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**T**HE Second Session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor-General, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following statement of the causes of the calling of this Session of Parliament together:—

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The accession and Coronation of His Majesty King George VI have been welcomed in this Dominion with universal approbation and with warm attachment to the Throne and to the persons of Their present Majesties. My Prime Minister was privileged to represent New Zealand at the Coronation ceremony in London, and the popular enthusiasm so unmistakably displayed throughout His Majesty's dominions has, in the opinion of my Advisers, provided conclusive proof of the value of the Throne to the British Commonwealth of Nations.

During this year my Ministers invited the public to contribute towards a fund for the provision of a Dominion memorial to His late Majesty, King George V, in the form of Children's Health Camps. It is gratifying indeed to record the magnificent response that all sections of the community, and both races, made to this appeal. Legislative proposals for the administration of this fund will be placed before you during the present session.

The Dominion was represented at the recent Imperial Conference by my Prime Minister, my Minister of Finance, and the High Commissioner for New Zealand in London. A report of the proceedings will be laid before you at an early date, and an opportunity will be afforded for a full discussion of the work of the Conference.

Foreign Affairs was one of the principal subjects discussed at the Imperial Conference, and my Government, as a result of this discussion, desire to reaffirm their attachment to the principles of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and their conviction that a collective system for the maintenance of the peace of the world is the only rational and effective means of achieving that end and of facilitating that general disarmament which they so ardently desire.

A further subject which received close consideration at the Imperial Conference was Defence, and my Prime Minister warmly appreciates and acknowledges the value of the information that was placed at his disposal at that time, and the advice and assistance that, in response to every request, was so freely and generously made available by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

The necessary steps have been taken for the more efficient co-ordination and administration of all branches of the Defence services of the Dominion, and legislative measures to that end will be placed before you during this session.

New Zealand was represented at the recent International Labour Conference by my Minister of Labour, who also took the opportunity of his visit to study industrial legislation and conditions in Europe and America. It is the intention of my Government to lay before you proposals for the ratification of a number of Conventions already adopted by the International Labour Conference.

The substantial material progress which this Dominion has made since I last addressed you is most encouraging. The value of the exports for the season ended 30th June last reached the highest figure ever recorded, and the internal trade of the Dominion has also been very buoyant, largely due, in the opinion of my Advisers, to the increased purchasing-power in the hands of the consuming public brought about by my Government's legislation to raise standards of living.

The satisfactory prices obtained for our products overseas, the reduction in local unemployment, and the general increase in national income stand out in striking and welcome relief after the unhappy years of depression. All sections of the community have enjoyed a much greater degree of prosperity, and my Ministers are confident that these happy conditions will be maintained and improved.

While the number of persons unemployed has shown a very substantial reduction, the problem of promoting employment and relieving distress—one of the major questions that has faced all countries since the depression—nevertheless continues to receive the closest attention of my Ministers. A properly planned and vigorous public-works policy, including river-protection works, and embracing every class of national work necessary for the development and prosperity of the Dominion, was commenced without delay. Considerably more men have been given full-time employment on public works and in secondary industries than in any previous year. It is proposed to provide facilities for the training of youths and men, including farm workers, by introducing courses of vocational instruction.

During the recess my Advisers have initiated inquiries into the fruit and vegetable industry, the fishing industry, and the tobacco industry, and the necessary measures are being taken for the knowledge so obtained to be applied in the best interests of the community.

The facilities provided by the Primary Products Marketing Department have been extended by the organization of the internal marketing of primary products.

When my Government assumed office there was a marked shortage of houses, and the problem of housing the people of the Dominion has occasioned my Advisers much concern. To meet this urgent need a Department of Housing Construction has been established under the control of a Parliamentary Under-Secretary. The first contracts for State houses were signed in March of this year; good progress has since been made, and the work is being rapidly accelerated.

My Government have attached great importance to the co-ordination of transport services and also to the principle of safety on the roads. A considerable reduction in fatalities has already been achieved as a result of the measures they have taken, and it is their intention to propose legislative amendments to further this object.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

During the recess my Minister of Finance, Customs, and Marketing has visited Great Britain for the purpose of discussing, with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the question of trade between Great Britain and New Zealand, and negotiations for a trade agreement, having as its objective a mutual expansion of trade, are still proceeding. My Minister took advantage of his visit abroad to discuss with His Majesty's Government in Canada, and also with the Governments of a number of foreign countries, the trade relationships between them and this Dominion. It is expected that these discussions will, in a number of cases, lead to the conclusion, at an early date, of trade arrangements which should provide increased opportunity for the disposal of this Dominion's primary products. In other cases the possibilities of arranging trade agreements to the benefit of the Dominion are to be further investigated.

The public accounts for the financial year ended 31st March last resulted in a surplus of £472,000, and the Dominion has proved able to provide for the whole of its financial requirements without recourse to overseas markets. Steps were taken, however, to convert, to the extent of £4,000,000, the 6-per-cent. stock, totalling £5,870,000, issued in London in 1921, the balance required to redeem this issue being provided from New Zealand. This conversion loan, issued at 30s. per cent. discount and bearing interest at 3 per cent. per annum, has resulted in a substantial saving in interest charges.

A scheme for invalidity pensions, and for an increase in the rates of existing pensions, both civil and military, inaugurated as a result of legislation passed during last session, has proved of great benefit, and proposals will be placed before you having for their object the extension of the system to cover certain classes of invalids not at present provided for. At the same time, it is my Ministers' intention to introduce a comprehensive measure establishing a system of national superannuation and health insurance, the benefits of which it is hoped will be reflected in every household.

HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The welfare and advancement of the Maori people have received the fullest attention of my Government during the past year, and vigorous methods have been pursued in promoting the development and settlement of their lands and in improving their living and housing conditions. It is the intention of my Government to continue and to accelerate these measures for promoting the health, prosperity, and happiness of the Maori race.

My Ministers have in preparation a comprehensive scheme for improving by sport and physical training the health and fitness of the people generally; and the arrangements for the supply of milk to children in schools, which were successfully inaugurated early this year in the principal cities, and which now reach about one-third of the school population, are being extended to other centres. At the same time facilities for the training of school dental nurses have been enlarged, and my Ministers hope to be in a position, very shortly, rapidly to increase the number of school dental clinics.

Preliminary consideration has been given to the reorganization of the education system. The views of educational authorities, associations of teachers, and other bodies interested in education have been obtained, and the recent New Education Fellowship Conference provided an opportunity for obtaining much helpful information from distinguished educationists visiting New Zealand. It is proposed to introduce legislation amending the Education Act, 1914.

Realizing the importance of forestry as a means of creating a valuable national asset, and at the same time of providing employment, my Ministers have under consideration a long-term programme of indigenous forest improvement (having due regard to the necessity of providing for the better preservation of native bush) in addition to the establishment of further exotic plantations.

My Minister of Agriculture is giving full consideration to measures necessary for the improvement of the farming industry and the protection of stock.

During the recess my Minister of Justice and Attorney-General has considered the matter of law reform, with a view to correcting anomalies in the law and ensuring that it should be adequate to meet the needs of justice in the light of modern conditions. With this objective a representative Law Revision Committee has been constituted.

My Advisers propose to lay before you amendments to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1925, providing for an extension of the definition of "industry." You will also be asked to extend, for a further period, the operation of the Fair Rents Act, 1936.

A Bill will be introduced for your consideration setting up a Standards Institute, on the lines adopted in Great Britain and other countries, with the object of co-operating with industry and commerce in the establishment of commodity standards where this would be helpful.

Bills will also be submitted for your consideration amending the Coal-mines Act, 1925, the Mining Act, 1926, the Stone-quarries Act, 1910, the Municipal Corporations Act, 1933, as well as measures concerning the duration of Parliament, an alteration in the day of the celebration of His Majesty's birthday, the centennial of New Zealand in 1940, an adjustment of the law relating to damage by motor-vehicles, and for facilitating the search for petroleum in the Dominion. A Bill providing for local government reform will also be introduced.

I earnestly trust that your deliberations on these subjects may be guided by Divine Providence for the welfare and prosperity of the people of this Dominion.