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## **SPEECH FROM THE THRONE**

DELIVERED BY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL  
ON 13 DECEMBER 1996

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. It is a privilege for me to exercise for the first time the prerogative of Her Majesty the Queen in opening this, the 45th Parliament.

In 1993, New Zealand voters decided that this Parliament should be elected on the basis of Mixed Member Proportional representation. The last Parliament enacted legislation to finalise the procedures for the 1996 general election. Standing Orders of the House were revised in December 1995, and refined in August 1996, to facilitate the conduct of business in the new era.

Much of the nine week period since polling day has seen the process of discussion on government formation pursued by the leadership of the relevant political parties. The National-United coalition has remained in office as the government.

Within the last few days the clear picture has emerged that the Rt Hon James Bolger commands the support of the majority of this House. The coalition agreement committed to by the National Party and by New Zealand First provides the basis for this assessment. Accordingly, I have invited Mr Bolger to form a new ministry. Arrangements are in train formally to appoint the members of the Executive of the National - New Zealand First coalition government early next week.

The process of negotiations to form a new government, while long, was necessary. There was a clear process to reach an agreement that would provide certainty. There were conventions and principles as to the manner in which government operated in the meantime. I commend the leaders of all of the political parties for the efforts they expended in negotiating the formation of a government.

The incoming National-New Zealand First government has announced the fundamental principles designed to guide its decisions and policy intentions within the financial parameters agreed for the next 3 years.

Those principles recognise our distinctive history as New Zealanders - our culture, institutions and values. They recognise the need for continued sound economic policy and social policies reflecting the value that New Zealanders place on family, education and work, and on fairness and compassion.

The principles emphasise the fundamental importance of a strong economy based on sound, stable government implementing orthodox policies in line with or better than best international practice. That includes commitments to strong growth; to price stability; to an open internationally competitive economy; to prudent, conservative fiscal management with reducing taxes and debt; and to better national savings performance.

The incoming coalition government has, in these principles, made clear its commitment to build on the benefits of the New Zealand environment to enhance the quality of life for all our people. It has committed itself to the economic and social development of New Zealand. It is also concerned to focus on the key elements for Maori of health, education and training, employment and sound economic resource development and on the settlement of outstanding Maori claims and grievances. It will devote

more resources to quality education, to prepare our young people better for life and employment, and to provide second chances for older people. It will provide the health and social services that are vital to well being in a fair and compassionate society. The coalition government recognises the need to help those who are, through misfortune, over-represented in the statistics of dependency, educational failure, ill-health, child mortality and law breaking.

The new government is also committed to providing adequate security, to ensure that people feel safe in their homes and communities.

The incoming government has agreed upon these, as among the fundamental principles by which it will govern. It is pleasing that the full Coalition agreement has been released, demonstrating how the government intends to give life to these principles.

The conclusion of the negotiations between National and New Zealand First is of course recent. At this point a comprehensive programme of the legislation and other business to be placed before this House over the term of this Parliament is being prepared.

An Appropriation (1995/96 Financial Review) Bill is to be introduced today.

The incoming government will, in the new year, place before you bills which will commence the implementation of policies to which it is committed.

The business which has been brought forward from the previous Parliament and is before you is substantial, and includes 65 bills. The Standing Orders of the House prescribe further business to which the House must attend in the coming months.

Supply has been voted for the period to the end of March 1997. An Imprest Supply Bill, to provide for supply for the balance of the period until supplementary estimates are passed in June 1997, will be placed before you in March.

The new members amongst you are, by common account, more comprehensively introduced to the conduct of Parliamentary procedures than were your predecessors. I understand that the seminars and presentations provided to members, and to their support staff, by the Parliamentary Services Commission and the Office of the Clerk, have been very favourably received.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, you constitute a House which has changed in many respects. Some of these changes flow from the MMP environment, including the expanded membership, the number of parties with members elected, and the proportion of the members representing the smaller parties.

There are many aspects of your membership which give cause for celebration. I refer in particular to the attainment of greater representation by members who are women, who are Maori, and who have Pacific

Islands backgrounds and to the election of the first member of Asian descent to the Parliament.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, I pray that Divine Guidance will attend this House in all of its deliberations.

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