

1891.—SESS. II.
NEW ZEALAND.

DESPATCHES

FROM THE GOVERNOR OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of His Excellency.

No. 1.

(No. 5.)

MY LORD,—

Government House, Wellington, 26th January, 1891.

I have the honour to inform your Lordship that a change of Ministry has taken place in New Zealand.

2. Parliament having been summoned to meet on the 23rd instant, Sir H. A. Atkinson, who, from ill-health had not been able to lead the House of Representatives during the previous session, made up his mind that his retirement was necessary. He accordingly intimated to me what would be his probable action, in the course of an interview which I had with him at Christchurch on the 16th instant.

3. At the same time he informed me that in the course of a few days he should hand to me the resignation of Sir William Fitzherbert, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, and that Ministers were prepared to advise his own appointment to that office.

4. I replied that, if such advice were tendered to me, I should accept it with unqualified satisfaction; that I felt assured his long services both as a soldier and statesman, to which the unfortunate breakdown in his health is to be attributed, would be but fairly recompensed by his appointment to a post of so honourable a character.

5. According to arrangements agreed to at that meeting, the Premier handed me the resignation of Sir William Fitzherbert on the 19th instant; and on the 21st instant he advised me that the Cabinet recommended me to summon him to the Upper House, which I accordingly did on the next day.

6. I enclose copies of the memoranda which passed between us on the subject.

7. On the 23rd instant Sir H. A. Atkinson called upon me at one o'clock in the afternoon, when, upon the advice of Ministers, I appointed him to be Speaker of the Legislative Council, and administered to him the usual oath; and at the same time he formally tendered to me the resignation of himself, and, of course, of his colleagues also.

8. I requested him to advise me whom I should send for and intrust with the formation of a Government; upon which he indicated Mr. Ballance, the leader of the Opposition in the late Parliament.

9. Mr. Ballance, in response to my invitation, called upon me at half-past one, and informed me that he undertook the duty of forming an Administration, and would wait upon me on the following day with the names which he proposed should form his Cabinet.

10. On the same day (23rd instant) Parliament was opened by Commission, and the House of Representatives proceeded to the election of a Speaker. Their choice fell on Mr. William Jukes Steward, member for the District of Waimate.