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Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners, to both Houses of Parliament, on Tuesday, August 15, 1876.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I AM happy to be able to release you from your attendance in Parliament.

My relations with all foreign Powers are of a friendly character, and I look forward confidently to the maintenance of the good understanding which now prevails.

The efforts which, in common with other Powers, I have made to bring about a settlement of the differences unfortunately existing between the Porte and its Christian subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina have hitherto been unsuccessful; and the conflict begun in those provinces has been extended to Servia and Montenegro. Should a favourable opportunity present itself, I shall be ready, in concert with my allies, to offer my good offices for the purpose of mediation between the contending parties; bearing in mind alike the duties imposed upon me by treaty obligations, and those which arise from considerations of humanity and policy.

A difference has arisen between my Government and that of the United States as to the proper construction of that Article of the Treaty of 9th August 1842, which relates to the mutual surrender of persons accused of certain offences. The inconveniences to both countries which would follow on a cessation of the practice of extradition are great and obvious; and I entertain the hope that a new arrangement may soon be arrived at, by which this matter may be placed on a satisfactory footing.

I am deeply thankful that my dear son, the Prince of Wales, has returned in good health from his lengthened journey through India. His presence in that part of my Dominions has given occasion for the expression of feelings of loyalty and devotion to my Throne which I highly value.

In pursuance of the power conferred upon me, I have by proclamation assumed the title of Empress of India. In making, as regards India, this addition to the ancient style of my Crown, I have desired to record, on an occasion of peculiar interest to me, the earnest solicitude which I feel for the happiness of my Indian people.

I trust that peace and order are re-established in the Malay Peninsula, and that the rulers of the native States will cheerfully accept the recommendations and assistance of my officers for the better government of their territories.

The visit to this country of the President of the Orange Free State has resulted in a satisfactory settlement of the long controversy which has existed with reference to the Province of Griqua Land; and an important advance has thus been made towards that friendly and cordial co-operation of neighbouring States which is essential to the interests of South Africa.

The Conference on South-African affairs, with regard to which papers have already been laid before you, is now sitting in London, and cannot fail to contribute largely to the settlement of various important questions.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I thank you for the liberal supplies which you have voted for the public service.