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THE First Session of the Fortieth 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 privilege for me to exercise for the second time the prerogative of Her Majesty The Queen in opening this First Session of the 40th Parliament.

Since I last addressed you my wife and I have had the honour of attending the marriage of The Prince of Wales to The Lady Diana Spencer. This was a glorious family—as well as constitutional—event, shared through television by New Zealanders and countless others of Her Majesty's loyal subjects. We wish Their Royal Highnesses a happy married life together.

New Zealand was again reminded of its monarchical heritage and of those abiding traditions that unite us as a nation when The Queen, accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh, visited many parts of the country last October. They were warmly received everywhere they went. This was the sixth such tour undertaken by The Queen. We

appreciate the unsparing efforts of our Sovereign in making personal contact with the peoples of her many realms. These visits are a feature of Her Majesty's reign but I am sure that no one takes their frequency for granted.

My Government is delighted at today's announcement that His Royal Highness The Prince Edward will spend some time later this year and next year at Wanganui Collegiate School as a house tutor/junior master. This will further cement the links which bind us to our Sovereign and her family.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, an action of special constitutional significance is contemplated. The Government proposes to advise Her Majesty The Queen to grant new Letters Patent constituting the Office of Governor-General, to replace the current Letters Patent and Royal Instructions which date from 1917. Consequently, during this Session, the Government intends to introduce complementary legislation to make statutory adjustments of a technical nature arising from the proposed grant of Letters Patent by Her Majesty.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, after a period of stagnation the New Zealand economy experienced a moderate recovery in 1981. During the past year real growth has occurred in manufacturing activity, retail turnover, and in the building and construction sector. This improvement was consistent with the Government's medium-term growth plans.

The economies of many of our major trading partners have been in recession over the past 2 years with the result that there has been a depressed demand for many of our agricultural products and consequent low prices. Despite this export volumes are increasing. Once prices reach a higher level (and there are some early signs that this is happening), the balance of payments should start to improve.

During the year supplementary minimum price payments provided substantial farm income support. Exporters also benefited from the Government's exchange rate policy.

With the Federation of Labour, the Employers' Federation, and the Combined State Unions the Government has been engaged in renewed efforts to reach an agreement to offset tax cuts by reduced wage

increases. Such an agreement would allow an easing of labour costs to employers, leading to a moderation of price inflation. Considerable progress has been made in clarifying some of the contentious issues involved, and it is the Government's hope that such a wage/tax trade-off can be implemented this year in the context of the free wage bargaining which has been enjoyed since 1978.

There were also some disappointing aspects to 1981 which need to be redressed. Inflation and unemployment remain at unacceptably high levels and the overseas deficit has worsened. Adjustment measures, however, can seldom be made without some sacrifice by sectors of the community. Domestic inflation must be reduced and New Zealand's international competitiveness improved. Restraint will be required by wage and salary earners, employers, and the Government alike.

The Government, for its part, is examining ways of slowing the growth of Government expenditure, improving efficiency within the public sector, and reducing the budget deficit. The Government has established a task force to review the taxation regime and Ministers will be studying closely the outcome of that review.

It is the Government's goal to improve the functioning of the economy so that it can produce more from the resources available to the nation. An important part of that process is the reduction of barriers that inhibit the movement of resources from uncompetitive, low yielding activities to those which make the most efficient use of available labour, materials, and capital, and produce a high rather than low social return.

The Government has continued to change gradually the form and level of protection afforded to local producers so as to promote a more cost-conscious attitude and to reduce the wide disparities in levels of assistance offered to different industries. These policies are aimed at increasing the ability of local producers to compete on international markets by reducing the costs of their inputs.

A closer economic relationship with Australia will complement these changes and promote a more efficient pattern of trade between the two countries. The agreement proposed would provide New Zealand exporters with assured long-term access to this largest export market for New Zealand manufactured goods.

The monetary, fiscal, and incomes policy adopted by the Government will support the medium-term growth plan by maintaining steady downward pressure on domestic prices.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, in its dealings abroad the Government will pursue policies designed to keep New Zealand safe, and to increase our overseas earnings.

In these uncertain times the Government is determined that New Zealand should continue to play its part in helping to maintain international stability. The recent despatch overseas of members of our armed forces on a difficult but essential mission to assist peace making in the Sinai is evidence of the Government's commitment to this objective.

Earning more income overseas through the export of goods and services is the key to faster economic growth. It is the Government's intention, therefore, to continue to accord high priority to the promotion of New Zealand external trading interests.

The Government will use meetings at Ministerial level of the OECD and the GATT to focus international attention on the need for decisive measures to improve access conditions and establish better trading opportunities for agricultural products.

The Government will continue its close contacts with New Zealand's major trading partners, particularly the European Community, the United States, and Japan, with the object not only of retaining existing access levels but expanding them further. Discussions with the European Community on the level of New Zealand butter access for 1983 and beyond will be of special importance.

New Zealand has a particular commitment to the South Pacific which, along with South-east Asia, will continue to receive the major share of our development assistance. New Zealand's island partners will also continue to be assisted through the Pacific Islands industrial development scheme.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, planning for the future is an essential process. This is being carried out in both the private and public sectors, not just for a few major projects but also for developments of different scales.

The Government is committed to promoting the development and growth of the agriculture, forestry, horticulture, fisheries, energy, mineral, and tourism sectors.

This year you will be asked to approve a Bill consolidating and amending the Fertilisers Act 1960. The Bill will improve consumer protection.

The horticultural sector will receive encouragement from the revision of the Plant Varieties Act 1973 which will permit the introduction of overseas plant varieties protected by patents and ensure better reciprocal protection of varieties developed in this country.

There is a need to modernise the 1908 fisheries legislation and its numerous amendments. You will, therefore, be asked to consider a Fisheries Bill which will regulate the industry and provide for conservation and protection.

The Government's policies in the energy sector will continue to aim at reducing dependence on imported oil and make the maximum use of indigenous energy resources. Gas from the Maui field remains the key to the implementation of these policies.

You will be asked to consider the revision of existing gas legislation in order to incorporate LPG, CNG, and provide for the needs of the expanding natural gas industry. Amendments to the Petroleum Act 1937 are also required in order to clarify the legislation relating to the pipeline network. In addition a Bill will be introduced to provide for the updating of the Quarries Act 1944 to bring that legislation into line with current mining practice.

The Government will continue with its policy of ensuring that New Zealand goods and services are used to the fullest possible extent in the major development projects. This will provide further opportunities to increase levels of skills and provide for more employment.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, in maintaining its commitment to ensuring the highest possible level of employment the Government recognises that this largely depends on a sound economy and a rate of economic growth that is adequate to provide jobs for an expanding workforce. It also depends on wage rates that are not excessive in relation to the level

of skill and experience of the worker. The Government is concerned that access to employment, especially for the young, is not denied because of the lack of suitable entry level wage rates in some awards and agreements. It will intensify its efforts to resolve this matter.

A key element in ensuring high levels of employment is vocational training. This year legislation will be introduced revising the functions of the Vocational Training Council and its associated training boards to reinforce the much closer links between training and employment. Last Session, the Government presented to Parliament a statement of directions in trade training. This set out the general direction of the reforms considered necessary to allow apprenticeship to play its full role in trade training. The proposals in that paper will be reflected this year in a revision and consolidation of the Apprentices Act 1948.

An amendment to the Industrial Relations Act 1973 is proposed which will revise procedures for union balloting on the question of unqualified preference.

You will be asked to consider a revision and consolidation of the Weights and Measures Act 1925.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, the Government is concerned that despite strenuous efforts to make people more aware of the need for road safety, the accident rate continues at a distressingly high level. Representations on a number of matters concerning the inexperienced driver and the drunken driver have been received. The Government has, therefore, decided to reconvene the Parliamentary Select Committee on Road Safety and any proposals requiring legislation will be referred to that committee.

In respect of housing, the need to assist low income first home seekers will continue to be recognised with particular emphasis on those with dependants. The Government continues to recognise the important part that emergency housing plays in easing local social problems.

Reports to the Government on health services reorganisation have been received and a review of the Board of Health is incorporated in legislation for introduction this year. Consideration is being given to a Bill that would enable the formation of area health boards.

The Government will continue to take the initiative to support the Maori people's efforts to achieve greater economic, social, and cultural growth. It will continue to consult Maori communities particularly in order to bring into being a revised Maori Affairs Act and to maintain the present pace of progress of the various Tu Tangata programmes such as land utilisation, housing, whanau, language, and kokiri basic skills training. Maori leadership at all levels will be encouraged to become involved in the policy and decision making for education, crime prevention, and employment.

It is proposed to introduce a Civil Defence Bill to revise and consolidate the 1962 Act.

Bills will be introduced to consolidate and update the Rating Act 1967 and the Valuation of Land Act 1951. You will also be asked to consider a Surveyors Bill which will be a revision of the Surveyors Act 1966. This is required to take account of the changes introduced by computer-based surveys and to make information more readily available.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, 1981 saw a comprehensive review of penal policy. The Government is now considering the recommendations of the Penal Policy Review Committee and the Working Party on Psychiatrically Disturbed Inmates which it is hoped will lead to significant changes to our penal system.

The programme of law reform will continue. Bills to improve aspects of the Companies Act 1955 and the Land Transfer Act 1952 will be introduced, and you will be asked to consider measures to update the law on the administration of the property of incapacitated persons. A Licensing Trusts Bill and a Bill to streamline procedures for dealing with minor criminal offences will be introduced for recess study.

You will be asked to continue consideration of the Official Information Bill which was introduced last year. While it will impose new responsibilities on State servants and other public employees to achieve and maintain effective communication with the public, it will not alter the fundamental responsibility of Ministers to account to Parliament for the actions of their departments. It is also proposed to introduce a Public Archives and Records Bill which will revise the Archives Act 1957.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, I commend all these matters to your careful consideration and I pray that divine guidance will attend your deliberations.