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*Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, August 14, 1877.*

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

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

My relations with all foreign Powers continue to be friendly.

The exertions which, since the commencement of disturbances in Eastern Europe, I have not ceased to make for the maintenance of the general peace, have, unfortunately, not been successful. On the outbreak of war between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, I declared my intention of preserving an attitude of neutrality so long as the interests of this country remained unaffected. The extent and nature of those interests were further defined in a communication which I caused to be addressed to the Government of Russia, and which elicited a reply indicating friendly dispositions on the part of that State.

I shall not fail to use my best efforts, when a suitable opportunity occurs, for the restoration of peace, on terms compatible with the honour of the belligerents, and with the general safety and welfare of other nations.

If, in the course of the contest, the rights of my Empire should be assailed or endangered, I should confidently rely on your help to vindicate and maintain them.

The apprehensions of a serious famine in Southern India, which I communicated to you at the opening of the Session, have, I grieve to say, been fully verified. The visitation which has fallen upon my subjects in Madras and Bombay, and upon the people of Mysore, has been of extreme severity, and its duration is likely to be prolonged. No exertion will be wanting on the part of my Indian Government to mitigate this terrible calamity.

The Proclamation of my Sovereignty in the Transvaal has been received throughout the Province with enthusiasm. It has also been accepted with marked satisfaction by the Native Chiefs and Tribes; and the war, which threatened in its progress to compromise the safety of my subjects in South Africa, is happily brought to a close.

I trust that the measure which has been passed to enable the European communities of South Africa to unite upon such terms as may be agreed on, will be the means of preventing the recurrence of similar dangers, and will increase and

consolidate the prosperity of this important part of my Dominions.

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

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

I have issued a Royal Warrant to give effect to the provision which you have made for ensuring adequate promotion to the officers of my Army.

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

The measures which have been passed relating to the Prisons of the United Kingdom will secure economy and efficiency in their management, and at the same time, effect a considerable reduction in local burthens.

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, under the Act to which I have gladly given my assent, will obtain power to extend more generally the benefit of the higher education.

The Acts for reorganising the Superior Courts of Justice in Ireland, and for reforming and conferring an extensive equitable jurisdiction on the County Courts, will largely improve the administration of the law in that part of the United Kingdom.

I anticipate the best results from the Act which extends to the Sheriff Courts of Scotland jurisdiction in regard to heritable rights.

In bidding you farewell, I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest on your recent labours and accompany you in the discharge of all your duties.

Then a Commission for proroguing the Parliament was read; after which the Lord Chancellor said:

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

By virtue of Her Majesty's Commission, under the Great Seal, to us and other Lords directed, and now read, we do, in Her Majesty's name, and in obedience to Her commands, prorogue this Parliament to Tuesday, the thirtieth day of October next, to be then here holden; and this Parliament is accordingly prorogued to Tuesday, the thirtieth day of October next.