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THE Second Session of the Twenty-eighth 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 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF  
 THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

Since I last had the privilege of addressing you in Parliament assembled His Majesty the King has graciously consented to visit New Zealand. His Majesty will be accompanied by the Queen and by the Princess Margaret, and will remain with us for four weeks in March of next year.

It is the King's wish that he should be enabled to meet the greatest possible number of his people during the visit. This desire will be reflected in the itinerary of the tour. Throughout the land, on this, the first visit of their reigning Sovereign, His Majesty's New Zealand subjects, Maori and pakeha, will be able to express their loyalty to the Crown and share with pride and rejoicing in welcoming the King, the Queen, and the Princess Margaret.

It is my intention to proceed next week on a visit to the Cook Islands, Western Samoa, and the Tokelau Group. Lady Freyberg and I look forward with keen anticipation and pleasure to this opportunity of meeting the peoples of those territories, whose fine qualities have won for them such high regard, and of seeing those islands of the Pacific so justly famed for their natural beauty and the fruitfulness of their soil.

The hope of my Government which I expressed when I last addressed you, that the structure of peace might be consolidated by agreement upon the settlements with Germany and Japan, has not been achieved. Hopes for peace, and, indeed, the very Charter for maintaining the hard-won peace, were based on a belief in the continuance of that unity of the Great Powers which gave such strength to the Allied brotherhood in arms. Differing basically in their interpretation of peace aims, however, the Great Powers have failed to establish the feeling of confidence which is essential if peace settlements are to be made and guaranteed and if collective security is to be a reality. In their plans for the security of this country my Government must take heed of this situation, over which they have little control.

In spite of these deep-seated dissensions which have delayed the achievement of its primary aims, my Government consider that the United Nations Organization must be maintained in its full membership in the hope that it may yet be, in the words of the Charter, "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations." My Ministers will continue to do what lies in their power to strengthen the United Nations and to ensure that its purposes and principles are observed.

Within the past year the United Kingdom and a nucleus of the countries of Western Europe, conscious of the traditions, culture, and interests they hold in common, have affirmed their determination to move towards a closer association. My Government welcome these steps towards the unification of the moral and material forces of this vital area, and note with satisfaction the contribution of the United States of America towards its success. Any question of merging the strength and resources of the British Commonwealth of Nations with those of the States of Europe presents problems which call for decisions of fundamental importance in the life and economy of this country. My Government are confident that a closer economic, defensive, and spiritual union of the United Kingdom and Europe, which they regard as necessary and desirable, can be achieved without prejudicing the historic unity of the Nations of the British Commonwealth. They believe, further, that the other European States concerned will share this view. These matters are under consideration by my Ministers. It is hoped, moreover, that the Prime Ministers of the British Commonwealth may be enabled at an early date to discuss these and other major questions of common and urgent concern.

During the course of the year my Government have warmly welcomed India, Pakistan, and Ceylon to full membership of the British Commonwealth. They will, for their part, offer their friendliest co-operation to these countries who share with us the benefits of this association of free peoples.

Parliament will be given an early opportunity to consider ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which was reached at Geneva, and which provides for the mutual grant of substantial tariff concessions among the signatories. The Charter for an International Trade Organization, drawn up at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment at Havana, will also be placed before Parliament for consideration.

During the past year my Government have participated in several conferences dealing with the welfare of the people of the South Pacific, South-east Asia, and the Far East. It is their policy that New Zealand should continue to contribute, within the limits set by her size and population, to the progress of her neighbours.

A Mission of the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations visited Western Samoa last year at the request of my Government to investigate a petition from the leaders of the Samoan people. The conclusions reached by the Mission endorse in large measure my Ministers' proposals for the advancement of Western Samoa and its progress towards self-government. Three weeks ago the new Legislative Assembly of Western Samoa, established in accordance with the Samoa Amendment Act, 1947, was formally opened.

The welfare of the peoples of the Pacific Islands for which New Zealand is responsible has continued to receive the constant attention of my Ministers. An important step in the political development of the people of the Cook Islands was the first meeting at Rarotonga in November last of the Legislative Council.

In giving full and careful consideration to New Zealand's defence obligations and requirements my Government have sought the advice of the most eminent military and scientific leaders, including Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery, Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder, the First Sea Lord, and Sir Ben Lockspeiser. Decisions have been made as to the basic defence organization necessary to give the maximum security to our own shores and to the islands north of New Zealand, to enable New Zealand to share in the British Commonwealth system of defence and to discharge any obligations to the United Nations.

In view of the completion of military tasks in its area of occupation in Japan it has been decided to withdraw the New Zealand brigade which forms a component of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, and the men will be returned to New Zealand before the end of this year.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The financial position of this country continues to be soundly based. The public accounts for the year ended March last show a surplus of £1,786,000. The continued buoyant revenue, particularly in receipts of Customs duties, has contributed largely to this result. The position of the Social Security Fund is also satisfactory. Although the benefits paid out of that Fund for the past year amounted to £39,500,000, the Fund is in the soundest position since it was established in 1939.

My Government have concluded agreements with both Canada and the United States of America, similar in terms to those of the agreement previously concluded with the United Kingdom, to avoid double taxation on certain classes of income.

The people of New Zealand have, during the year, joined their British kinsmen in their new and equally determined battle against economic adversity. In this way we have expressed our knowledge that our welfare is linked with that of the people of Britain and our admiration of the British people's defence of liberty in perilous years. Measures taken by my Government to assist the United Kingdom by conserving dollar funds, by limiting imports in accordance with the value of the nation's current export income and by increasing the export of food, have been supplemented by the enthusiastic and effective work of the Aid for Britain National Council and local committees.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

New Zealand continues its recovery from the economic difficulties resulting from the war.

More houses were built last year than in any previous year in the country's history. My Government will maintain those building controls which have contributed towards such satisfactory results, in order that the greatest numbers of houses may continue to be built from the available materials and labour.

To-day, almost three years since victory was achieved, the country will regard with satisfaction the measures taken to ensure the successful re-establishment in civil life of those men and women who served with the armed forces.

The total of rehabilitation loans now granted to 62,000 men and women exceeds £50,000,000, and rehabilitation outlay in all its forms is over £67,000,000.

There is no unemployment among ex-servicemen, or in the community generally. My Government, as in the past, will pursue policies designed to assure the continuance of full employment and the prevention of poverty. They hold firmly that economic stabilization is fundamental to the welfare of the people, and that to depart from their stabilization policy, would damage New Zealand's economy and frustrate the people's efforts to assist Great Britain. It is proposed to introduce a Bill formally constituting the Economic Stabilization Commission as an advisory body and providing for the continuance of functions which have hitherto been exercised under emergency regulations.

The special efforts to increase primary production this year in order to supply more food to Britain have been helped by favourable climatic conditions in most districts, and it is anticipated that there will be an over-all increase in the volume of exportable produce.

During the year the Maori people have made excellent progress under the schemes for the promotion of their welfare. They are entering whole-heartedly into the purposes of the Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act. Tribal executives and committees constituted by the Act have been appointed and tribal districts defined. Constant attention is being given to the needs of the Maori people, especially in matters relating to health, housing, education, and the examination of land claims.

My Ministers have considered the report of the Royal Commission on Licensing. Legislation will be introduced to give effect to certain recommendations of the Commission.

The Royal Commission on Gaming and Racing has completed its inquiries and presented a comprehensive report with recommendations. Members will be afforded an opportunity to examine and discuss the report. My Ministers are considering the recommendations of the Commission which involve legislative action.

The continued increase in the birth-rate necessarily means that plans must be made to ensure that more school rooms and teachers will be ready wherever and whenever they are required. My Minister of Education has initiated the surveys on which such plans must be based.

Legislation will be introduced for the amendment and consolidation of the law relating to British nationality and New Zealand citizenship, the Fair Rents Act, Trustee Savings-banks, Friendly Societies, and the transfer of coal-measures to the Crown. A consolidation of the Acts relating to Land will also be placed before you. Other Bills will provide for the more effective control of tuberculosis, and for new administrative machinery affecting transport.

I pray that you may receive Divine guidance in your deliberations on all these matters for the welfare and happiness of our people.