

1879.
NEW ZEALAND.

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT

(MEMORANDUM BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR).

Memorandum given by His Excellency the Governor to the Premier, and laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by the Hon. Sir G. Grey.

I HAVE carefully considered the position in which Ministers are placed by the defeat which they have just sustained in the House of Representatives, upon a no-confidence motion; and I am clearly of opinion that they have a fair constitutional claim to a dissolution.

No doubt, a general election at the present moment would be inconvenient, having regard to the condition of public business—the prevailing financial depression—and the circumstances of the colony generally, especially the Native difficulties upon the West Coast. But I presume that Ministers have carefully considered the consequences of such a step before tendering to me advice to dissolve, and I am, therefore, prepared to adopt their recommendation, leaving with them the entire responsibility of such a proceeding.

At the same time, I think it right to stipulate that the well-recognized constitutional principles which govern cases like the present shall be strictly adhered to. Ministers have lost the confidence of the representatives of the people, and are about to appeal from them to the country. A majority of the House of Representatives has declared that Ministers have so neglected and mismanaged the administrative business of the country, that they no longer possess the confidence of Parliament. It is indispensable in such circumstances, if Ministers do not at once resign, that Parliament shall be dissolved with the least possible delay, and that, meanwhile, no measure shall be proposed that may not be imperatively required, nor any contested motion whatever brought forward. It is necessary, also, and in accordance with established constitutional precedent, that the new Parliament shall be called together at the earliest moment at which the writs are returnable.

If Ministers accept a dissolution upon this understanding, I beg that in any explanation which the Premier may think proper to make to Parliament, the answer which I have given to his tendered advice may be stated in my own words.

30th July, 1879.

HERCULES ROBINSON.