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Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech, delivered by the Lords Commissioners, to both Houses of Parliament on Friday, August 14, 1885.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I AM glad to be able to relieve you from the labours of a Session which has been protracted and eventful.

When you assembled in October last I informed you that an Expedition was advancing up the valley of the Nile for the relief of Khartoum. Three months later, with a deep sorrow, which was shared by all my people, I learnt that the Expedition had arrived too late, and that the heroic General Gordon and his companions had fallen. An endeavour, which was ineffectual, was made to reach Khartoum by constructing a railway from Suakin to Berber. My troops were ultimately withdrawn from the whole of the Eastern Soudan except Suakin, and from the Western Soudan down to Alashkert.

Although the objects of the Expedition have not been attained, I have great reason to be proud of the bravery and endurance which have been displayed by my soldiers and sailors, and of the skill with which they have been commanded.

I received with great pleasure loyal offers of military assistance in this campaign from my Colonies and from the native Princes in India, and a Contingent from the Colony of New South Wales served with distinction in the actions which took place on the coast of the Red Sea.

The death of the Mahdi will probably enable me to perform with less difficulty the duties towards the Ruler and people of Egypt which events have imposed upon me. I shall not relax in my efforts to place the government and good order of that country upon a firm foundation.

My relations with other Powers are of a friendly nature.

Difficulties which at one time were of an anxious character arose between my Government and that of Russia as to the limits of the territory of my ally, the Ameer of Afghanistan. Negotiations still continue, and will, I trust, lead, at an early period, to a satisfactory settlement.

The progress of events in South Africa has compelled me, in the interest of the native races, to take under my protection Bechuanaland and certain adjacent territories.

I am taking the necessary steps to place the north-western frontier of my Indian Empire in a condition of adequate defence, in the absence of which the prosperity and tranquillity of my Indian

subjects are liable from time to time to be interrupted and disturbed.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I thank you for the liberality with which, during the past year, you have provided for the Services of the country.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I have had pleasure in giving my assent to a measure for enabling federal action in certain matters to be taken by the Colonies of Australia; to a much-needed amendment of the Criminal Law; and to a Bill for establishing a new Department for Scottish Affairs. I have also been glad to concur in a measure for increasing the number of occupying freeholders in Ireland.

I notice with sincere gratification that an endeavour has been made by a Bill, to which I have assented, to diminish the evils of overcrowding and of insanitary dwellings, which hinder so seriously the moral and material well-being of the labouring classes.

I regret to say that the depression which has so long prevailed in many important trades and in the agricultural and manufacturing industries of the country still continues. I have directed the issue of a Commission to inquire into the causes of it and to ascertain whether it can be alleviated by any legislative measures.

During the past Session your time has been principally occupied by the enlargement of the Electorate, and the extensive changes which you have, in consequence, made in the constitution of the House of Commons. I earnestly trust that these comprehensive measures may increase the efficiency of Parliament, and may add to the contentment of my people.

It is my purpose before long to seek their counsel by a dissolution of Parliament. I pray that the blessing of God may rest upon their extended liberties, and that the numbers who are called to the exercise of new powers will use them with the sobriety and discernment which for so long a period have marked the history of this nation.

Then a Commission for proroguing the Parliament was read; after which the Lord Chancellor said:

My Lords and Gentlemen,

By virtue of Her Majesty's Commission, under the Great Seal, to us and other Lords directed, and now read, we do, in Her Majesty's name, and