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*Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners to both Houses of Parliament, on Wednesday, August 10th, 1870.*

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

**T**HE state of public business enables me to release you from your attendance in Parliament.

I continue to receive from all foreign powers assurances of good-will and friendship; but I have witnessed with grief and pain, on domestic as well as public grounds, the recent outbreak of war between two powerful nations, both of them allied with this country.

My best exertions have been used to avert this great calamity.

I shall now direct a constant and anxious attention to the strict observance of the duties and the maintenance of the rights of neutrality.

I have cheerfully assented to the measure, matured by your wisdom, to enlarge the power of the Executive, not only for the discharge of international duties, but for the prevention of acts which, in time of war might be injurious to the interests of the country.

I shall make every fitting endeavour to check the operation of causes which might lead towards enlarging the area of the present conflict, and to contribute if opportunity shall be afforded me, to the restoration of an early and honourable peace.

I have tendered to the two belligerent powers treaties identical in form to give additional security to Belgium against the hazards of a war waged upon her frontiers. This treaty has been signed by Count Bernstorff, on the part of the North German Confederation, and the French Ambassador has signified that he has authority to sign the corresponding instrument as soon as his full powers arrive. Other powers which were parties to the Treaty of 1839, have been invited to accede, if they should think fit, to this engagement.

The shocking murders recently perpetrated in Greece produced a painful impression throughout Europe, and have drawn attention to serious evils existing in that country. My unremitting efforts will be directed to securing the complete and searching character of the inquiry which has been instituted.

*Gentlemen of the House of Commons.*

I thank you for the liberal provision which was made by you for the ordinary service of the year, and for the additional supplies of men and money which you have voted in view of the altered state of things on the Continent of Europe.

The condition of the revenue gives ground for the hope that it may be able to meet the new charge which has been created without reversing the proper balance of income and expenditure.

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

In regard to domestic legislation, I may fitly congratulate you on the close of the session, marked by an assiduous devotion to labours of the utmost national importance.

The temporary Act for the repression of agrarian crime and the maintenance of order in Ireland, has, up to the present time, answered the purposes for which it was passed.

From the Act for regulating the occupation and ownership of land I anticipate the gradual establishment both of harmonious relations between owners and occupiers of land, and of general confidence in the provisions and administration of the law, and in the just and benevolent intentions of the Legislature.

In consequence of the efforts which have been made in matters of capital moment, to remove from the Statute Book whatever might seem inequitable to Ireland, I trust that the discharge of the first duty of government in providing for the security of life and property will become more easy; and I shall rely with confidence upon the loyalty and affection of my Irish subjects.

It has given me pleasure to concur with you in the passage of the important law providing for national education in England. I perceive in it a new guarantee for the moral and social well-being of the nation, and for its prosperity and power.

The Naturalisation Act, and the Act for the Extradition of Criminals, will tend to confirm our friendly relations with foreign powers.

The Act which regulates enlistment for a shortened term of service in the ranks of the army will, I trust, tend to increase the efficiency of the force, to promote the welfare of the soldier, and to provide for the nation a reserve of men well