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Lord Chamberlain's Office, January 6, 1881.

ORDERS for the Court's going into Mourning on Friday next, the 7th instant, for Her late Royal Highness The Dowager Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg Strelitz; viz. :—

The Ladies to wear black Dresses, white Gloves, black or white Shoes, Feathers, and Fans, Pearls, Diamonds, or plain gold or silver Ornaments.

The Gentlemen to wear black Court Dress, with black Swords and Buckles.

The Court to change the Mourning on Friday, the 14th instant; viz. :—

The Ladies to wear black Dresses, with coloured Ribbons, Flowers, Feathers, and Ornaments, or grey or white Dresses, with black Ribbons, Flowers, Feathers, and Ornaments.

The Gentlemen to continue the same Mourning.

And on Sunday, the 16th instant, the Court to go out of Mourning.

Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners, to both Houses of Parliament, on Thursday, January 6, 1881.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I HAVE called you, at a period earlier than usual, to the resumption of your labours, as some affairs of more than common urgency demand your attention.

My relations with Foreign Powers continue to be friendly and harmonious.

The main question relating to the Frontier between Turkey and Montenegro has been settled.

The Powers are now engaged in communications which have in view the determination of the Frontier between Turkey and Greece.

Some important portions of the Treaty of Berlin, which have so long remained without fulfilment, continue to form an object of my anxious attention.

A rising in the Transvaal has recently imposed upon me the duty of taking military measures with a view to the prompt vindication of my authority; and has of necessity set aside for the time any plan for securing to the European settlers that full control over their own local affairs, without prejudice to the interests of the natives, which I had been desirous to confer.

I regret that the War in Basutoland still continues, notwithstanding the efforts of the Cape Government. It would cause me much satisfaction if a suitable occasion should present itself for

friendly action on my part with a view to the restoration of peace.

The War in Afghanistan has been brought to a close, and, with the exception of the Candahar force, my troops have been recalled within the Indian frontier. It is not my intention that the occupation of Candahar shall be permanently maintained; but the still unsettled condition of the country, and the consequent difficulty of establishing a Native Government, have delayed for a time the withdrawal of the army from that position.

Papers on the several subjects to which I have adverted, as well as further Correspondence on the Military Estimates of India, will be presented to you.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

The Estimates for the Services of the coming year are in a forward state of preparation, and will be speedily laid before you.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

There has been a gradual, though not very rapid, improvement in the trade of the country; and I am now able to entertain a more favourable expectation of the Revenue for the year than I could form at its commencement.

The anticipation, with which I last addressed you, of a great diminution of the distress in Ireland, owing to an abundant harvest, was realized; but I grieve to state that the social condition of the country has assumed an alarming character. Agrarian crimes in general have multiplied far beyond the experience of recent years. Attempts upon life have not grown in the same proportion as other offences; but I must add that efforts have been made for personal protection, far beyond all former precedent, by the police, under the direction of the Executive; I have to notice other evils yet more widely spread. The administration of justice has been frustrated, with respect to these offences, through the impossibility of procuring evidence; and an extended system of terror has thus been established, in various parts of the country, which has paralyzed almost alike the exercise of private rights and the performance of civil duties.

In a state of things new in some important respects, and hence with little of available guidance from former precedent, I have deemed it right steadily to put in use the ordinary powers of the law before making any new demand. But a demonstration of their insufficiency, amply supplied by the present circumstances of the country, leads me now to apprise you that proposals will be