

A Bill will be placed before you designed to improve existing legislation as regards soil conservation and rivers control.

You will also be asked to consider the measures that will be necessary to facilitate detailed investigations as to the feasibility of a major iron and steel industry based on New Zealand's iron sand resources.

My Ministers are gratified that, for the first time in several years, the country is free from restrictions on the use of electricity and it is their constant aim that this satisfactory position be maintained. The Commission, which my Government has appointed to inquire into the distribution of electric power throughout New Zealand, should assist in large measure in the resolution of existing difficulties and anomalies in this field. My Government has also appointed a Gas Council to assist with the task of preserving and expanding our valuable gas industry where this can be done to advantage. Bills will be placed before you dealing with bulk supply charges for electricity, and with the certification and registration of electric linemen.

To both our primary and our secondary industries, as well as to other fields of national activity, an essential and positive contribution will continue to be made by my Government's scientific and research agencies.

Production in our farming and manufacturing industries has increased substantially. Manufacturers in particular have been required to increase output rapidly and the success of their efforts has done much to satisfy consumer demand.

You will be asked to consider proposals for the minor amendment of the Harbours Act 1950 and the Fisheries Act 1908. Experience in the operation of legislation concerning shipping and seamen has prompted my Ministers to prepare for your consideration certain amendments to the present law. The action my Government proposes to take this year in calling world-wide tenders for the construction of a new rail-sea ferry for operation across Cook Strait is a major step towards the introduction of a service which will effectively bridge a long-felt gap in our rail and roading systems.

New measures which my Government has introduced to counter the prevalence of motor accidents have led to a marked reduction in fatalities. This problem, however, remains serious and my Ministers will spare no effort to achieve a high standard of road safety. A White Paper will be placed before you recording the findings of the Committee which my Government appointed to examine the whole field of the transport of goods by road.

Marked improvements in our internal and overseas air services include the introduction of the most up-to-date types of aircraft. My Government continues to give close attention to the provision and development of appropriate airport and air navigational facilities.

The importance of communications in the business and domestic spheres of our rapidly developing country is also recognised by my Ministers in the maximum effort they are making to meet the needs of the people for increased telephone facilities.

My Government is encouraged by the success of the measures they have promoted to stimulate the building of houses. During the year just past a record number of houses was constructed and my Ministers will intensify the steps already taken in their endeavours to ensure that every family will have the opportunity of obtaining adequate accommodation.

The rate of increase in our labour force during the past year has been one of the highest since the Second World War while the maintenance of a good record of industrial relations is illustrated by the fact that time lost in industrial stoppages during 1958 was the second lowest in the post-war years.

My Government, in pursuance of its policy gradually and progressively to introduce equal pay for equal work under equal conditions into New Zealand, has decided to appoint a Committee to advise how this objective can best be attained in the State services as a first step.