

The problem of the terms of trade assumes special significance when viewed in the context of the threat to our rights of access to the United Kingdom market. The protection of New Zealand's vital interests in the negotiations which Britain is now undertaking with the European Economic Community will be a continuing major objective of my Government in this year. Discussions are currently under way about the provisions which will be needed to ensure the continuity of New Zealand's exports of butter, cheese, and lamb should Britain become a member of the Community. The British Government has made it clear that in terms of the assurances which it has extended to New Zealand it is determined to ensure that the appropriate safeguards are provided. My Ministers have presented New Zealand's case to the Governments of the Community and the special nature of New Zealand's problems is now familiar to all parties in the negotiations. The formulation of detailed solutions to these problems will be a major task in the coming months.

Honourable Members, conscious of the changing pattern of the relationships among the nations bordering the Pacific my Government will further extend and diversify its ties with friendly countries with a view to promoting peace and stability in the region. My Government was honoured to receive visits from the King and Queen of Tonga and the Chief Minister of Fiji during last year and to be represented at the independence celebrations of these two Commonwealth countries of the South Pacific. The appointment last year of New Zealand High Commissioners to these countries will ensure that the closest contact is maintained.

New Zealand is continuing its assistance to the Cook Islands and the Niue and the Tokelau Islands. The forthcoming visit to the Cook Islands of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh will bring great pleasure and honour to a community which is entering its sixth year of self-government in free association with New Zealand. In Niue further thought is being given to the course of constitutional progress. My Government will give sympathetic consideration to the wishes of the Government and people of Niue as soon as they have reached conclusions on the course they wish to follow.

Asia remains for New Zealand an area of opportunity and obligation. New Zealand is continuing to co-operate with its Commonwealth partners in working out defence arrangements in Malaysia and Singapore which will help maintain regional security. In view of the improved defensive capacity of the forces of the Republic of Vietnam my Government is able to reduce the level of its military assistance to that country.

In a year which has begun with the first Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting to be held in Asia my Government places emphasis on the developing pattern of exchanges among Commonwealth nations and on the objectives expressed in the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles adopted at Singapore.

My Government will continue to support efforts to enable the United Nations to play its full part in ensuring the peace and progress of the world, particularly through New Zealand membership of the Economic and Social Council. My Government has announced that 1971 will be observed in New Zealand as International Year Against Racial Discrimination. A Race Relations Bill will be introduced with a view to the ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

You will be asked to consider a Bill along lines similar to recent legislation in Australia and the United Kingdom to modernise the