

Over the past twelve months New Zealand has been able to welcome a large number of migrants both from the United Kingdom and other countries of Europe. A further 2,000 displaced persons and refugees were admitted during this period. An agreement was made with the Netherlands Government providing for the entry of a number of Dutch nationals, and a New Zealand Migration Office has been established at The Hague. My Ministers are confident that the maintenance of a vigorous immigration programme, in which first preference will be given to settlers from the United Kingdom, is essential both in developing our economic resources and increasing our relative security. Action is being taken to develop the educational services and other facilities which will aid the assimilation of migrants from European countries, and help them to settle down happily in our New Zealand society.

The development of the education services to meet the large increase in the number of pupils enrolling in our schools is being given special attention. The erection of additional school buildings and extra class-rooms is proceeding as rapidly as the supply of labour and material permits.

Although the economy of New Zealand remains buoyant and there is a sustained demand for our products in overseas markets, it is nevertheless essential to our continued well-being that we should have industrial harmony and a spirit of co-operation amongst all sections of the community.

My Government is determined to continue its efforts to ensure that the comprehensive system now available for the peaceful settlement of industrial problems is preserved and, where necessary, improved, and also to ensure that the lawful system of conciliation and arbitration is not replaced by the use of unlawful direct action in which intimidation, victimization, force, and violence are the chief ingredients. The firm and resolute action taken by the Government in meeting the challenge to our industrial system has resulted in normal work being resumed in most of the affected industries. To help secure this result it was necessary to proclaim a state of emergency, and the policy and actions of the Government will be matters for your consideration. My Ministers have all along been anxious that the state of emergency should be determined as soon as this can safely be done, but up to the present they have been forced to the conclusion that the time for this action has not yet arrived. They are, however, keeping the situation continually under review, being conscious of their responsibility to recommend the repeal or relaxation of the Emergency Regulations and the termination of the state of emergency immediately this can prudently be done, having regard to the public interest and, in particular, the safety of those men and women directly concerned by the problems of the present crisis.

The response of all sections of the community to the requirements of the emergency has been most gratifying, but my Ministers feel that special reference should be made to the remarkably fine service rendered by the men and women of the Navy, Army, and Air Force, the men who manned the ships and have served in the Civil Emergency Organization, and by the members of the Emergency Supplies Committees, whose work all merits the highest praise.

The cost of this disastrous hold-up has been very great, and the effect upon the national economy will be widespread. It will not have been in vain, however, if it is followed, as it is hoped it will be, by a period of industrial peace and harmony and increased efficiency. The new spirit which has already been demonstrated encourages the belief that better times lie ahead. My Government resolved to do all in its power to promote peace and well-being for all engaged in industry, the steady improvement of industrial relations, and the speedy consideration and adjustment of industrial problems by peaceful and lawful methods.

I commend all these matters to your earnest consideration and I pray Divine guidance in your deliberations.