

Estimates of expenditure will be placed before you for your consideration in due course.

Works projects continue to be a major feature of my Government's development programme. With the commissioning of the Roxburgh Hydro-electric Power Station this year, power problems in the South Island will be resolved although there are shortages of electric power at the present time owing to drought conditions. In the North Island rapid progress is being maintained in the construction of power stations at Waipapa, Atiamuri, and Ohakuri, while the station at Whakamaru is expected to commence operations within the next few months. Preparations for the establishment of the coal-fired steam station near Mercer are also developing satisfactorily and plans for the use of geothermal steam for power generation are well advanced. Notwithstanding these developments and having regard to the long-term demand for electric power, my Ministers have deemed it prudent to investigate the possibility of transferring power across Cook Strait by submarine cable.

The Government agencies concerned are following closely the application of advances in nuclear science to research and power production in New Zealand. The recent discoveries of uranium and thorium-bearing ores in the South Island have focused attention on the Atomic Energy Act 1945, and you will be asked to consider a Bill designed to clarify the provisions of the Act and to bring the law on this subject up to date.

Action by my Government to foster the development of a healthy tourist industry in New Zealand includes the establishment of a Tourist Hotel Corporation to take over hotels at present operated by the Government, increase overseas publicity and measures to improve tourist facilities throughout the country.

The National Roads Board, which was established in 1953, has recently extended its policy of financial help in connection with major and urgent roading work in the larger municipal areas. My Government is deeply concerned at the tragic loss of life in road accidents and new measures are constantly under trial in the endeavour to reduce the hazards arising from the increasing volume of road traffic.

A high demand for labour remains a feature of the employment position in New Zealand. Unemployment is practically non-existent and it is pleasing to record another year of good industrial relations. Major industrial disturbances and dislocations have been conspicuous by their absence and industry has enjoyed notable progress and expansion. A Bill will be placed before you during the session to consolidate the Workers' Compensation Act 1922 and its amendments and also to provide some increased benefits under the Act.

My Government's concern for the welfare of the Maori people is reflected in a vigorous policy aimed at assisting them to develop fully their physical, mental, social, and economic resources. The Maori land development and settlement programme includes major projects in the Waikato, King Country, and North Auckland areas, and the number of new dwellings completed during last year through the financial and building facilities made available by my Government was well in excess of the previous year's total.

The welfare of the Island Territories continues to engage the close attention of my Ministers, and you will be asked to consider a Bill to give effect to proposals for further constitutional development in the trust territory of Western Samoa. As a result of a recent investigation, the lines along which the future economic progress of the Cook Islands should be directed have been more clearly defined.

Although in most fields the task of re-establishing our ex-servicemen is nearing completion, farm settlement continues to be a major responsibility. To meet this my Government will take steps to speed up the rate of settlement during the coming year.