

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT

(MEMORANDA RESPECTING A).

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

No. 1.

MEMORANDUM FOR HIS EXCELLENCY.

MINISTERS respectfully present their compliments to His Excellency; and, in obedience to his desire that they should put into writing their views on the subject of a Dissolution, beg to submit that the state of Parties is such that, in their opinion, a Dissolution of the House of Representatives is urgently required, and they have the honor to advise His Excellency to grant such a Dissolution.

2. The following amongst other considerations have weighed with Ministers in coming to the conclusion to tender this advice; and Ministers desire to state those considerations, in order that His Excellency may be the better enabled to understand the circumstances in which the colony is placed:—

(1.) The present House was elected upon a distinct question, that of the Abolition of the Provinces. Since the settlement of that question, no clearly-defined party lines have been kept.

(2.) The present Ministry was not in power at the time of the General Election.

(3.) The Ministry came into office in consequence of the vote of the House on the following motion—"That the Government does not possess the confidence of the House." This vote was taken on October 8th, the numbers being—Ayes, 42; noes, 38.

(4.) The day on which Ministers entered office was the 13th October. On the 24th October, before Ministers had had sufficient time to prepare and make to the House a statement of their financial and general policy, the following notice of motion was given by Major Atkinson—"That this House has no confidence in the Government;" and when this motion was proposed, an amendment was moved by Mr. Reynolds, "That as the Government have not yet declared their policy, this House declines in the meantime to entertain the question of 'Confidence' or 'No confidence' in the Ministry." On the 6th November, a vote was taken on the motion; and the numbers being—Ayes, 39, noes, 39, Mr. Speaker gave his voice with the Noes. The amendment was negatived on the voices.

(5.) On November 7th, the Government intimated to the House their belief that the business could be brought to a close about November 16th, and that the prorogation could then take place during the ensuing week. Immediately after this intimation, Major Atkinson gave notice of another want-of-confidence motion, as follows:—"That this House has now no confidence in the Government." There has not yet been a vote upon this motion.

3. His Excellency will see from this statement, that several members of the House have, within about four weeks, recorded their want of confidence in each of two Administrations, namely, the late one, and the one now holding office.

4. Ministers believe that upon the single ground that they were not in power at the time of the General Election, they have a claim to a Dissolution, on their advice to dissolve the House being tendered to His Excellency.

5. The unsatisfactory state of the Public Business before the House, after a Session of nearly four months, might also be urged as sufficient of itself to warrant a Dissolution.

6. But, in addition, expressions of opinion received from all parts of the country lead Ministers to believe that, in the event of a Dissolution being granted to them, they will be enabled to carry on the business of the country with a large working majority.

7. The continuance of Ministers in office would also, in their belief, based on assurances they have received from many leading Natives, enable them to make progress towards bringing to an end the long-continued isolation of a large and very powerful section of the Native population. Three of the four Maori members in the House support the present Government; and, a few days ago, the