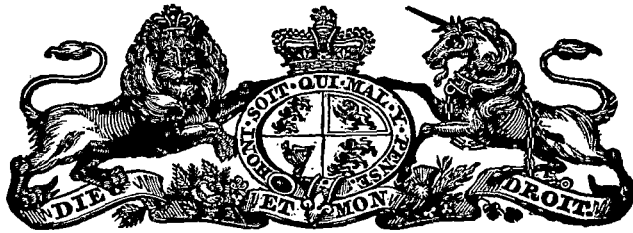


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1877.

SESSION II.

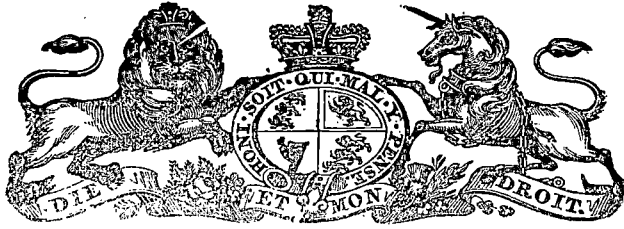
T A S M A N I A.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DISSOLUTION OF HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

MEMORANDUM BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

Laid upon the Table by Mr. Crowther, and ordered by the Council to be printed,
May 15, 1877.



MEMORANDUM.

MINISTERS having been defeated by a majority of three on a vote of Want of Confidence in the House of Assembly, the Premier has asked for a dissolution on the following grounds :—

1st. That, in the opinion of Ministers, an appeal to the country would result in the return of a majority favourable to the present Ministry.

2nd. That their policy—that of public works accompanied by taxation—for the first time (Ministers allege) boldly grapples with the financial difficulty, and proposes to raise revenue ample for all requirements. Upon this policy they wish the country to pronounce.

3rd. That in the opinion of Ministers a general election, and an expression of the feeling of the people upon any given policy, either favourable or adverse, might promote co-operation between the two Houses of Parliament.

The Governor, in reply, has thought it well, as an erroneous impression has been abroad, to note, that (as the Premier is well aware) no promise of a dissolution was ever made by him by anticipation on the formation of the present Ministry, nor was it ever asked for. The Governor, indeed, on that occasion, expressly said, that if a dissolution were hereafter asked for, he should be guided by the circumstances of the case as they might arise, and by his own knowledge of constitutional practice, and that his judgement would be exercised upon a full and fair consideration of the reasons that might be adduced.

The Governor in this case will grant a dissolution. It is usual to grant a dissolution when the Minister advises the Crown that, in his opinion, an appeal to the Country is likely to result in an expression of confidence by the return of Ministerial supporters : and it has justly been said by a great authority, that the result of the general election can alone decide whether or no a Minister has been justified in tendering such advice.

In this case, however, there is the further consideration that the present House of Assembly is by effluxion of time moribund ; and it would be a departure from the ordinary constitutional practice to accept the verdict of an expiring branch of the Legislature as conclusive, and to refuse to the people the opportunity of exercising their legitimate influence over the policy of the Country.

Bearing in mind that the relations between the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council have for several years been marked by a want of co-operation, the Governor cannot but attach weight to the third point adduced by the Premier, and adverted to in the resolution of the House of Assembly. It is, he hopes, possible that the results of a fresh election may tend to improved relations between branches of the Legislature which have not worked harmoniously and in concert, either under the present Ministry, or under that which preceded it and whose members are now in opposition.

At the present crisis, the internal affairs of the Colony (which may be said to be entering into a new phase of its history with rapidly developing and fresh resources), no less than its external circumstances in the face of an impending European War, alike require a strong Ministry, possessing the confidence of a decided majority of the House of Representatives, and able to maintain satisfactory relations with the Legislative Council. It is the Governor's duty, within the limits assigned him by the Constitution, to promote this end. It appears to him that no Ministry can, as matters now stand, have such certainty of reasonable security of tenure of office as may enable it to grapple the questions with which it is now brought face to face, and to carry them to a satisfactory solution. Such a Government cannot in the nature of things exist in the very teeth of an impending general election, which may not only change the position, but greatly vary the *personnel*, of our Legislature. Such a Government may, however, exist after a general election. It is of the greatest importance that time should be saved, and a definite decision arrived at. The people alone can effect this. The Governor is therefore of opinion that an appeal to the Country should at once be made, and that the new Parliament should be convoked at the earliest possible period ; and consequently, in the exercise of the prerogative committed to his discretion by Her Majesty, he is prepared to grant a dissolution.

FRED. A. WELD, *Governor.*

Government House, Hobart Town,
May 11th, 1877.

JAMES BARNARD,
GOVERNMENT PRINTER, TASMANIA.