

It is particularly requested, that in every case the names be *very distinctly written* upon the cards to be delivered to the Lord Chamberlain, in order that there may be no difficulty in announcing them to His Royal Highness.

The State Apartments will be open for the reception of Company coming to Court at half-past one o'clock.

LATHOM,  
Lord Chamberlain.

*Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Thursday, February 9, 1888.*

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

I CONTINUE to receive from all other Powers cordial assurances of their friendly sentiments, as well as of their earnest desire to maintain the peace of the world.

My officers, in conjunction with those of the Emperor of Russia, have completed the demarcation of the Afghan boundary in conformity with the terms of the Convention of last year. I trust that the work which has thus been brought to a conclusion may tend to remove the possibility of misunderstanding between the two Powers in regard to their Asiatic possessions.

Animated by a desire to prevent the effusion of blood, I despatched a Mission to the King of Abyssinia, with the hope of dissuading him from engaging in a war with Italy. I deeply regret that my efforts have not been successful.

The deliberations of the Conference assembled at Washington to adjust questions which have arisen between the Dominion of Canada and the United States are still in progress.

The negotiations which were commenced in 1885, with respect to the regulation of the Suez Canal, have been brought to a conclusion so far as points of difference between myself and the French Republic are concerned.

I have also entered into an agreement with the French Republic for the protection of life and property in the group of the New Hebrides by a Joint Naval Commission.

A Conference of Delegates from the Powers interested in the sugar industry was summoned in London in the autumn to consider the possibility of putting an end to the injurious system of bounties; and they have made considerable progress towards the conclusion of a satisfactory arrangement.

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

The Estimates for the Services of this year, which will be laid before you, have been framed with due regard to economy. You will be asked to make provision for the improvements in the defence of the ports and coaling stations of my Empire which have been rendered urgently necessary by the advance of military science. You will also be asked to sanction an arrangement for providing a special squadron for the protection of Australasian commerce, the cost of which will be partially borne by the Colonies themselves.

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

The measures which, at the cost of great labour, you passed during the last session for the benefit of Ireland have been carefully carried into effect during the period which has since elapsed.

The result of this legislation, so far as it has been tested by a short experience, has been satisfactory. Agrarian crime has diminished; and the power of coercive conspiracies has sensibly abated. Measures tending to develop the resources of Ireland, and to facilitate an increase

in the number of the proprietors of the soil, will be laid before you.

Your attention will be invited to the subject of Local Government in England, and measures will be submitted to you for dealing with it, in combination with proposals for adjusting the relations between Local and Imperial finance, and for mitigating the burdens at present imposed upon the ratepayers.

The prospects of commerce are more hopeful than any to which I have been able to point for many years past. I deeply regret that no corresponding improvement is observable in the condition of agriculture. I commend the interests of that great industry to your attentive care, in the hope that means may be discovered for enabling it to meet more effectively the difficulties under which it labours.

You will be invited to consider legislative proposals for cheapening the Transfer of Land; for modifying the procedure by which Tithe Rent-charge is collected; for the promotion of Technical Education; for preventing undue preferences in the Rates charged by Railway Companies on foreign and domestic produce; for remedying abuses in the formation of Companies under limited liability; and for amending the Law as to the Liability of Employers in case of accidents.

Measures for improving the position of the Scottish Universities, and for regulating the Borough Police in Scotland, will be laid before you; and proposals will be submitted to you for diminishing the cost of Private Bill Legislation.

In these and all other efforts that you may make to promote the well-being of my people, I pray that you may be guided by the hand of Almighty God.

AT the Court at Osborne House, Isle of Wight, the 7th day of February, 1888.

PRESENT,

The QUEEN's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

WHEREAS by an Act passed in the tenth year of the reign of Her Majesty, intitled "An Act for the more easy recovery of small debts and demands in England," it is, among other things, enacted that it should be lawful for Her Majesty, with the advice of Her Privy Council, to order that the said Act be put in force in such county or counties as to Her Majesty, with the advice aforesaid, should seem fit, and to divide the whole or part of any such county (including all counties of cities, and counties of towns, cities, boroughs, towns, ports, and places, liberties, and franchises therein contained or thereunto adjoining) into districts; and to order that the County Court should be holden for the recovery of debts and demands, under the said Act, in each of such districts; and, from time to time, to alter such districts, as to Her Majesty, with the advice aforesaid, should seem fit; and, from time to time, with the advice aforesaid, to declare by what name, and in what towns and places, the County Court should be holden in each district:

And whereas Her Majesty was pleased, by an Order in Council, of the ninth day of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven, to order that the said Act be put in force in the counties and places therein specified, and the same was put in force accordingly:

And whereas by certain other Acts made and passed in the thirteenth, in the fourteenth, in the sixteenth, in the twentieth, in the twenty-second, in the twenty-ninth, in the thirty-first, in the