

“More than 36 years ago, under the counsel and wise guidance of Your Majesty’s illustrious and lamented Consort, my beloved father, the Exhibition of 1851 gave a vast impulse to commercial activity and set an example which has been often followed in the countries both of the old and of the new worlds. The creation of an Imperial Institute would seem to be a fitting development and completion of the work thus wisely and usefully initiated.

“The financial success of that great and bold enterprise has enabled Your Majesty’s Commissioners to grant this site for the purposes of the Institute and thus to render the entire fund contributed by Your Majesty’s subjects directly available for its erection and maintenance.

“In this tribute of love and loyalty every class and race, every colony and country that owns your Majesty’s beneficent sway, will take part; and in it they will see a record of those 50 years of public progress and prosperity which will make Your Majesty’s reign famous in English history.

“It is our earnest hope that the building, of which Your Majesty to-day lays the foundation-stone, will tell to many generations yet to come the story of the long and happy reign of Our Gracious Sovereign.”

Her Majesty read the following reply handed to her by The Secretary of State for the Home Department, The Right Hon. Henry Matthews, M.P. :—

“It is with infinite satisfaction that I receive the address in which you give expression to your loyal attachment to My Throne and person and develop the views that have led to the creation of the Imperial Institute.

“I concur with you in thinking that the counsels and exertions of My beloved Husband initiated a movement which gave increased vigour to commercial activity, and produced marked and lasting improvements in industrial efforts.

“One indirect result of that movement has been to bring more before the minds of men the vast and varied resources of the Empire over which Providence has willed that I should reign during 50 prosperous years.

“I believe and hope that the Imperial Institute will play a useful part in combining those resources for the common advantage of all My subjects and in conducing towards the welding of the Colonies, India, and the Mother Country into one harmonious and united community.

“In laying the foundation stone of the building devoted to your labours, I heartily wish you God speed in your undertaking.”

An Ode, written for the occasion by Lewis Morris, Esq., and composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan, was performed by The Royal Albert Hall Choral Society and full orchestra, assisted by the pupils of The Royal College of Music, under the conductorship of Sir Arthur Sullivan.

Her Majesty then advanced to the spot where the stone was to be laid.