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THE Second Session of the Thirty-fourth Parliament of New Zealand was this day opened by the Governor-General, when His Excellency was pleased to make the following statement of the causes of the calling of this session of Parliament together:

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Since I last addressed you, world affairs have been marked by rapid change and sharpening tensions. This has been particularly evident in South-East Asia where the dangers to stability, and to hopes of peaceful development, have intensified.

My Government has been deeply concerned at the mounting intransigence of Indonesia in its so-called confrontation of Malaysia. It has accordingly taken steps to demonstrate New Zealand's continued and unequivocal support for the independence of a fellow-member of the Commonwealth of Nations. New Zealand forces have participated in operations in defence of Malaysian territory and additional Naval, Army and Air Force units have been sent to strengthen New Zealand's contribution to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve.

The mounting threat to the integrity of South Vietnam has also commanded the constant attention of my Ministers. New Zealand has maintained its practical assistance through the work of a medical team and an Army engineering detachment. My Government has also had under continuous review the question whether, in the light of its other commitments, New Zealand should provide additional aid to the embattled Vietnamese people. My Ministers commend the readiness of the United States to enter unconditional discussions with the Governments concerned, while at the same time it carries the free world's massive burden of assisting South Vietnam to withstand the aggression generated by the Communist régimes to the north.

At its recent meeting in London, which was attended by my Minister of Defence, the SEATO Council reaffirmed its belief that the capability and readiness of defence forces serves as a deterrent to aggression and thus contributes to peace. To enable New Zealand to play its full part in preparations for collective defence, my Government has taken further steps to ensure that the armed forces are maintained at a high level of preparedness. Good progress has been made in particular with the re-equipment of the three Services with modern weapons and means of transport.

Threats to peace give added importance to institutions devoted to the attainment of international harmony and cooperation. My Government was therefore pleased to act as host to the recent meeting of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, of which my Minister of Overseas Trade is Chairman. It can only view with the gravest concern, however, the crisis over the costs of peacekeeping operations that threatens the very existence of the United Nations. At the same time, my Government has maintained the New Zealand Police Unit in Cyprus and has agreed in principle to designate a force which would be on call for future United Nations peacekeeping operations.

My Prime Minister will shortly attend a meeting in London of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. In addition to reviewing the world situation and discussing matters of mutual interest, this gathering will consider the establishment of a Commonwealth secretariat to strengthen the machinery of consultation. My Government sees in this new initiative a positive step in the continued evolution of our multi-racial association. It also looks forward with keen anticipation to the meetings of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which are to be held in New Zealand in November and December.

Earlier this year the Commonwealth paid solemn tribute to the memory of its pre-eminent statesman, the late Sir Winston Churchill. To commemorate his unparalleled service you will be asked to endorse the establishment of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to enable men and women from all walks of life to visit and study in other parts of the Commonwealth and the United States of America.

You will be asked to amend the Electoral Act by increasing the number of Parliamentary electorates in the South Island to 25 and stabilising the representation of the South Island at this figure. The number of electorates in the North Island will then increase according to the relative population growth. This will lead to the first change in the size of your Assembly since 1900 and it is of some interest that the legislation should be introduced in the year which marks the centennial of the transfer of the seat of Government to Wellington.

Last month the people of the Cook Islands voted to elect a new Legislative Assembly which has the responsibility of deciding whether the Constitution you adopted last year is acceptable in its present form as the basis for their future self-government. It is gratifying that such a very high proportion of the people freely exercised their right to vote in this important election which, moreover, was observed by representatives of the United Nations. My Ministers are ready to consider constitutional amendments which have been recommended by the new Assembly and will, as appropriate, submit the necessary legislation for your consideration.

In the economic field New Zealand has enjoyed prosperous conditions in the past year. High output and rapid growth have been achieved in all main sectors of the economy.

In 1964 higher earnings from meat, wool, and dairy produce brought a record export income and the benefit of this was reflected in a greater volume of imports and in increased economic activity. Although the net gain from immigration remains at a good level, there is a continuing strong demand for labour.

The general recovery in export prices which commenced in 1962 may, however, have reached a peak in 1964. Wool prices fell sharply in the latter months of the year and lower prices continued throughout the season. More recently there has also been a reduction in the return from butter and cheese sold on the London market.

My Ministers may therefore face the task of maintaining economic growth in agriculture and industry without the impetus provided by a rising trend in export income.

In order to moderate the pace of internal expansion, my Government has adopted a number of stabilising measures, including the freezing of a substantial proportion of Government loan receipts and the voluntary wool freeze. Among other measures, for which there is likely to be a continuing need, is the voluntary farm income stabilisation scheme which you will be asked to validate by legislation. It is the aim of my Advisers, through these policies, to ensure that the progress of New Zealand's economic development is maintained, despite fluctuations in export income.

My Government's financial proposals for the current year will be placed before you at an early date.

In the field of primary production, my Ministers have pressed forward with the review and implementation of the recommendations, numbering more than 120, adopted last year by the Agricultural Development Conference. The attainment of a 40 per cent increase in agricultural production by 1972 will, however, call for a concerted effort by all concerned. My Government therefore warmly welcomes the full cooperation being given by representatives of Federated Farmers and the producer boards in the work of the Agricultural Production Council.

In the last year loan finance provided to farmers through the State Advances Corporation was at a record level and greater emphasis was placed on loans for development. There has also been a notable increase in the finance provided through the Marginal Lands Board.

My Advisers are at present considering steps to increase the level of research in the light of the recommendations recently submitted by the National Research Advisory Council. They are also reorganising and intensifying the work of the farm extension services. It is their confident belief that all these measures, combined with financial incentives, will be of significant help in the efforts of the farmers to increase primary production at the required rate.

In the field of international trade, my Ministers have maintained their efforts, in negotiations with other Governments and in the appropriate international agencies, to preserve and expand the markets for the nation's products, both primary and secondary. Within New Zealand they will continue to promote sound economic industries in terms of the established criteria. Convinced that the building of a steel works using indigenous raw materials will be a step of especial importance, my Advisers will see that, during its period of development, the new enterprise receives all necessary financial and other assistance.

Steps are also being taken to promote the more intensive prospecting and exploitation of the country's other mineral resources. The recent meetings in New Zealand of the Commonwealth Mining and Metallurgical Congress were most timely in this regard in securing a wider appreciation of what can be achieved with new techniques. Mining ventures, however, still involve high risks and my Ministers are accordingly preparing legislation to extend the concessions already granted to the industry.

In order to increase the future supplies of timber for the expanding forest industries, my Government has liberalised the farm forestry loan scheme and is considering further measures to bring about a wider participation in the commercial growing of trees.

You will be asked to approve the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zone Bill. This will define the limits of New Zealand's 3-mile territorial sea in accordance with the rules laid down in the 1958 Geneva Convention; it will also provide for the establishment of a further 9-mile exclusive fishing zone for the use of the domestic industry.

In terms of its policy of relaxing import controls in so far as this is compatible with the balance of payments and the sound development of the economy, my Government has removed the need for licences for the import of a further list of raw materials, equipment, and finished goods not made in New Zealand. About one-third of the total import trade is now exempt from control.

To assist in the promotion of improved quality in New Zealand manufactured goods, both for export and for domestic sale, legislation will be proposed for the establishment of an Industrial Design Council. My Ministers also consider that if, as is their intention, the spirit of the Trade Practices Act is to be achieved, the present legislation should be reviewed. They are accordingly examining the ways in which competition might best be preserved and the public interest safeguarded.

The commissioning of the Benmore Electric Power Station, and of the inter-Island transmission system, marks a step of outstanding significance in the development of the electricity resources of New Zealand. The demand continues to increase very rapidly and my Ministers have made provision for speeding up the investigation and development of power resources.

In the field of communications also my Ministers are pressing forward with measures to match the other developments in the economy. They are confident that the new Auckland International Airport, which will be in use later this year, and the recent opening of the Christchurch airport to large jet aircraft will increase still further the earnings of overseas exchange by the tourist industry and by Air New Zealand.

In the matter of traffic control, my Ministers will introduce legislation offering the Transport Department's services free of charge to local bodies. Authorities already using these services will gain materially; any local body now providing its own traffic control will be able, at its own discretion, to take advantage of the new legislation.

In order to maintain the pace of the programme for modernising the railways, locomotives and wagons are being imported in substantial numbers as well as being made locally. Work will start this year on the Kaimai deviation to give improved access to the Bay of Plenty. As a further step in reshaping the Railway finances, my Government has decided to write down the capital liability of the system by £70 million.

A Commission is being established to inquire into and advise on the future development of the country's ports and the efficient and economic movement of goods to and from and through them. Its study of long-term issues will reinforce the good work being done by the Exports and Shipping Council.

You will be asked to approve legislation to enable New Zealand to adopt the 1960 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and also the 1954 Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil. An amendment to the Shipping and Seamen Act will make provision for the manning scales on oil tankers employed in the New Zealand home trade.

My Government is at present considering reports on the control and use of the national water supply. It anticipates that, if the existing legislation is consolidated, provision will be made for a new Water Resources Organisation.

In the field of Maori affairs my Ministers will continue with the development of techniques and conditions – in education, trade training, farming, housing, and health – by which the Maori people may be helped to participate more fully in the economic and social life of the community. More Maori youths will be given the opportunity to undertake trade training and additional hostel accommodation will be provided. My Ministers also propose to amend the law governing Maori land so that Incorporations will be able to secure more capital to improve their farming operations, especially where reverted lands are involved.

A consolidation of the State Advances Corporation Act will be introduced for your consideration. During the past year the Corporation's loans to applicants with freehold sections have increased considerably and my Government's policy of lending for the purchase of existing houses has had ready acceptance. Over the country as a whole there has been a substantial increase in permits for the building of houses and flats.

In the field of education my Government has accepted the view of the teachers' organisations that top priority should be accorded to the programme for the three-year training of teachers. This complex and costly operation, which will be introduced progressively over five years, will begin in 1966 in the Hamilton and Dunedin Teachers' Colleges. My Advisers are also considering whether the Education Act should be amended to revise the present system of administering education up to and including the secondary level. They anticipate that in higher education, in the universities and technical institutes, as well as in the teachers' colleges, the year ahead will be marked by an intensification of the current expansion and development.

A Bill will be introduced to consolidate and substantially amend the Mental Health Act. The new measure will reflect the considerable recent developments in knowledge and therapy that have occurred in this field.

The control over the supply and distribution of narcotics will be clarified and strengthened under the provisions of a Narcotics Bill which is designed to assist in the struggle to ward off a menace that now threatens this country.

You will be asked to approve the changes in the present law that are needed to legalise the publication of Sunday newspapers. My Ministers are also considering legislation to ensure that the effective control of mass media of information will be retained in New Zealand hands.

An amendment to the Forests Act will provide for the establishment of forest parks. These will be complementary to the existing national parks and public recreation will be encouraged in them, but not to the exclusion of other forest uses such as soil and water conservation and timber production.

My Ministers propose to amend the Broadcasting Corporation Act to increase the size of the Corporation, at present limited to three members. There will also be a Bill to amend the Medical Research Council Act and another measure is in preparation to reconstitute, at its own request, the Royal Society of New Zealand in the light of current developments in scientific endeavour.

My Advisers have given close consideration to the best way of avoiding the practice of contractual discrimination on the ground of race, colour, or creed and have decided to introduce an amendment to the Property Law Act for this purpose.

You will be asked to consider legislation consolidating and amending the Licensing Trusts Act and an Extradition Bill to replace the present law governing the surrender of offenders to foreign countries.

Among other measures to be presented for your consideration will be a Government Service Tribunal Bill to restate the functions of the Tribunal following the enactment of the State Services Act; a Building Societies Bill; a consolidation of the Customs Act; an amendment to the Decimal Currency Act to make transitional provisions during the changeover period; an amendment to the Machinery Act providing for the approval of safety frames for tractors used in agricultural operations; a revision of the Servants' Registry Offices Act; and amendments to the Civil Defence Act and the Rating Act.

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

