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*Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners, to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, September 7, 1880.*

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

**I**T is with satisfaction that I find myself at length enabled to release you from your arduous labours.

I continue to receive assurances of the most friendly character from all Foreign Powers.

The failure of the Sublime Porte to execute, according to its engagement, a plan which was agreed upon in April last for the determination of the Ottoman frontier lying towards Montenegro has caused unfortunate delays in the settlement of that question, and the Treaty of Berlin has not yet taken effect in other points of importance which remained open at the commencement of the Session.

The Governments which were parties to that Treaty have communicated to the Sultan their judgment on the means of bringing to a satisfactory settlement the Greek and Montenegrin Frontier Questions, on the administrative organization of the European Provinces of Turkey, and on the principal reforms required in the Asiatic Provinces inhabited by Armenians.

For the attainment of the objects in view, I continue to place reliance on the fact that the concert of Europe has been steadily maintained in regard to the Eastern Question, and that the Powers which signed the Treaty of Berlin are pressing upon the Sublime Porte, with all the authority which belongs to their united action, the measures which in their belief are best calculated to ensure tranquillity in the East.

I have not been unmindful during the few months which have elapsed since I last addressed you of the considerations which I have stated would guide my policy on the North-Western Frontier of my Indian Empire. Measures have already been taken for the complete military evacuation of Northern Afghanistan, and some progress has been made towards the pacification and settlement of the country.

A renewal of hostilities by the Afghans, under Ayoub Khan, has rendered necessary further military operations in Southern Afghanistan. The prompt measures taken by the Government of India for the relief of the garrison of Candahar, and the conspicuous ability and energy displayed by my officers and troops in the execution of those measures, resulting in the brilliant victory recently gained by the gallant force under the command of Sir Frederick Roberts, will, I trust, speedily bring to

an honourable termination the war in that division of the country.

I regret that it has not hitherto been possible to give you such information on the general state of Indian Finance, and the recent miscarriages in presenting the accounts of military expenditure, as you would justly require before entering on a practical consideration of the subject. You may, however, rest assured that I shall redeem my pledge to supply you with this information at the earliest period in my power.

No advance has recently been made in the project of a South African Confederation, nor could advantage arise from endeavours to press it forward, except in proportion to the favourable movement of public opinion in that portion of the Empire. The general state of affairs in South Africa is, however, on the whole, satisfactory, except in Basutoland, where I trust that a moderate and conciliatory policy may allay the agitation caused by the enforcement of the Disarmament Act.

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

I tender to you my thanks for the liberal provision which you have made to meet the charges of the public service.

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

I acknowledge, with thankfulness to the Almighty, the happy continuance, during several weeks, of fine weather for securing a harvest which gives in many places a reasonable promise of abundance. I am thus enabled to anticipate both a further revival of trade and some addition to the revenue of the country for the year; and I dwell with especial pleasure upon the probable improvement in the condition of the people of Ireland, who have so seriously suffered from previous failure of the crops.

I rejoice also to observe that, notwithstanding the lateness of the period at which you began your labours, your indefatigable zeal and patience have enabled you to add to the Statute Book some valuable laws.

I refer particularly to your settlement of the long-contested questions relating to the subject of Burials, to the Education Act, and the Act for the better determining the Liability of Employers, and to these I would add the Act relating to Ground Game, the repeal of the Malt Duty, the Savings Banks Act, and the Post Office Money Orders Act, and the measures for bettering the condition of Merchant Seamen, and providing for the safer carriage of Grain Cargoes.

I trust that these measures may, under Divine