



THE NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY

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THE **Third** Session of the Thirty-first 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 MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

It was our great pleasure and privilege in December last to welcome His Royal Highness the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in the course of his extensive tour of Commonwealth countries.

In accordance with his expressed wish, the visit was less formal than the Royal tour in 1953-54. His Royal Highness thus had greater opportunities of meeting New Zealanders at work, and of seeing something more of this country's achievements in the fields of agriculture, industry, commerce, science, and education.

The enthusiasm with which our Royal visitor was received was heart-warming evidence of the unswerving loyalty and deep affection which the New Zealand people have for the Crown.

These are among the enduring qualities that will remain uppermost in my memories of this country.

I feel deeply honoured to have been the representative of the Queen during the last four and a half years. It has been the earnest endeavour of my wife and myself to associate ourselves with the New Zealand people in all walks of life, and everywhere we have been welcomed with the warmest friendliness.

This is the last occasion on which I shall have the privilege of addressing you in Parliament assembled, and of acknowledging before you the great courtesy and kindness shown to me, and also to my wife and family, during our stay here.

We extend to you, and through you to those you represent, our grateful thanks, together with our heartfelt wishes for the future well-being of New Zealand and its people.

In the international sphere over the past year there is little that is encouraging, and much, indeed, that gives rise to deepening concern.

While it is unlikely that Powers possessing thermo-nuclear weapons would deliberately precipitate a global war, the dangers of miscalculation remain, as do the risks of limited wars fought with conventional weapons. The crises of the past year serve as a stern reminder of

the threats to national freedom and human liberties and the need for strong defences. The ruthless crushing of the Hungarian people has exposed the cruel reality that lies behind the genial phrases of peaceful coexistence.

There has been disappointingly little progress towards any international agreement on disarmament. As the devastating power of thermo-nuclear weapons grows, the need for such an agreement becomes every day more urgent, and it is the firm conviction of my Ministers that all Governments must continue to exert every effort to reach that goal, but until it is attained the Western Powers cannot abandon their preparations nor relax their vigilance.

New and urgent significance has been given to the subject with the carrying out of the British tests in the Pacific of its nuclear weapon. As my Prime Minister has made clear, my Government will continue to advocate and support any comprehensive programme of supervised limitation of armaments, including nuclear weapons, with an adequate system of international inspection upon which agreement can be reached by the powers principally concerned.

The policy of my Ministers has continued to be based on active support for the United Nations and on the closest co-operation with other Commonwealth countries and with the United States.

The forthcoming meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers will provide a valuable opportunity for an exchange of views by Commonwealth leaders on world problems.

Instability continues in the Middle East and developments in the area accordingly still cause my Advisers deep concern.

In the United Nations my Government's representatives have urged that the difficulties of the Arab-Israeli problem be squarely faced and that attention be directed to its basic causes. My Government regards the United Nations Emergency Force as an important element in efforts to stabilise the Middle East and favours its retention in the area until substantial progress has been made towards settlement of Arab-Israeli differences and until secure rights of navigation in the Suez Canal have been restored. In my Advisers' view the international character of the Suez Canal should be fully observed and it should be operated under a system which, while of benefit to Egypt, is efficient, financially stable, secure against the influences of personal caprice and national ambition, and without discrimination against the shipping of any country. My Government will continue to work with other countries for a settlement with Egypt that will satisfy these conditions.

Progress has been made through the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation in building up the defensive strength of the member countries and in developing friendly co-operation among them in various fields. At the meeting of the Council of Ministers of SEATO, which took place in Canberra earlier this year, there was real cause for satisfaction with the advances made.

In the light of the present international situation and of the nature of the military measures necessary for the security of the free world, my Ministers have recently conducted a comprehensive review of defence policy. They are confident that the modifications set out in the White Paper that will be placed before you will enable our armed forces to make a realistic and effective military contribution to the collective defence arrangements to which New Zealand is a party.

Among the countries in this part of the world, the Colombo Plan is an instrument for international co-operation to which my Ministers have always attached the greatest importance. At the meeting, held in Wellington last December, of the Consultative Committee of the Plan there was encouraging evidence of the beneficial social and economic results of the operation of the Plan and of the improvement in international understanding that it has promoted. My Government invites your continued support for this beneficent project.

New Zealand's economic problems continue to be those associated with rapid expansion and a high level of demand both for capital and consumer goods, but my Ministers are gratified that their policies have contributed substantially to the greater degree of stability now evident. They see, however, no cause for complacency in the matter of our export trade and arrangements were made for a representative mission of producer organisations, manufacturers, and traders, under the leadership of my Minister of Agriculture, to visit London for discussions on our trade relations with the United Kingdom. These discussions have resulted in valuable additions to the Ottawa Agreement and have led to a better understanding of the present-day problems associated with the expanding trade of our two countries. My Advisers are also maintaining their close watch on developments in the pattern of world trade generally, including proposals for a European Free Trade Area. They are conscious of the need to expand and diversify New Zealand's overseas markets not only for our primary produce, but also for our processing and manufacturing industries.

The steady influence in the economy of the policies initiated by my Ministers has made possible the removal from business activity of further direct controls.

The availability of adequate resources for development purposes is regarded by my Ministers as important in our expanding economy. They attach special importance to successful loan-conversion operations and to the borrowing of funds to support the very substantial part of their works programme that is not financed from revenue. There has been a good response to their endeavours to encourage higher levels of savings.

Estimates of expenditure will be placed before you for your consideration in due course.

My Government's land-development programme is being maintained throughout New Zealand and provision is being made for increased areas to be developed in both Southland and Westland. Endeavours to speed up the rate of farm settlement of our eligible ex-servicemen have been maintained so as to permit the reinstatement of a policy of civilian settlement.

You will be asked to consider a Bill dealing with the action my Government is taking to secure future supplies of phosphate rock, so important to our agricultural industry, and a Bill amending the Meat Act so as to ensure a consistently high standard for all exported meat.

New Zealand and Australia will be joint hosts later this year to the Seventh British Commonwealth Forestry Conference, a feature of which will be the presentation of a comprehensive survey of our native forest resources. My Government is gratified at the continued progress of the pulp and paper industry and the substantial increase in the export of its products.

Our growing prosperity and improved standards of living are reflected in the rapid expansion of road transport and, although during the last eight years the country's road transport fleet has increased by more than 75 per cent, my Ministers are pleased to be able to report that their vigorous programme of road safety measures has achieved a steady decline in the death rate from traffic accidents.

My Government has recognised the increasingly important role of aviation in our transport system by promoting the development of the necessary facilities, including the installation of radar landing systems to ensure the continued safety and efficiency of our airways.

The development of electric power retains an important place in my Government's works programme and good progress is being made with the coal-fired steam station near Mercer and with the harnessing of geothermal steam at Wairakei; both of these plants should be in operation next year. In addition, three further hydro-electric stations are under construction on the Waikato River, while, in the South Island, the output of the Roxburgh power station is to be increased to twice its present level. My Ministers are carefully examining the feasibility of

transferring electric power from the South Island to the North Island by submarine cable and plans are under way for further large-scale development of both our hydro-electric and thermal resources.

Employment expanded again in 1956, and good industrial relations have been maintained with no major stoppages since I last addressed you. My Advisers continue to give their close attention to the problem of reducing the level of accidents in industry.

Efforts by my Government to ensure adequate housing for our people have been fully sustained and the number of houses completed last year once again reached a record total.

My Government is pleased to be able to report progress in the first phase of an extensive building programme for our university colleges. My Ministers are also engaged in an examination of the measures necessary to encourage and assist the development of technical and agricultural education to meet the future economic and social needs of our people. Steps have been taken to broaden the scope of child welfare activities and during this year children's homes controlled by voluntary organisations will, for the first time, receive direct financial assistance from my Government.

The inoculation of children against poliomyelitis has now commenced and my Government hopes during this year to make the benefits of this outstanding achievement in preventive medicine available to a wider range of our young people. You will be asked to consider a Bill which, while retaining local management of our hospitals by elected boards, will make provision for my Government's responsibility in the financing of a national and comprehensive public hospital system. A Bill will also be placed before you for the purpose of consolidating social security legislation.

As always, the well-being of the Maori people is a major concern of my Government and special emphasis is placed on welfare, education, and employment among the young people. During the past year authority has been given for the development of a further 15,000 acres of Maori land in Northland and 5,000 acres in the King Country. In addition, finance and building facilities have been made available for the erection of more than 550 houses.

Evidence of my Ministers' continuing attention to matters affecting the people of the Island Territories is provided by Bills which will be placed before you to promote further constitutional development in Western Samoa and the Cook Islands.

One important measure that you will be asked to consider is a revision of the Crimes Act to bring its provisions, particularly those relating to penalties, into closer harmony with modern views and with public opinion. Other proposed legislation in the field of criminal law and procedure includes a consolidation and revision of the Justices of the Peace Act and an Extradition Bill. Legislation to provide for the holding of a referendum on the question of capital punishment will be placed before you.

Among miscellaneous legislation which my Ministers propose to submit for your consideration is an amendment to the Mental Health Act making changes in the procedure relating to committal of persons to mental hospitals and to persons charged with criminal offences, a Simultaneous Deaths Bill altering the present rule determining succession to property, and a consolidation and revision of the Religious, Charitable, and Educational Trusts Act. Other consolidating measures will deal with the Police Force, the postal and telegraph services, and the law relating to dangerous goods and explosives. Bills dealing with the control of our national archives, with the adjustment of valuations for certain rating purposes, and with the law relating to shipping and seamen will also be placed before you.

All these matters I commend to your careful consideration and I pray that Divine guidance will attend your deliberations.