

Ministers also consider that better use should be made of existing houses. They are aware that many elderly people live in family homes which are now too large for their needs and which they find difficult to maintain. They would prefer smaller, more convenient accommodation, but cannot obtain it close to the amenities which they need, and at a price which they can afford.

On the other hand there are many families living in overcrowded conditions in desperate need of good family accommodation at a reasonable rental. Only Government action can resolve this problem. Ministers intend to serve the needs of both the elderly and the young family by making it possible for the elderly, at their discretion, to sell their properties to the State which would make them available to families on a rental or purchase basis. The elderly will be accommodated in pensioner units of their choice, the construction of which will be accelerated.

The burden of local authority rates falls heavily on pensioners and other persons with relatively low incomes and the Government will introduce legislation to authorise assistance for such people.

Honourable Members, the Government recognises that the further improvement of the education system at all levels is necessary if New Zealand is to become a society in which all have equal opportunity to realise their full potential. A review is being made of tertiary education to ensure that policies for the further development of education at the higher levels are balanced, suited to the educational and vocational needs of individuals, and related to the requirements of both the regions and the whole of New Zealand. It considers that special attention is needed at the pre-school level and Ministers will be enlisting the help of voluntary organisations to ensure that there is full community support for the measures that will be taken.

It is the Government's particular concern that the Maori and Pacific Island people should benefit to the full from the facilities provided for their advancement. It considers that the proposed development of pre-school education will be particularly relevant to their needs.

In accordance with its policy to promote the physical and mental health of all New Zealanders and to ensure that they have the opportunity to occupy their leisure hours constructively, the Government will introduce legislation to establish a Ministry of Recreation and Sport to administer new policies of assistance to sporting and recreational organisations. Special attention will be given to the provision of facilities in new housing areas where there are many young people but few recreational facilities.

The Government is giving careful consideration to ways in which the community can be encouraged to participate more fully in the protection and improvement of the neighbourhoods in which they live. It has established a local committee to be known as the Guardians of Lakes Manapouri and Te Anau. The guardians will be responsible for reporting and making recommendations to the Government on any matters arising from the environmental, ecological, and social effects of the construction and operation of the Manapouri - Te Anau hydroelectric power scheme.

The Government will submit for your consideration this Session a Bill which will preserve Lake Wanaka in perpetuity for the benefit and enjoyment of the public.