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Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Friday, August 7, 1874.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

THE time has arrived when I am enabled to release you from your attendance in Parliament.

In so doing, my first wish is to thank you for the readiness with which you have made provision for my son Prince Leopold on his attaining his majority.

My relations with all Foreign Powers continue to be friendly, and the influence arising from those cordial relations will be employed, as heretofore, in maintaining the obligations imposed by Treaties, and in promoting and consolidating the Peace of Europe.

The Emperor of Russia having made proposals for a Conference to be held at Brussels, the object of which is to lessen, by judicious regulations, the severities of war, I have, in common with other Powers, authorised a delegate to attend that Conference; but, before doing so, I have thought it right to obtain assurances from all the Powers thus represented, that no proposal shall be brought forward calculated either to alter the recognised rules of international law, or to place restrictions on the conduct of naval operations. The recommendations which may issue from the Conference will have my careful consideration, but I have reserved to myself full freedom of action in regard to their acceptance or rejection.

Negotiations have been undertaken for the renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty formerly in force between the Dominion of Canada and the United States of America. These negotiations, commenced at the desire and in the interest of the Dominion, have been temporarily suspended by the adjournment of the American Senate. They will be revived at an early date, and it is my hope that they may lead to an increase of commercial intercourse between my colonial subjects and the citizens of the United States.

I deeply lament the continuance in Spain of disturbances which form a single exception to the general tranquillity of Europe; but, while earnestly desiring the restoration of peace and civil order in that country, I believe that this result will be most surely brought about by a rigid abstinence from interference in the internal affairs of an independent and friendly State.

The Treaty recently concluded with the Sultan of Zanzibar, having for its object the suppression of East African Slave Trade, has been faithfully ob-

served, and has already done much to put an end to that traffic as carried on by sea. The exertions of my Naval and Consular servants, in that part of the world, will not be relaxed until complete success has been obtained.

I am thankful to say that the famine in India has, as yet, been attended with little mortality, a result mainly attributable, under Providence, to the precautions taken by my Indian Government. The strenuous exertions of my Viceroy, and of the officers serving under him, merit my high approbation.

Since the close of hostilities on the Gold Coast, steady progress has been made in the task of pacifying the country and of organising its administration. Treaties of Peace have been concluded with important tribes, and the King of Ashanti has persevered in the discharge of his obligations to this country.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I acknowledge the liberality with which you have provided for the charges of the State.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I have seen with pleasure the considerable reductions which you have been able to make in taxation. The total abolition of the sugar duties will not only confer a benefit on the consumers of an article in universal demand, but will also prove of much commercial advantage to the nation. The removal of the duty on horses is another measure well calculated to encourage the trade and industry of the country. Concurrently with these remissions, and with a further reduction of the Income Tax to a rate which is little more than nominal, you have been enabled to make important grants from the general revenue towards services which, though of Imperial concern, have hitherto been defrayed, either exclusively or in an undue proportion, out of local rates. I trust that these measures, when their full effect shall have been felt, will conduce to the general prosperity of the country, and will impart increased elasticity to the revenue.

Although your Session has been unavoidably curtailed of a third of its usual duration, I observe with satisfaction that you have been able to carry measures of general interest and importance.

I have cordially given my assent to the Act "for improving the health of women, young persons, and children employed in manufactures." By this measure I anticipate that not only will the health and education of the classes affected by it be promoted, but that the relations between the