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The Speech of the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, February 3, 1824.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

WE are commanded by His Majesty to express to you His Majesty's deep regret, that in consequence of indisposition He is prevented from meeting you in Parliament upon the present occasion.

It would have been a peculiar satisfaction to His Majesty to be enabled in Person to congratulate you on the prosperous condition of the country.

Trade and commerce are extending themselves both at home and abroad.

An increasing activity pervades almost every branch of manufacture.

The growth of the revenue is such, as not only to sustain public credit, and to prove the unimpaired productiveness of our resources, but (what is yet more gratifying to His Majesty's feelings) to evince a diffusion of comfort among the great body of His people.

Agriculture is recovering from the depression under which it laboured; and, by the steady operation of natural causes, is gradually re-assuming the station to which its importance entitles it among the great interests of the nation.

At no former period has there prevailed throughout all classes of the community in this Island, a more cheerful spirit of order, or a more just sense of the advantages which, under the blessing of Providence, they enjoy.

In Ireland, which has for some time past been the subject of His Majesty's particular solicitude, there are many indications of amendment; and His Majesty relies upon your continued endeavours to secure the welfare and happiness of that part of the United Kingdom.

His Majesty has commanded us further to inform you, that He has every reason to believe that the progress of our internal prosperity and improvement will not be disturbed by any interruption of tranquillity abroad.

His Majesty continues to receive from the Powers, His Allies, and generally from all Princes

and States, assurances of their earnest desire to maintain and cultivate the relations of friendship with His Majesty; and nothing is omitted on His Majesty's part, as well to preserve general peace as to remove any causes of disagreement, and to draw closer the bonds of amity between other nations and Great Britain.

The negotiations which have been so long carried on through His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, for the arrangement of differences between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, are, as His Majesty flatters himself, drawing near to a favourable termination.

A Convention has been concluded between His Majesty and the Emperor of Austria, for the settlement of the pecuniary claims of this country upon the Court of Vienna.

His Majesty has directed that a copy of this Convention shall be laid before you, and He relies on your assistance for the execution of some of its provisions.

Anxiously as His Majesty deprecated the commencement of the war in Spain, He is every day more satisfied, that in the strict neutrality which He determined to observe in that contest, (and which you so cordially approved), He best consulted the true interests of His people.

With respect to the provinces of America which have declared their separation from Spain, His Majesty's conduct has been open and consistent; and His opinions have been at all times frankly avowed to Spain and to other Powers.

His Majesty has appointed Consuls to reside at the principal ports and places of those provinces, for the protection of the trade of His subjects.

As to any further measures, His Majesty has reserved to Himself an unfettered discretion, to be exercised as the circumstances of those countries, and the interests of His own people, may appear to His Majesty to require.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

His Majesty has directed us to inform you that the estimates for the year are prepared, and shall be forthwith laid before you.

The numerous points at which, under present circumstances, His Majesty's naval force is neces-

sarily distributed, and the occasion which has arisen for strengthening His garrisons in the West Indies, have rendered unavoidable some augmentation of His establishments by sea and land.

His Majesty has, however, the gratification of believing, that notwithstanding the increase of expence incident to these augmentations, it will still be in your power, after providing for the services of the year, to make arrangements in some parts of our system of taxation, which may afford relief to certain important branches of the national industry.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

His Majesty has commanded us to acquaint you that He has not been inattentive to the desire expressed by the House of Commons, in the last Session of Parliament, that means should be devised for ameliorating the condition of the negro slaves in the West Indies.

His Majesty has directed the necessary information relating to this subject to be laid before you.

His Majesty is confident that you will afford your best attention and assistance to any proposition which may be submitted to you for promoting the moral improvement of the negroes, by an extended plan of religious instruction, and by such other measures as may gradually conduce to the same end.

But His Majesty earnestly recommends to you to treat this whole subject with the calmness and the discretion which it demands.

It is a subject perplexed with difficulties which no sudden effort can disentangle.

To excite exaggerated expectations in those who are the objects of your benevolence, would be as fatal to their welfare as to that of their employers; and His Majesty assures Himself you will bear in mind, that in the correction of a long-standing and complicated system, in which the fortunes and the safety of large classes of His Majesty's subjects are involved, that course of proceeding is alone likely to attain practical good, and to avoid aggravation of evil, in which due regard shall be paid to considerations of justice, and in which caution shall temper zeal.