of the Government.

8. In accordance with an engagement entered into by Mr. Commissioner Maclean on behalf of the General Government, when completing the purchase of certain lands from the natives of this province, I have give given instructions to survey such reserves as were stipulated for by them; the immediate completion of which may be necessary to the validity of the purchase, and any further delay might possibly interrupt that friendship which has happily for so long a period existed between the European and native population.

9. Deeming the prompt administration of justice to be of the first importance to all civilized communities, I have felt it to be my duty to solicit the attention of his Excellency the Governor to the delay which has taken place in its dispensation within this province, consequent on the continued illness of his Honor

the Judge, and expressing my hope that his Excellency may be able to provide a remedy for so serious an evil.

10. The extensive opposition which has been unexpectedly offered in some districts to the operation of the "Education Act," passed in your last session, renders it desirable that that important subject should again receive your attentive consideration. In accordance with the 21st clause of the act, the first Half-Yearly Report of the Central Board will be laid before you: it can hardly fail to be of great assistance to you in pointing out where the present Act is capable of being made more useful or more generally acceptable, and any effort on your part to accomplish so desirable an object will have my concurrence.

11. The estimated income for the current year will be found by you to be inadequate to the performance of those public works required by the growing wants of the province; I, therefore, deem it desirable that the "Country Roads Act" passed in your last session, and which has failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was designed, should be amended, for which purpose I shall submit for your consideration such alterations as I trust will make it more consonant with the expressed wishes of the people.

12. The "Waste Lands Regulations" require, in my opinion, some modifications to adapt them to the altered circumstances of the province, one of the most important of which will be to afford facilities to those of our population who may be unable to procure profitable employment by working for hire, or who may be desirous of attaching themselves permanently to the interests of the province, to acquire small allotments of land, and permitting payment to be made by instalments over a series of years. Portions of our extensive pastoral districts might be made available for such purpose, and thus add considerably to the wealth of the province, not only by the stimulus that would be given to increased production, but by counteracting to a considerable extent the injurious annual drain of cash in the purchase and rental of land, at high prices, from absentee proprietors and speculators, occasioned by the inducement of credit being given by them, and the present land regulations requiring that immediate payment should be made for all lands purchased from the Government. The heavy debt imposed upon our land fund suggests, in my opinion, the necessity of a reconsideration of that portion of the regulations making free grants of land to naval and military settlers, with a view to their repeal. I, however, shall be prepared to concur with you in making those provisions to apply to such persons who may have served in any part of the colony of New Zealand—a class of persons

who are totally excluded by the present regulations.

13. A memorial has been presented to me (a copy of which will be laid before you) on behalf of the mechanics and labourers who formed part of the earliest settlers in this province, asking compensation for injuries sustained by them in consequence of the nonfulfilment of engagements made with them by the New Zealand Company. I hesitate not to call your attention to their claims, and if in any measure you may adopt to investigate them you should be satisfied of their being well founded, it will afford me much satisfaction to aid you in any endeavour to render them justice.

14. Estimates of the probable receipts and proposed expenditure will be submitted to you without delay. You will perceive, on reference to the latter, that I have made various reductions, which, while curtailing the expenses of the Government, will, I trust, not interfere with the efficient working in those departments in which such reductions have been made.

15. Any other subjects upon which I may deem it advisable to address you I shall take an early opportunity to call your attention to by message.

J. P. ROBINSON,
Superintendent.

12th January, 1857.