

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.

KENMARE,  
Lord Chamberlain.

*Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, February 7, 1882.*

*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*

IT is with much satisfaction that I again invite your advice and assistance in the conduct of public affairs.

I have given my approval to a marriage between my son Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, and Her Serene Highness Princess Helen of Waldeck and Pyrmont. I have every reason to believe that this will be a happy union.

I continue in relations of cordial harmony with all foreign Powers.

The Treaty for the cession of Thessaly to the Greek Kingdom has now been executed in its main provisions. The transfer of sovereignty and of occupation was effected in a manner honourable to all concerned.

In concert with the President of the French Republic, I have given careful attention to the affairs of Egypt, where existing arrangements have imposed on me special obligations. I shall use my influence to maintain the rights already established, whether by the Firmans of the Sultan or by various international engagements, in a spirit favourable to the good government of the country and the prudent development of its institutions.

I have pleasure in informing you that the restoration of peace beyond the North-Western Frontier, together with continued internal tranquillity, plentiful seasons, and increase of the revenue, has enabled my Government in India to resume works of public utility which had been suspended, and to devote its attention to measures for the further improvement of the condition of the people.

The Convention with the Transvaal has been ratified by the Representative Assembly; and I have seen no reason to qualify my anticipations of its advantageous working.

I have, however, to regret that, although hostilities have not been renewed in Basutoland, the country still remains in an unsettled condition.

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

The Estimates for the service of the year are in an advanced stage of preparation, and will be promptly submitted to you.

*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*

My communications with France on the subject of a new Commercial Treaty have not been closed. They will be prosecuted by me, as I have already acquainted you, with a desire to conclude a Treaty favourable to extended intercourse between the two nations to whose close amity I attach so great a value.

The trade of the country, both domestic and foreign, has for some time been improving, and the mildness of the winter-season has been eminently suited to farming operations. Better prospects are, I trust, thus opened for the classes immediately concerned in agriculture.

The public revenue, which is greatly, though not always at once, affected by the state of industry and commerce, has not yet exhibited an upward movement in proportion to their increased activity.

The condition of Ireland at this time, as compared with that which I described at the beginning of last year, shows signs of improvement; and encourages the hope that perseverance in the course you have pursued will be rewarded with the happy results which are so much to be desired.

Justice has been administered with greater efficacy; and the intimidation, which has been employed to deter occupiers of land from fulfilling their obligations, and from availing themselves of the Act of last Session shows upon the whole a diminished force.

My efforts, through the bounty of Providence, have been favoured by the abundance of the harvest in that portion of the United Kingdom.

In addition to a vigorous exertion of the provisions of the ordinary law, I have not hesitated, under the painful necessity of the case, to employ largely the exceptional powers intrusted to me for the protection of life and property by two Acts of the last Session.

You will be invited to deal with proposals for the establishment in the English and Welsh Counties of Local Self-Government, which has so long been enjoyed by the towns; together with enlarged powers of administration, and with financial changes which will give you an opportunity of considering, both as to town and country, what may be the proper extent, and the most equitable and provident form, of contribution from Imperial taxes in relief of local charges.

These proposals, in so far as they are financial, will apply to the whole of Great Britain. It will be necessary to reserve the case of Ireland for a separate consideration.

In connection with the general subject of local administration, I have directed a measure to be prepared and submitted to you for the reform of the ancient and distinguished Corporation of London, and the extension of Municipal Government to the metropolis at large.

Bills will again be laid before you with which, during the last Session, notwithstanding the length of its duration and your unwearied labours, it was found impossible to proceed. I refer particularly to those concerning Bankruptcy, the repression of Corrupt Practices at Elections, and the Conservancy of Rivers and Prevention of Floods.

Measures will also be proposed to you with respect to a Criminal Code and to the Consolidation and Amendment of the Laws affecting Patents.

The interests of some portions of the United Kingdom have suffered peculiarly, of late years, from the extreme pressure of the public business on your time and strength; but I trust that, during this Session, you may be able to consider Bills which will be presented to you in relation to the Law of Entail and to Educational Endowments in Scotland, and to improved means of Education in Wales.

I commend these and other subjects with confidence to your care; and it is my earnest prayer that your wisdom and energy may, under the blessing of God, prove equal to the varied and increasing needs of this extended Empire.