

transferring electric power from the South Island to the North Island by submarine cable and plans are under way for further large-scale development of both our hydro-electric and thermal resources.

Employment expanded again in 1956, and good industrial relations have been maintained with no major stoppages since I last addressed you. My Advisers continue to give their close attention to the problem of reducing the level of accidents in industry.

Efforts by my Government to ensure adequate housing for our people have been fully sustained and the number of houses completed last year once again reached a record total.

My Government is pleased to be able to report progress in the first phase of an extensive building programme for our university colleges. My Ministers are also engaged in an examination of the measures necessary to encourage and assist the development of technical and agricultural education to meet the future economic and social needs of our people. Steps have been taken to broaden the scope of child welfare activities and during this year children's homes controlled by voluntary organisations will, for the first time, receive direct financial assistance from my Government.

The inoculation of children against poliomyelitis has now commenced and my Government hopes during this year to make the benefits of this outstanding achievement in preventive medicine available to a wider range of our young people. You will be asked to consider a Bill which, while retaining local management of our hospitals by elected boards, will make provision for my Government's responsibility in the financing of a national and comprehensive public hospital system. A Bill will also be placed before you for the purpose of consolidating social security legislation.

As always, the well-being of the Maori people is a major concern of my Government and special emphasis is placed on welfare, education, and employment among the young people. During the past year authority has been given for the development of a further 15,000 acres of Maori land in Northland and 5,000 acres in the King Country. In addition, finance and building facilities have been made available for the erection of more than 550 houses.

Evidence of my Ministers' continuing attention to matters affecting the people of the Island Territories is provided by Bills which will be placed before you to promote further constitutional development in Western Samoa and the Cook Islands.

One important measure that you will be asked to consider is a revision of the Crimes Act to bring its provisions, particularly those relating to penalties, into closer harmony with modern views and with public opinion. Other proposed legislation in the field of criminal law and procedure includes a consolidation and revision of the Justices of the Peace Act and an Extradition Bill. Legislation to provide for the holding of a referendum on the question of capital punishment will be placed before you.

Among miscellaneous legislation which my Ministers propose to submit for your consideration is an amendment to the Mental Health Act making changes in the procedure relating to committal of persons to mental hospitals and to persons charged with criminal offences, a Simultaneous Deaths Bill altering the present rule determining succession to property, and a consolidation and revision of the Religious, Charitable, and Educational Trusts Act. Other consolidating measures will deal with the Police Force, the postal and telegraph services, and the law relating to dangerous goods and explosives. Bills dealing with the control of our national archives, with the adjustment of valuations for certain rating purposes, and with the law relating to shipping and seamen will also be placed before you.

All these matters I commend to your careful consideration and I pray that Divine guidance will attend your deliberations.