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NEW ZEALAND



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THE First Session of the Twenty-eighth Parliament of New Zealand was on the twenty-fourth day of June opened by Commissioners under the authority of Letters Patent, and His Excellency was this day pleased to make the following statement of the causes of the calling of this Session of Parliament together:—

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

It affords me much pleasure to meet you at the opening of the first session of the Twenty-eighth Parliament.

I have been privileged, since I last addressed you, to visit many parts of New Zealand, and I have observed with profound satisfaction the deep spirit of loyalty which animates the people, Maori and pakeha alike.

Among the nations of the world the past year has been marked by great activity directed toward the settlement of post-war problems. Upon these settlements will be based the possibilities of peace and progress for the coming years.

My Government, conscious of the importance to New Zealand of these international understandings, and, in the belief that this country can, and must, contribute towards the establishment of world peace and the welfare of the peoples, have taken advantage of New Zealand's right to join the victorious Allied nations in making the peace settlements and have accepted its responsibilities to participate in the deliberations of the United Nations and its associated bodies. During the past year New Zealand was represented at many international meetings. These will be the subject of report to Parliament by my Minister of External Affairs.

New Zealand has been elected for a three-year term to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, which is responsible for promoting international economic and social co-operation.

This country's election to the Council may be regarded not only as an honour to New Zealand and a recognition of its contribution to international economic and social well-being, but also as a measure of the responsibility which rests upon the Dominion in these matters.

The Fourth Session of the Council was attended by my Minister of Finance and Customs, who then proceeded to London and Geneva to lead the New Zealand delegation during the discussions on the multilateral tariff agreements and the proposed Charter for an International Trade Organization.

My Attorney-General led the New Zealand delegation to the Conference of Paris which considered the peace treaties with Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland. The treaties as finally drafted were signed on behalf of New Zealand on the 10th of February last. Legislation to authorize my Government to give effect to certain provisions of the peace treaties will be proposed for Parliament's approval.

My Government have also given consideration to the peace settlements with Germany and Japan, which will probably be brought closer to finality in the coming year. It has been necessary to emphasize with some effect that the peace settlements should not be dictated to the other Allies by the Great Powers, but that countries which contributed as much proportionately to the Allied war effort should be fully associated with the drafting of the treaties.

In expressing New Zealand's views upon the control and future of Japan, my Advisers have placed great emphasis upon the need to secure now, and enforce for the future, the most thorough-going disarmament of a country which has for long been the chief menace to New Zealand's security. It is expected that discussions upon the Japanese settlement will shortly take place in Canberra among the countries of the British Commonwealth preparatory to the wider international Peace Conference.

My Government's efforts, in conjunction with the Government of Australia, to secure regional co-operation to promote the raising of living standards in non-self-governing territories in the Pacific, resulted in the signing of an agreement by the United Kingdom, the United States, France, the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand establishing a South Pacific Commission. The report of the New Zealand delegation to this Conference, indicating the further action which will be necessary, will be laid before Parliament.

My Ministers have continued to watch over the well-being of the island dependencies. The need for associating the people of the Cook Islands in a greater measure of responsibility in the government of the Group has been met by the formation of the Legislative Council of the Cook Islands.

At the meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and on the initiative of my Government, an agreement was reached to bring Western Samoa under the Trusteeship provisions of the United Nations Charter. The terms of this Agreement will be laid before you. In consequence of this change in the status of Western Samoa it will probably be necessary to ask Parliament to amend the Samoa Act, 1921.

The nature and strength of the Defence Forces of New Zealand and the international and British Commonwealth obligations and other defensive requirements upon which they are based have continued to occupy the close attention of my Advisers.

The Council of Defence has been reconstituted. The Chiefs of Staff of Army and Air have recently attended a Conference in the United Kingdom called by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, who will himself shortly pay a visit to New Zealand. Measures are being taken to reconstitute and reorganize the Regular Army and the Air Force. A naval recruiting campaign has been commenced, and the Royal New Zealand Naval Volunteer Reserve is being re-established and expanded.

The necessity to maintain their proportion of the occupation forces in Japan is fully recognized by my Government. By agreement with His Majesty's Governments in other contributing

countries of the British Commonwealth and with the Government of the United States of America, the New Zealand Army group of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan is being reduced to a strength of 2,400.

The devastation and acute shortages resulting from six years of large-scale warfare have placed in jeopardy the lives and well-being of many millions of human beings. New Zealand is a member of several international bodies which are co-ordinating the work of individual nations in alleviating the desperate plight of many countries and people. Parliament will be made aware of the work of many of these bodies—such as the International Refugee Organization and the International Children's Emergency Fund—and practical proposals will be made by my Government of ways in which New Zealand can make the most effective contribution to the attainment of their ends.

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

During the financial year which ended on 31st March the public revenues were buoyant, and the accounts closed with a surplus of £4,611,000. Benefits distributed from the Social Security Fund amounted to £36,121,000, which was £1,000,000 more than had been anticipated in the Budget.

Legislation was enacted last year to effect a reduction in income-tax and sales-tax. Further relief was accorded taxpayers this year by the elimination of the remaining 6d. in the pound of national security tax, and the necessary legislation to validate this reduction will be introduced during the present session of Parliament.

In recognition of the enormous burden that the United Kingdom carried throughout the war and is continuing to bear in the post-war period, a gift of £12,500,000 was made to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom as a token of New Zealand's appreciation of the magnificent effort of the British people in safeguarding the freedom of mankind. A grant of £250,000 was also made to the fund initiated by the Lord Mayor of London for the alleviation of distress caused by the recent disastrous floods in Britain.

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

It is gratifying that New Zealand is making a substantial recovery from the economic dislocations of the war.

The success of the rehabilitation scheme gives special satisfaction. Ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen have had the widest opportunities to secure remunerative employment. Over 11,500 ex-servicemen have availed themselves of the trade-training scheme. In addition, 3,251 ex-servicemen have wholly or partly completed training as farmers.

My Government's land-settlement proposals are designed to place at least 9,000 ex-servicemen permanently on the land. 3,893 ex-servicemen have acquired farms of their own with rehabilitation finance. For the settlement of ex-servicemen the State has so far acquired or set aside 742,000 acres of land.

Over 25,400 ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen have received grants to assist them with their education. Already 21,000 houses have been provided for ex-servicemen, and financial provision has been made for a further 4,600 houses. Of the 186,000 ex-service personnel registered with the Rehabilitation Department over 132,000 have, so far, received some form of assistance. The total outlay for rehabilitation now amounts to just on £51,000,000.

In the primary industries there has been a notable achievement. The previous season's output of meat, which was a record, is, on preliminary evidence, likely to be surpassed in the current season.

With the favourable climatic conditions, dairy production has recovered from the setback of last season's drought, and the export of butter will exceed the previous year's shipments by approximately 20,000 tons.

An agreement has been made between my Government and the representatives of the dairy industry providing for the establishment of a Dairy Commission, for the determination each season of the guaranteed price and for the future responsibility for marketing butter and cheese overseas and in New Zealand. Legislation to give effect to this agreement will be submitted early in the session.

The promotion of the general well-being and progress of the Maori people has engaged the constant attention of my Government. During the year welfare officers were appointed under the Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act, and work has progressed on the development and settlement of Maori lands. A Royal Commission has been appointed to investigate the "surplus lands" claims, and other claims are receiving consideration.

My Ministers are convinced that the Crown should take such steps as are necessary to conserve the coal resources of the country and to ensure of their planned working, and to this end it is proposed, by legislation to be introduced at the present session of Parliament, to nationalize the coal-measures.

The Department of Labour and the National Employment Service have been amalgamated, and legislation to give effect to this merger will be introduced. The reorganized Department is giving constant attention to the improvement of industrial relations and the health, safety, and welfare of workers in industry.

As the speedy settlement of industrial disputes is an important factor in maintaining good industrial relations, legislation will be introduced for the purpose of providing assistance for the Court of Arbitration in carrying on its greatly increased duties. Amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act to provide for considerable improvement in the compensation benefits will be placed before you.

My Government have made arrangements with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for a scheme of assisted immigration, the limiting factor in which is the amount of shipping available.

Schedules of works to be constructed during the next ten years have been announced by my Government as part of their policy of co-ordinating the development of national resources. In the consideration of these proposals for the forward development of all districts full regard for the views and interests of the local communities is ensured by the machinery for joint review between my Government and Regional Councils representing the local authorities. This close collaboration also ensures that local needs are best served in the determination of priorities made necessary by the present shortage of man-power and materials. The highest priorities have been given to housing and electricity works. Notwithstanding the difficulties in obtaining supplies of materials, the total number of new dwellings erected last year reached the record total of 9,463. For the purpose of producing a supply of electricity adequate to meet the ever-increasing demand every possible action is being taken to hasten the construction of the major hydro-electric schemes. A constant search is being made throughout the world for available generating-plants of a suitable type.

Economic stabilization continues to be a basic consideration of my Government's policy. Although there have been slight improvements during the past year in the availability of certain commodities, there remains a wide discrepancy between supply and demand for goods. In the interests of all sections of the community the continuation of an effective stabilization policy is essential to prevent inflationary increases in prices.

It is proposed to introduce a Bill consolidating the present legislation relating to tuberculosis, and to make additional provision for the effective control of the disease.

The merging of the Mental Hospitals and Health Departments will also be the subject of legislation.

In the field of education my Government's activities will be devoted to consolidating advances made in recent years and to providing additional teachers, buildings, equipment, and special services necessary for carrying out the Government's policy of giving full and free education to every child. Two consultative committees have reported in recent months—the Committee on Pre-School Educational Services, and the Committee on Adult Education.

Last year a Royal Commission on Licensing completed its task, and presented a most comprehensive report in which the social and economic aspects of the licensing laws are closely and critically examined. It recommended many reforms in the law relating to the manufacture, importation, and distribution of intoxicating liquors. Parliament will be given an opportunity to examine and discuss the report and its proposals.

With the termination of wartime activities my Advisers have deemed it necessary to review all war regulations, and appropriate measures for dealing with them will be placed before Parliament.

It is also proposed to lay before you legislation to consolidate the laws relating respectively to the sale of food and drugs, and to Magistrates' Courts. Legislation will also be formulated to provide for social security reciprocity with Australia and for better protection against forest and rural fires.

I commend all these matters to your careful consideration, and I pray for Divine guidance in your deliberations.

