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Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, August 15, 1876.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I AM happy to be able to release you from your attendance in Parliament.

My relations with all Foreign Powers are of a friendly character, and I look forward confidently to the maintenance of the good understanding which now prevails.

The efforts which, in common with other Powers, I have made to bring about a settlement of the differences unfortunately existing between the Porte and its Christian subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina have hitherto been unsuccessful, and the conflict begun in those Provinces has been extended to Servia and Montenegro. Should a favourable opportunity present itself, I shall be ready, in concert with my allies, to offer my good offices for the purpose of mediation between the contending parties, bearing in mind alike the duties imposed upon me by treaty obligations and those which arise from considerations of humanity and policy.

A difference has arisen between my Government and that of the United States, as to the proper construction of that article of the Treaty of 9th August, 1842, which relates to the mutual surrender of persons accused of certain offences. The inconveniences to both countries which would follow on a cessation of the practice of extradition are great and obvious, and I entertain the hope that a new arrangement may soon be arrived at, by which this matter may be placed on a satisfactory footing.

I am deeply thankful that my dear son, the Prince of Wales, has returned in good health from his lengthened journey through India. His presence in that part of my dominions has given occasion for the expression of feelings of loyalty and devotion to my throne which I highly value.

In pursuance of the power conferred upon me, I have, by proclamation, assumed the title of Empress of India. In making, as regards India, this addition to the ancient style of my Crown, I have desired to record, on an occasion of peculiar interest to me, the earnest solicitude which I feel for the happiness of my Indian people.

I trust that peace and order are re-established in the Malay Peninsula, and that the rulers of the native states will cheerfully accept the recommendations and assistance of my officers for the better government of their territories.

The visit to this country of the President of the Orange Free State has resulted in a satisfactory settlement of the long controversy which has existed with reference to the Province of Griqualand, and an important advance has thus been made towards that friendly and cordial co-operation of neighbouring States which is essential to the interests of South Africa.

The conference on South African affairs, with regard to which papers have already been laid before you, is now sitting in London, and cannot fail to contribute largely to the settlement of various important questions.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I thank you for the liberal supplies which you have voted for the public service.

The additional outlay required to place my army and navy upon a proper footing of efficiency, and the check which has been given to the advance of the revenue by the comparative stagnation of trade, have compelled me to propose to you an increase of taxation. I desire to acknowledge the readiness with which you have responded to that appeal, and at the same time to assure you that no effort shall be wanting to keep the expenditure of the country within the bounds of moderation.

I notice with satisfaction the increasing attention paid by you to the question of local finance, and your greater watchfulness over the cost of services which are every year becoming more important, and the consideration of which ought not to be dissevered from that of imperial expenditure.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

The Act which you have passed for the amendment of the Laws relating to Merchant Shipping will, I trust, promote the safety of our ships and seamen, without imposing unnecessary restrictions upon the conduct of a service in the prosperity of which our national interests are in so many ways involved.

The measure for making further provision respecting the Elementary Education of the country is one of great importance, and will complete the work on which successive Parliaments have for many years been engaged, by securing a due attendance at school of the children for whose benefit the means and the machinery of education have been so largely supplied.

I have readily given my assent to a Bill for facilitating the Regulation and Improvement of Inclosure Acts as will, I hope, tend to the preser-