

New Zealand's economic relations with other countries; and the advancement of the peoples of the Pacific islands for whose welfare it is responsible.

Within the United Nations, my Government is at present devoting particular attention to the work of the Economic and Social Council to which New Zealand was last year elected for a three-year term.

Within the Commonwealth, my Government has endeavoured to extend the procedures of consultation and personal contact which are a special feature of the relationship. It has established diplomatic posts in India and the Federation of Malaya and a trade commission in the West Indies.

It has continued to participate actively in the operation of the Colombo Plan.

My Prime Minister attended the meeting of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee in Seattle and both within that forum and in the United Nations General Assembly has indicated the importance which my Government places upon international action to deal with the problems of poverty and hunger.

My Prime Minister also attended a meeting of the ANZUS Council in Washington and in February of this year visited Japan in response to an invitation extended by the Government of that country following the Japanese Premier's visit to New Zealand late in 1957. In April last my Prime Minister acted as Chairman of the 5th Meeting, held here in Wellington, of the Council of Foreign Ministers of SEATO. This was the first international conference of such dimensions to be held in our country.

My Government has continued to watch closely the implications for New Zealand of economic integration in Europe and the effects on New Zealand's trade and economic relations of policies of agricultural protection which result in impediments to the trade of efficient producers.

As part of a vigorous trade promotion policy my Government has entered into formal trade arrangements with Japan and the Federal Republic of Germany and has revised the 1932 Agreement with the United Kingdom.

My Government has taken important action bearing upon the future of Western Samoa. It has outlined a programme for the final stages of the constitutional advancement of the territory and this has been endorsed by a special Trusteeship Mission of the United Nations. Legislation will be introduced this session to enable the establishment on 1 October of this year of a form of Cabinet Government in Western Samoa.

It is my intention to proceed in HMNZS *Royalist* next month on a visit to Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, including Niue, and the Tokelau Group. My wife 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 for ourselves those islands of the Pacific so justly famed for their natural beauty and fruitfulness of soil.

In October next my Government will be represented at a Conference on the Antarctic which will meet in Washington. It is hopeful that agreement will be possible on arrangements which will keep Antarctica free of political rivalries whilst ensuring to all countries free access for peaceful purposes. Units of our scientific and exploration personnel continue to support New Zealand activities in the area.

In pursuance of its policy of maintaining, in close association with our allies, a proper contribution towards the collective defence of our way of life, my Government is proceeding with plans to re-equip our Armed Forces with modern ships, aircraft, and weapons. A second regular battalion of the New Zealand Regiment is at present undergoing training in preparation for the relief later this year of the battalion now serving in Malaya. Our Air Force squadron in that area has been re-equipped and is now operational in its new role.