



THE NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY

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THE Second Session of the Thirty-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 MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Last month His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh spent 4 crowded days in New Zealand. In that short time he visited industrial, scientific, and youth projects and fulfilled numerous other engagements in both the North Island and the South Island.

The keen personal interest displayed by His Royal Highness in so many phases of our national life, and his informed comment, made the occasion memorable for New Zealand.

The visit has also enabled our people to demonstrate once again their abiding loyalty to Her Majesty The Queen and the esteem in which they hold the Duke of Edinburgh.

Today it is my great privilege for the first time to address you in Parliament assembled.

I am deeply conscious of the honour which Her Majesty The Queen has bestowed on me in appointing me to be Her Representative in the country of my birth. I shall at all times strive faithfully to discharge that trust and, as Her Representative, to serve the people you represent, both European and Maori.

In this task I have already found warm encouragement in the friendship and hospitality extended to me, and to my wife and family, since we arrived in December. The welfare of the people of New Zealand is very close to our hearts and I pray that, during my term of office, I may be able to assist in promoting their progress and happiness.

In the field of international affairs, the issues of peace and security in South-East Asia have continued to demand the constant attention of my Government.

The past year has seen dramatic developments. Among these were the decisions of the British Government, first to withdraw its forces from Malaysia and Singapore by the mid 1970s, and, subsequently, to complete the withdrawal by the end of 1971.

My Prime Minister and my Minister of Defence have just returned from the Five-Power Conference in Kuala Lumpur. This meeting was concerned with the profound implications of Britain's withdrawal for the future security of South-East Asia and the Pacific. You will be invited to discuss what this may mean for New Zealand, and also to review the work of the conferences held in this building in April of the SEATO and ANZUS Councils, and of the Foreign Ministers of the countries allied in the defence of the Republic of Vietnam.

Vietnam is still the focal point of communist aggression and subversion in South-East Asia. Last year my Government accordingly increased its military assistance to the Republic of Vietnam, where New Zealand units are operating with the Australian Task Force. It has also continued, in consultation with its Allies, to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. It does not expect this to be quickly or easily attained. My Ministers are nevertheless maintaining the closest consultations with New Zealand's Allies on the course of the Paris talks.

My Government is participating fully in the work of the United Nations and in the diverse activities of the Commonwealth.

In the United Nations General Assembly it has supported the adoption of the treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. It continues to attach great importance to the peace-keeping functions of the Organisation.

In the year which marks the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, my Ministers place special emphasis on the ability of the Commonwealth to demonstrate that the prejudice, and the racial, national, and economic barriers which divide nations can be surmounted.

The visit which the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Gorton, paid to New Zealand at the end of March underlined the high value which both Governments attach to the further development of their close ties of friendship and mutual understanding. It provided a most welcome and timely opportunity for the discussion of matters of common interest.

Valuable capital and technical aid continues to be given by New Zealand to many countries of Asia, the Pacific, and Africa under both bilateral and multilateral arrangements and also through the important work of voluntary agencies such as CORSO and Volunteer Service Abroad.

My Government has recently announced that, for the next 3 years, it will maintain at a high level the financial assistance it has been giving to the Cook Islands, Niue, and the Tokelau Islands. In March, on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister of Western Samoa, my Prime Minister also announced that the programme of aid to that country, in education, technical assistance, and administration, will be carried forward until 1971.

A Bill to give effect to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations will be presented for your consideration.

During 1967 the national economy responded to the measures taken by my Government to restore the balance of payments, following the collapse of wool prices, and to moderate the previously excessive rate of growth of internal demand. The difficulties facing New Zealand were nevertheless aggravated by the continued low level of export prices.

More recently, since the devaluation of the New Zealand dollar to parity with the currency of Australia, there has been a distinct improvement in the level of overseas reserves. Production for export has continued to increase and some export returns have improved. New Zealand's manufacturing industries are now in a better position to compete with those of Australia.

It would be premature to assume that the period of adjustment is over. My Ministers are confident, however, that given firm but flexible economic policies the improvement in the balance of payments can be sustained.

Within New Zealand, selective measures have been taken to lessen the impact of the adverse circumstances which still affect the economy. My Government has speeded up the calling of tenders for some buildings. It is also providing employment in a number of labour-intensive projects of real value to the economy and has offered generous subsidies to local authorities to help them to take similar action. Life Offices and Savings Banks have been authorised to divert some of their funds from Government stock to local authority loans and to loans for new housing. Lending limits for new houses have been increased and more Crown sections are being made available to private builders. Some hire purchase restrictions have been eased. The possible need for further measures is being kept under continuous review.

At the same time my Ministers have been concerned that a positive approach should be adopted towards New Zealand's longer term development. Earlier this year they therefore took steps to set up a National Development Conference. It will be its purpose to devise constructive measures for stimulating soundly based and sustained economic growth.

The Steering Committee and other committees are already at work preparing the background material for the first session of the Conference. They are dealing both with the main sectors of the economy—agriculture, manufacturing, forestry, fishing, tourism, minerals, transport, and distribution—and with the major factors which influence development, such as education, training and research, manpower, and marketing.

My Ministers anticipate that this expansion of indicative planning on to a national scale will provide targets and policy recommendations for the economy as a whole and also for key industries during the next 5 to 10 years. Particular attention will be given to those forms of production which have the greatest capacity for the net earning of overseas exchange.

Two special conferences, on forestry and tourism, will be held within the framework of the National Development Conference.

Rapid developments in forestry and in the wood-based industries, stimulated by devaluation and the Free Trade Agreement with Australia, make it clear that a stocktaking at this time will be of the utmost value.

Last year more than 200,000 overseas tourists, a record number, visited New Zealand. It is the objective of my Ministers, through the Tourist Conference, to secure the support of all sections of the industry for a co-ordinated drive to develop the full capacity of tourism to earn overseas funds.

The National Development Conference will consider targets for the pastoral industry up to 1978–79. The build-up of stock numbers in recent years has been in line with the targets for 1972–73 which were previously set by the Agricultural Development Conference. Further substantial increases in stock numbers are expected in 1969.

In the season which is closing farm production has been well maintained. To offset the effect of lower incomes in some sectors of the industry, my Government has taken steps to ensure that finance is available for sound farm development programmes. It welcomes the wider use which is now being made of advisory, scientific, and financial services.

My advisers have nevertheless been increasingly concerned by the growing pressures which protectionism and surplus products have been exerting on New Zealand's markets. The market in the United Kingdom is of fundamental importance, particularly for the dairy industry and for lamb, and my Ministers will spare no effort to safeguard it against unfair competition. They will continue also to watch closely any developments which might affect Britain's application to join the European Economic Community.

In other markets the most urgent needs are still new outlets for New Zealand products and improved conditions of access where restricted sales are already being made. These objectives will be actively pursued through the vigorous promotion of New Zealand's commodities and in both bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

A Meat Amendment Bill will be submitted for your consideration, following the further study of the measure introduced last year. Legislation is being drafted to enable breeders and selectors of plants to gain legal protection for new varieties.

The fishing industry last year established new records in its total catch and in its export earnings. My Government is convinced of the scope for further expansion and development. It will submit for your consideration a Bill to authorise the leasing of areas of the seabed for the farming of fish and shellfish.

Legislation in the financial field will include a consolidation of the Estate and Gift Duties Act. This measure, together with the Land and Income Tax legislation, will provide an opportunity for implementing many of my Government's decisions on the report of the Taxation Review Committee.

A Bill will be introduced to authorise New Zealand's participation in the system of special drawing rights recently adopted by the International Monetary Fund.

Estimates of expenditure for the coming year, with related financial proposals, will be placed before you in due course.

In the field of industrial development my Government attaches special importance to the exploitation of New Zealand's indigenous minerals and fuels. It continues to give active encouragement to the search for new deposits of economic value and it welcomes the recent quickening in the pace of exploration and investigation.

A Bill will be submitted to bring the mining legislation more into keeping with current requirements. Provisions relating to the use of water for mining, and also for irrigation, will be incorporated in an amendment to the Water and Soil Conservation Act.

In order that the best value may be obtained from Kapuni natural gas, legislation will be introduced to extend the existing gas franchise areas and to permit gas to be supplied to new housing districts which cannot be serviced at present.

A consolidation of the legislation administered by the New Zealand Electricity Department will be submitted for your consideration.

My Ministers are fully conscious of the vital importance of efficient transport services for New Zealand's export trade and for its expanding local industries. They are now reviewing the administrative arrangements which will best promote the proper co-ordination of the transport system and the changes in the law that may be required for this purpose.

My Government regrets that the British Shipping Lines should have postponed a decision on the opening of a container shipping service to New Zealand. In the circumstances it has decided that there should be an independent inquiry into the economic significance of such a service. An amendment to the Customs Act will be introduced in order to facilitate the entry and clearance of cargo imported and exported in containers.

The modernisation of the railway system is well advanced and has already achieved greater efficiency and economy, with a marked improvement in freight services. In the field of civil aviation the Queenstown Airport is being developed and other southern aerodromes are being improved to handle the larger planes which are now needed for the increased tourist traffic.

My Government has also decided to build a new jet runway in Rarotonga. It is confident that this will prove its value in the earning of overseas funds through tourism and through the operations of Air New Zealand. It should also be of major benefit to the economy of the Cook Islands.

You will be asked to consider an amendment to the Niue Act and also a Bill to amalgamate the Department of Island Territories with the Department of Maori Affairs.

In their endeavours to advance further the welfare of the Maori people my Ministers will continue to place the main emphasis on those measures which have already proved their worth. Special attention is being given to housing and education and to steps to widen employment opportunities for young Maori workers, including apprenticeship training schemes and city pre-employment courses.

In the field of education, both primary and secondary schools are going through a period of unprecedented development in curricula, teaching methods, and internal organisation. The programme for the extension of the period of training of primary teachers from 2 years to 3 is now well on the way to completion. The teachers' colleges are soon to be governed by their own councils after 90 years of direct control by Education Boards. These changes, and other developments in the secondary schools, technical institutes, and the universities, are being carried forward at a time when larger rolls are exerting growing pressures at all levels of the educational system.

A Bill will be introduced to establish a Vocational Training Council to replace, with wider functions, the present Council for Technical Education.

My Ministers will place before you several important measures in the field of family law. One will remove the remaining legal inequalities of children born out of wedlock. A Domestic Proceedings Bill will revise the law and procedure governing separation, maintenance, and paternity orders; it will also provide improved procedures for conciliation in domestic cases. Two other measures will deal with the law relating to custody and guardianship, and with the capacity of persons under 21 years of age to make contracts and wills.

In addition legislation has been drafted to extend the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to acts and decisions by officers of Hospital Boards and Education Boards. There will also be a consolidation of the Licensing Trusts Act and its amendments.

My Government has announced increases in the rates of most Social Security benefits, economic pensions and war veterans' allowances. The necessary amendments to the Social Security Act and the War Pensions Act will be submitted for your approval.

Following the recent decision of the Court of Arbitration on the application for a General Wage Order, my Government has also taken steps to prevent increases in the prices of most goods and services for a period of two months.

In the field of public health you will be asked to consider a Mental Health Bill, following the wide discussion and review of the measure introduced last Session. The reconstitution of the Medical Council and the establishment of a Medical Education Committee, responsible to the Council, will be among the changes proposed in a consolidation of the Medical Practitioners Act. There will also be Bills to promote the study of the reasons for maternal mortality and to revise and consolidate the food and drugs legislation.

A revision of the Local Authorities (Members' Contracts) Act will be submitted for your consideration together with amendments to the Municipal Corporations Act and the Counties Act. In accordance with the recommendation of the National Anti-Litter Council a Bill is being prepared to draw together the present legislation dealing with litter.

A Royal Commission is at present examining wage-fixing procedures in the State Services and other bodies supported by public funds. When the Royal Commission submits its report, my Ministers will discuss its recommendations with the employee organisations and any other interested parties before deciding whether legislation needs to be introduced.

My Government anticipates that during this Session you will complete the consideration of measures which have been studied by Select Committees during the Recess. These include the Broadcasting Authority Bill, the Post Office Amendment Bill, the Poultry Bill, and proposals relating to consumer goods. My Ministers will give most careful consideration to the report of the Select Committee which has been studying the questions of blood alcohol tests for drivers of motor vehicles and the demerit points system.

Other measures which will be placed before you will include a consolidation of the Child Welfare legislation, amendments to the National Parks Act, and a Bill to facilitate the establishment of a Building Research Association. There will also be amendments to the New Zealand Society of Accountants Act, the Education Act, the Joint Family Homes Act, and the Civil Defence Act.

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