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Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Thursday, February 9, 1888.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I CONTINUE to receive from all other Powers cordial assurances of their friendly sentiments, as well as of their earnest desire to maintain the peace of the world.

My officers, in conjunction with those of the Emperor of Russia, have completed the demarcation of the Afghan boundary in conformity with the terms of the Convention of last year. I trust that the work which has thus been brought to a conclusion may tend to remove the possibility of misunderstanding between the two Powers in regard to their Asiatic possessions.

Animated by a desire to prevent the effusion of blood, I dispatched a Mission to the King of Abyssinia, with the hope of dissuading him from engaging in a war with Italy. I deeply regret that my efforts have not been successful.

The deliberations of the Conference assembled at Washington to adjust questions which have arisen between the Dominion of Canada and the United States are still in progress.

The negotiations which were commenced in

1885, with respect to the regulation of the Suez Canal, have been brought to a conclusion, so far as points of difference between myself and the French Republic are concerned.

I have also entered into an Agreement with the French Republic for the protection of life and property, in the group of the New Hebrides, by a Joint Naval Commission.

A Conference of Delegates from the Powers interested in the sugar industry was summoned in London in the autumn, to consider the possibility of putting an end to the injurious system of bounties; and they have made considerable progress towards the conclusion of a satisfactory arrangement.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

The Estimates for the Services of this year, which will be laid before you, have been framed with due regard to economy. You will be asked to make provision for the improvements in the defence of the Ports and Coaling Stations of my Empire, which have been rendered urgently necessary by the advance of military science. You will also be asked to sanction an arrangement for providing a special squadron for the protection of Australasian commerce, the cost of which will be partially borne by the Colonies themselves.