

(No. 66.)



1879.

T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT:

MEMORANDUM BY PREMIER DATED OCT. 21, 1879, INCLUDING
MEMORANDUM FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR
DATED OCT. 18, 1879.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Crowther, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
October 21, 1879.



MEMORANDUM.

MINISTERS considered it their duty to ask for a Dissolution for the following reasons:—

1st. Parties being so equally divided in the present House, the difficulty, if not impossibility, of carrying on the Government in a satisfactory manner appeared to them to warrant an appeal to the several constituencies.

2nd. That Ministers having submitted a distinct policy, including direct taxation on Property and Income and the reform of the Constitutional Act, the country should be called upon to express an opinion favourable or otherwise of that policy.

3rd. That Ministers were bound in justice to their supporters and themselves to evidence their willingness to submit both the policy and *personnel* of the Administration to the verdict of the Electors, as the present House had, by a majority of one, expressed its want of confidence in Ministers.

The Premier and the Colonial Secretary waited upon the Governor and asked for a dissolution on the grounds above stated, and expressed their belief that they were justified in making the application, and desirous at the same time that whatever decision His Excellency might arrive at such application should be duly recorded.

The Governor in the following Memorandum declined to grant a dissolution:—

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PREMIER.

A vote of want of confidence in Ministers having been carried in the House of Assembly, they have asked for a dissolution.

2. The present House of Assembly was elected a little over two years ago.

3. It was elected under the auspices, and the dissolution had been given at the request, of the party now in office.

4. I have no assurance or ground for belief that a general election would now materially alter the strength of parties.

5. No distinct division of parties in the House upon any question to be put to the country has been shown to my satisfaction. The question of direct taxation was to some extent brought before the country at the last election, but appeared little to influence the result. An Income Tax Bill passed the House of Assembly last Session, and the principle of direct taxation has since been virtually re-affirmed by that House. Now I am asked to dissolve the Assembly, and to appeal to the Country on a financial policy which has never been rejected by that House, nor even by the Legislative Council this Session.

6. The question of the relations between the two Houses has indeed been raised, but it has not taken a substantial form, or become a line of party demarcation.

7. The Legislative Council has this Session expressed no opinion upon either of these two questions of policy.

8. In my opinion the time has not yet arrived, even though it possibly may arrive, when these questions can be properly considered ripe for reference to the country as a test between one party and the other. Were a dissolution now granted, the real issue at a general election would be the personal question of confidence in certain Members of the Ministry as decided in the House, or of the opposition, and not questions of policy.

9. Considering all the circumstances of the case I do not think that such an issue, though in some cases a sufficient ground for an appeal to the country, now warrants the dissolution of a comparatively young House of Assembly, at a time when the financial position of the Colony is admittedly suffering by the delay of urgently necessary measures, until it has been proved that the present Parliament cannot furnish a Ministry able to carry on the public business, more especially as new combinations are understood to have been under consideration by Members of both parties, and divergences of opinion on political questions between opposite sides of the House do not seem rigidly defined or clearly irreconcilable.

10. It will moreover be in the recollection of the Premier, and of the Colonial Secretary, that before their assumption of office I warned them that I was not prepared to grant a dissolution under existing circumstances without special and strong reasons being adduced; that I had taken the same course with Mr. Giblin their predecessor, who, concurring with my view, did not ask for a dissolution.

Ministers will also observe on reference to my Memorandum of 11th May, 1877, that most of the conditions which then led me to give their party a dissolution are now wanting, and consequently I am unable to accept their advice.

F. A. WELD.

Government House, 18th October, 1879.

Upon receipt of this Memorandum the Premier placed the resignation of Ministers in His Excellency's hands, and they now hold office only until their successors are appointed.

WILLIAM LODGE CROWTHER, *Premier.*

21st October, 1879.

In continuation of Paper No. 66.

[Laid upon the Table of the Council by Mr. Crowther, and ordered to be printed, October 24, 1879.]

MEMORANDUM.

THE statements contained in the sub-leader of the "*Mercury*" of the 23rd instant, under the heading "The Political Situation and Ministerial Memo.," are not only erroneous, but must have been known to be erroneous by any one who read it with the slightest attention.

In the first place the Memo. or Statement of Ministers is dated the 21st October, while the Governor's Memo. is dated the 18th, yet the Editor of the "*Mercury*" speaks of it as though Ministers wished it to be understood as a document submitted to, and answered by, His Excellency the Governor.

No document was submitted to His Excellency, but, as clearly set forth in the Memo. in question—"the Premier and the Colonial Secretary waited upon the Governor and asked for a dissolution," stating the grounds upon which they deemed they were justified in making the application, and also expressing their desire that their application should be recorded.

This desire has been attained by the course adopted, namely, by laying a Memorandum upon the Table of the House containing a statement of the action taken by Ministers, the grounds upon which such action was taken, and at the same time making known to the House the views of His Excellency the Governor upon the question of granting or withholding a dissolution at the present juncture.

The concluding paragraph clearly shows that the Memorandum or Statement of the Premier was intended solely for the information of Parliament, and could by no possibility have been addressed to the Governor.

His Excellency's Memo. of the 18th instant was in reply to the request of the Premier and Colonial Secretary made verbally when they waited upon him on that day.

WILLIAM LODGE^K CROWTHER, *Premier*.

24th October, 1879.