

September last my Government reached agreement with overseas interests on the terms under which an aluminium smelter will be established near Bluff. There has been a renewed interest in mineral exploitation in New Zealand, strongly reinforced by the recent promising indication of a large petroleum field off Taranaki.

My Government considers that the significant growth of exports of manufactured goods over the last 2 years demonstrates that New Zealand industry is developing on a sound competitive basis. My Ministers will continue to provide incentives and other forms of appropriate assistance to enable manufacturers to make an even greater contribution to the nation's export drive.

My Government will negotiate bilateral and other arrangements where these can lead towards an expansion of New Zealand's overseas trade. There has already been considerable success in these fields. Over the first 5 years of the New Zealand - Australia Free Trade Agreement there has been a substantial increase in trans-Tasman trade. My Government is examining means of giving further impetus to this trade in 1970.

My Government will continue to urge other governments, both bilaterally and through the appropriate international agencies, to establish arrangements for the orderly production and marketing of primary products, in particular dairy products. The agreement recently negotiated in respect of the marketing of skim milk powder demonstrates that progress can be achieved by patient endeavour in this very difficult field.

Honourable Members, my Government is concerned that the nation's social welfare services should be fully equipped to meet the needs of my people. It believes that further co-ordination of social services is necessary and it intends to amalgamate the Social Security Department and the Child Welfare Division to form a new department of Social Welfare. You will accordingly be asked to consider an amendment to the Social Security Act. The necessary amendment to the Child Welfare Act will be placed before you in conjunction with a general revision and consolidation of the legislation.

My Minister of Health will ask you to consider this Session Bills to consolidate and revise the Pharmacy Act 1939 and the Nurses and Midwives Act 1949. In respect of the latter measure it is proposed to substitute an independent corporate body, the Nursing Council, for the present Nurses and Midwives Board.

My Government recognises that the equality of opportunity which exists for all races in New Zealand cannot be fully effective until all its citizens are in a position to take advantage of those opportunities. My Ministers believe that the provision of adequate facilities for education is an essential precondition to enable the nation's young people to develop their talents to the full. Following the report of the National Development Conference an Advisory Council on Educational Planning has been set up to advise my Government on the action to be taken on appropriate Conference recommendations. My Ministers are confident that further significant progress will be made this year in implementing these recommendations.

The improvement of the standard of education of my Polynesian people in New Zealand is seen by my Ministers as the key to their further economic and social progress. Pre-school training and trade training schemes for Maori and other Polynesian youths are being extended and they are also being encouraged to train for general farming and horticultural work.