

Pursuant to the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Education held in Christchurch in October, 1944, Consultative Committees were set up to report upon the education of the pre-school child and adult education. Their reports should be received shortly, and it is expected that substantial developments will follow in both these important fields.

In the field of social security, negotiations will be carried out to extend the reciprocity of pensions and benefits to other members of the British Commonwealth. Validating legislation will be introduced in the course of the session to give effect to certain increases now being paid to widows with dependent children and to wives of disabled soldiers.

The affairs of my Maori people have again received special care and attention. I am happy to record the final settlement of the long-standing claim of the Waikato tribes for the redress of their grievances regarding the confiscation of their lands following upon the Maori wars of the "sixties." Steps are being taken to bring about the settlement of other outstanding Maori claims.

The improvement of health among the Maori people and provision of adequate housing will continue to occupy a prominent place in the administration of Maori affairs.

The development and settlement of Native lands is also receiving close attention, and active steps will be taken to maintain the highest level of production from farming and horticultural activities.

The welfare of New Zealand's island dependencies and the mandated territory of Western Samoa receives the constant attention of my Ministers. The visit to New Zealand in October last of three High Chiefs of Samoa, with their wives, gave warm evidence of the good will of the people of New Zealand, whose guests they were.

It is the hope of my Ministers to introduce during this session measures to enable the people of the Cook Islands to be more closely associated in the government of those Islands through the formation of a Council representative of both the Northern and the Lower groups.

Scholarships provided by my Government are now enabling thirty-four young people—twenty-seven from Samoa, five from the Cook Islands, and two from Niue—to attend secondary schools in New Zealand.

With a view to implementing one of the main recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee which investigated the Local Government system, legislation will be brought before you during the present session for the purpose of setting up a permanent Commission to review certain phases of local government.

It is also proposed to lay before you legislation to consolidate the Factories Act, 1921-22, and its amendments. Other legislative measures relate to Workers' Compensation, Apprentices, Nassella Tussock, Trustee Law, Land Laws, Soil Conservation, Stock Foods, Stock-remedies, Veterinary Services, and the establishment of a New Zealand Geographic Board.

All these matters I commend to your careful consideration, and I pray for Divine guidance in your deliberations.