



# The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23, 1867.

*The Speech of the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Wednesday, August 21, 1867.*

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

I AM happy to be enabled to release you from the labours of a long and more than usually eventful session, and to offer you my acknowledgments for the successful diligence with which you have applied yourselves to your parliamentary duties.

My relations with foreign countries continue on a friendly footing.

At the commencement of the present year great fears were entertained that the differences which had arisen between France and Prussia might have led to a war of which it was impossible to foresee the ultimate result. Happily the advice tendered by my Government, and by those of the other neutral States, aided by the moderation of the two Powers chiefly interested, sufficed to avert the threatened calamity; and I trust that no ground at present exists for apprehending any disturbance of the general peace.

The communications which I have made to the reigning monarch of Abyssinia, with a view to obtain the release of the British subjects whom he detains in his dominions, have, I regret to say, thus far proved ineffectual. I have, therefore, found it necessary to address to him a peremptory demand for their immediate liberation, and to take measures for supporting that demand, should it ultimately be found necessary to resort to force.

The treasonable conspiracy in Ireland, to which I have before called your attention, broke out in the early part of the present year in a futile attempt at insurrection. That it was suppressed, almost without bloodshed, is due not more to the disciplined valour of my troops, and to the admirable conduct of the police, than to the general loyalty of the population and the absence of any token of sympathy with the insurgents on the part of any considerable portion of my subjects. I rejoice that the supremacy of the law was vindicated without imposing on me the painful necessity of sacrificing a single life.

The bill for the abolition of certain local exemptions from taxation enabled me to avail myself of a liberal concession made, in anticipation, by the Emperor of the French, whereby several taxes were removed which pressed heavily upon British shipping.

I have concluded a postal convention with the United States of America, whereby the rate of postage between the two countries will be diminished by one-half, and further arrangements are in progress for increasing the intercourse between this country and the continent of North America.

The Act for the union of the British North American provinces is the final accomplishment of a scheme long contemplated, whereby those colonies, now combined in one dominion, may be expected not only to gain additional strength for the purposes of defence against external aggression, but may be united among themselves by fresh ties of mutual interest, and attached to the mother country by the only bonds which can effectually secure such important dependencies—those of loyalty to the Crown and attachment to British connection.

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

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

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

I have had great satisfaction in giving my assent to a Bill for amending the representation of the people in Parliament. I earnestly trust that the extensive and liberal measure which you have passed may effect a durable settlement of a question which has long engaged public attention; and that the large number of my subjects who will be for the first time admitted to the exercise of the elective franchise may, in the discharge of the duties thereby devolved upon them, prove themselves worthy of the confidence which Parliament has reposed in them.

It is gratifying to me to find that the lengthened consideration which you have necessarily given to this important question has not prevented your entering on many subjects to which your attention was directed at the commencement of the Session, and particularly to such as have immediate reference to the well-being of the industrial classes.

I have had especial pleasure in giving my assent to Bills for extending to various trades, with such modifications as have been found necessary, the provisions of the Factory Acts, the success of which has proved the possibility of combining effectual protection to the labour of women and children with a due consideration for the interests of the trades immediately concerned.

I confidently anticipate from the operation of the present Acts the same improvement in the