



THE NEW ZEALAND GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY

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THE First Session of the Thirty-seventh 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 is a great privilege for me to address you, the newly elected members of the thirty-seventh Parliament of New Zealand.

I can assure you that I look forward with great pleasure to my association with you in the coming years and I pray that I may be able to assist in promoting the progress and happiness of the people to whom we both have a responsibility.

The Government's foreign policies reflect the basic concern of New Zealanders for fundamental human rights. All doctrines of racial superiority and of discrimination are rejected. All issues in the field of race relations, both at home and abroad, will be judged on this basic principle which New Zealand will promote through its membership of international organisations and through the United Nations in particular.

The Government will oppose more vigorously the continued testing of nuclear weapons, especially in the atmosphere and in the Pacific. The co-operation of our neighbours will be sought in the pursuit of all effective and practical means of achieving an end to such tests.

The Government welcomes the substantial progress that has been made towards reducing tension among the Great Powers and at the same time towards restoring peace in South-east Asia. Ministers recognise the need to maintain good working relations with all the Great Powers, particularly those whose policies have a major effect on peace and welfare in the Pacific region. They will foster New Zealand's already close relations with the United States and Japan. They have taken prompt steps to accord formal recognition to the People's Republic of China, and to establish diplomatic relations. They have directed that the question of opening a New Zealand diplomatic mission in Moscow at an early date should be examined together with ways of extending representation to other countries through accreditation from existing diplomatic posts.

Ministers were especially glad to have had an early opportunity to discuss issues of mutual concern with the Prime Minister of Australia and to strengthen the working arrangements for co-operation and consultation between the two countries.

Ministers regard the social, economic, and political advancement of the independent countries of the South Pacific as of major importance to New Zealand and will seek new ways to quicken its pace. They look forward to a further exchange of views in the near future with the Heads of Government of these countries.

In undertaking a review of existing multi-lateral arrangements in South-east Asia, Ministers are determined that New Zealand should continue to work closely with Asian countries and to make a positive contribution to the growth of regional co-operation. They welcome the agreements reached for the ending of the wars in Indo-China and earnestly hope that these will introduce an era of lasting peace and reconstruction. They have decided to double New Zealand's civil aid to those war-torn countries over a 5-year period.

The Government believes that the defence services, which are being reorganised on a totally volunteer basis, will also have an important role to play in constructive activities associated with New Zealand's assistance programmes for developing countries.

Honourable Members, to assist its policy of export promotion the Government intends to expand and strengthen its representation overseas and ensure that efforts in the diplomatic and trade fields are closely integrated. Special attention will be given to trade relations with the enlarged European Economic Community, Australia, and the South Pacific Islands.

Legislation will be introduced for your consideration to establish an export/import corporation to co-ordinate and expand overseas trading opportunities, particularly for those who lack resources to do this on their own account.

Although New Zealand is at present enjoying favourable prices for all major exports, the Government is well aware that this situation is unlikely to continue unless steps are taken to modify those agricultural production and trading policies which periodically produce world surpluses, undermine prices, and encourage new frontier restrictions. My Government will take the opportunity of the multi-lateral trade negotiations commencing this year within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to seek a just basis for international trade in primary products.

Honourable Members, it is the Government's intention to provide the economic climate necessary for New Zealand to achieve a more satisfactory rate of economic growth and at the same time bring about a better distribution of goods and services. Ministers will introduce for your consideration fiscal and other incentives designed to encourage greater production by all sections of the community. The Government recognises the key role played by investment in the process of economic development and attaches considerable importance to the need to raise the overall level of community savings. Appropriate encouragement will be given. Ministers recognise that the will to save and therefore the ability to invest is threatened by inflation. The Government is determined to restrain cost and price increases. Action already taken includes the establishment of Rent Appeal Boards, a freeze on Government charges for bulk power, an undertaking not to increase postal and telegraph charges or railway freight rates, and the stabilisation of consumer wool prices.

Ministers intend to strengthen the Price Stabilisation Regulations and will undertake a comprehensive evaluation of price control policy. A Bill will be submitted for your consideration which will replace the Rent Review Regulations and provide by statute the necessary protection for tenants against the activities of unreasonable landlords. Amendments to consumer protection and trade practices legislation will be placed before you. You will be asked to consider a Bill to control mergers, takeovers, and monopolies.

An amendment to the Reserve Bank Act is proposed to strengthen control over financial institutions and the creation of credit. It will also provide for some consolidation of existing banking legislation.

Honourable Members, the Government recognises that good industrial relations are essential to a prosperous and happy society. It believes that all people, wherever they work, desire a sense of purpose and the opportunity for achievement. Many are employed in uninteresting and monotonously repetitive tasks. The Government believes that more account must be taken of human considerations in industrial relations and the legislation which it will place before you will have this as a primary objective.

A number of amendments to the Industrial Relations Bill, which is at present before a Select Committee, will be submitted for your consideration. These will include provisions to ensure that workers receive a just return from increases in production and improvements in productivity. Provision will be made for the adequate recognition of skills and for the investigation of profit sharing and the development of productive bargaining.

A Bill will be introduced to amend the Annual Holidays Act to ensure, for all workers, a minimum of 3 weeks' annual holiday.

The Government has taken urgent action to combat unemployment, particularly for school leavers and young workers. Regions where this has been put into effect include the West Coast and Whangarei. It has also acted to improve the supply of skilled labour for the building industry and it will encourage the development of training schemes for workers of all levels of skill throughout industry. You will be asked to consider legislation to ensure that workers who have been displaced as a result of industrial change receive both compensation and the opportunity to acquire new skills.

The Government will encourage manufacturers to expand their activities in those areas where additional employment opportunities are needed. Regional development has been accorded a high priority and several regional development councils will be established this year. The Development Finance Corporation will be replaced by an Industrial Development Finance Corporation: its responsibilities will include the financing of regional industrial development.

The Government will establish the conditions which will enable manufacturers to play their full part in the development of the nation. The transfer of import licensing administration from the Customs Department to the Department of Trade and Industry will ensure that import licensing and industrial development policies are properly co-ordinated. You will be asked to consider changes in legislation to effect this transfer.

A number of measures to foster New Zealand's rural industries will be placed before you. It is proposed to establish a Rural Banking and Finance Corporation responsible for all forms of farm finance. You will be asked to consider an amendment to the Wool Marketing Corporation Act which will restore powers of acquisition to the corporation.

Proposals will be placed before you to implement some of the recommendations of the Fishing Industry Select Committee.

A White Paper will be submitted for your consideration on broadcasting policy. It will set out the Government's policy regarding the future organisation and development of broadcasting in New Zealand. Following your study of this you will be asked to consider a Broadcasting Bill making the necessary legislative changes.

Honourable Members, you will be asked to examine a number of measures to improve social legislation. You will be given an opportunity to consider the issues raised by the reinstatement of allowable income for means-test beneficiaries and the special bonus paid to such beneficiaries last Christmas.

Ministers are discussing with the Accident Compensation Commission the means of effecting the earliest extension of the provisions of the Accident Compensation Act to housewives and other non earners.

Proposals are being prepared for a comprehensive wage-related contributory superannuation scheme. This will require extensive preparation but it is hoped that a Bill will be introduced later in the Session.

The Hospitals Act 1957 will be amended to facilitate the leasing of premises by hospital boards for use as health centres.

On completion of discussions with the profession a consolidation of the Opticians Act will be placed before you.

Ministers consider that a review and consolidation of the Child Welfare Act 1925 has been too long delayed. It is proposed to submit a revision for your consideration this Session.

Honourable Members, the Government believes that there should be greater emphasis on the building of houses to provide good accommodation for those who are at present inadequately housed.

Ministers also consider that better use should be made of existing houses. They are aware that many elderly people live in family homes which are now too large for their needs and which they find difficult to maintain. They would prefer smaller, more convenient accommodation, but cannot obtain it close to the amenities which they need, and at a price which they can afford.

On the other hand there are many families living in overcrowded conditions in desperate need of good family accommodation at a reasonable rental. Only Government action can resolve this problem. Ministers intend to serve the needs of both the elderly and the young family by making it possible for the elderly, at their discretion, to sell their properties to the State which would make them available to families on a rental or purchase basis. The elderly will be accommodated in pensioner units of their choice, the construction of which will be accelerated.

The burden of local authority rates falls heavily on pensioners and other persons with relatively low incomes and the Government will introduce legislation to authorise assistance for such people.

Honourable Members, the Government recognises that the further improvement of the education system at all levels is necessary if New Zealand is to become a society in which all have equal opportunity to realise their full potential. A review is being made of tertiary education to ensure that policies for the further development of education at the higher levels are balanced, suited to the educational and vocational needs of individuals, and related to the requirements of both the regions and the whole of New Zealand. It considers that special attention is needed at the pre-school level and Ministers will be enlisting the help of voluntary organisations to ensure that there is full community support for the measures that will be taken.

It is the Government's particular concern that the Maori and Pacific Island people should benefit to the full from the facilities provided for their advancement. It considers that the proposed development of pre-school education will be particularly relevant to their needs.

In accordance with its policy to promote the physical and mental health of all New Zealanders and to ensure that they have the opportunity to occupy their leisure hours constructively, the Government will introduce legislation to establish a Ministry of Recreation and Sport to administer new policies of assistance to sporting and recreational organisations. Special attention will be given to the provision of facilities in new housing areas where there are many young people but few recreational facilities.

The Government is giving careful consideration to ways in which the community can be encouraged to participate more fully in the protection and improvement of the neighbourhoods in which they live. It has established a local committee to be known as the Guardians of Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau. The guardians will be responsible for reporting and making recommendations to the Government on any matters arising from the environmental, ecological, and social effects of the construction and operation of the Manapouri - Te Anau hydroelectric power scheme.

The Government will submit for your consideration this Session a Bill which will preserve Lake Wanaka in perpetuity for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.

Honourable Members, Ministers recognise that one of the basic responsibilities of the Government is to ensure that the people of New Zealand are able to live in peace and security. It is disturbed by the increase in crimes of violence. Firm action will be taken in an endeavour to prevent situations arising which may lead to acts of mob violence. It believes that the implementation of its social policies will do much to convince young people that there are opportunities for them to play a constructive part in shaping New Zealand's future. The small minority of those who persist in anti-social behaviour will be dealt with by the courts. You will be asked to consider proposals which will ensure that the courts have appropriate powers to deal with these people.

It is the wish of the Government that Select Committees of Parliament should play a greater part in the legislative process. In the past they have been largely confined to a revisory and, to some extent, advisory role considering and hearing evidence on Bills after they have been introduced and, in the case of Public Expenditure Committees, investigating some aspects of public administration. As an experiment in initiating action it is proposed to invite the Statutes Revision Committee to consider and report on the Police Offences Act 1927.

You will be asked to consider a Crimes Amendment Bill giving effect to certain recommendations of the Criminal Law Reform Committee. It is proposed to extend the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to all local authorities. A Bill will also be submitted putting into effect the recommendations of the Special Committee on Matrimonial Property.

The Government believes that the appalling loss of life on the roads is a matter which calls for urgent and effective action. The many measures which have been taken in recent years to reduce road deaths and injuries appear to have had little impact. More must be done to stop New Zealanders killing and maiming themselves and each other through the careless use of motor vehicles. Ministers will be presenting proposals to deal firmly with this situation and you will be invited to reappoint a Select Committee on Road Safety.

Honourable Members, many of the measures which you will be asked to consider in this and succeeding Sessions of this Parliament will be in implementation of the Government's policies to promote the social advancement of the people of New Zealand. Ministers believe that a stronger, more self-sufficient society can only be built on the basis of thriving local communities themselves, composed of strong and self-reliant family units. The Government is aware of the many strains and pressures which are exerted on the family by a too-materialistic approach to life. In the administration of their portfolio responsibilities and in the proposals for legislation which they will submit for your consideration, Ministers will seek to use the resources of the community to strengthen family ties and promote an appreciation of community values. In so doing they will be advancing a concept of New Zealand as a free community of families caring for the quality of life of each of its members.

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