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The Speech of the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, November 19, 1867.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I again applying to you for your advice and assistance, I regret that I have found it necessary to call for your attendance at an unusual, and probably to many of you, an inconvenient season.

The Sovereign of Abyssinia, in violation of all international law, continues to hold in captivity several of my subjects, some of whom have been especially accredited to him by myself; and his persistent disregard of friendly representations has left me no alternative but that of making a peremptory demand for the liberation of my subjects, and supporting it by an adequate force. I have accordingly directed an expedition to be sent for that purpose alone; and I confidently rely upon the support and co-operation of my Parliament in my endeavour at once to relieve their countrymen from an unjust imprisonment, and to vindicate the honour of my Crown. I have directed that papers on the subject shall be forthwith laid before you.

I receive from all Foreign Powers assurances of their friendly feelings, and I see no reason to apprehend the disturbance of the general peace of Europe.

A band of Italian volunteers, without authority from their own Sovereign, having invaded the Papal territory, and threatened Rome itself, the Emperor of the French felt himself called upon to despatch an expedition for the protection of the Sovereign Pontiff and his dominions. That object having been accomplished, and the defeat and dispersion of the volunteer force having relieved the Papal territory from the danger of external invasion, I trust that his Imperial Majesty will find himself enabled, by an early withdrawal of his troops, to remove any possible ground of misunderstanding between His Majesty's Government and that of the King of Italy.

The treasonable conspiracy, commonly known as Fenianism, baffled and repressed in Ireland, has assumed in England the form of organised violence and assassination. These outrages require to be rigorously put down, and I rely for their effectual suppression upon the firm administration of the law and the loyalty of the great mass of my subjects.

Gentlemen of the House Commons,

The estimates for the ensuing year are in course of preparation, and will in due time be laid before you. They will be framed with a view to economy and to the necessary requirements of the public service.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

As a necessary sequel to the legislation of the last Session, Bills will be laid before you for amending the Representation of the People in Scotland and Ireland.

I have reason to believe that the Commissioners appointed to inquire into and report upon the boundaries of existing boroughs, as well as of the proposed divisions of counties and newly enfranchised boroughs, have made considerable progress in their enquiries; and no time will be lost after the receipt of their Report in laying before you their recommendations for your consideration and decision.

A bill will also be presented to you for the more effectual prevention of Bribery and Corruption at Elections.

The Public Schools Bill, which has already been more than once submitted to Parliament, will again be laid before you.

The general question of the Education of the people requires your most serious attention, and I have no doubt you will approach the subject with a full appreciation both of its vital importance and of its acknowledged difficulty.

Measures will be submitted to you during the present Session for amending and consolidating the various Acts relating to the Mercantile Marine.

The exemption which the country has now for sometime enjoyed from the Cattle Plague affords a favourable opportunity for considering such permanent enactments as may relieve the home trade from vexatious restrictions, and facilitate the introduction, under due regulation of Foreign Cattle for home consumption.

Measures for the amendment of the law, which have been deferred under the pressure of more urgent business, will be submitted for your consideration.

Other questions, apparently calling for legislative action, have been referred to Commissioners, whose Reports, as they shall be received, shall without delay be laid before Parliament.