

Honourable Members, Ministers recognise that one of the basic responsibilities of the Government is to ensure that the people of New Zealand are able to live in peace and security. It is disturbed by the increase in crimes of violence. Firm action will be taken in an endeavour to prevent situations arising which may lead to acts of mob violence. It believes that the implementation of its social policies will do much to convince young people that there are opportunities for them to play a constructive part in shaping New Zealand's future. The small minority of those who persist in anti-social behaviour will be dealt with by the courts. You will be asked to consider proposals which will ensure that the courts have appropriate powers to deal with these people.

It is the wish of the Government that Select Committees of Parliament should play a greater part in the legislative process. In the past they have been largely confined to a revisory and, to some extent, advisory role considering and hearing evidence on Bills after they have been introduced and, in the case of Public Expenditure Committees, investigating some aspects of public administration. As an experiment in initiating action it is proposed to invite the Statutes Revision Committee to consider and report on the Police Offences Act 1927.

You will be asked to consider a Crimes Amendment Bill giving effect to certain recommendations of the Criminal Law Reform Committee. It is proposed to extend the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to all local authorities. A Bill will also be submitted putting into effect the recommendations of the Special Committee on Matrimonial Property.

The Government believes that the appalling loss of life on the roads is a matter which calls for urgent and effective action. The many measures which have been taken in recent years to reduce road deaths and injuries appear to have had little impact. More must be done to stop New Zealanders killing and maiming themselves and each other through the careless use of motor vehicles. Ministers will be presenting proposals to deal firmly with this situation and you will be invited to reappoint a Select Committee on Road Safety.

Honourable Members, many of the measures which you will be asked to consider in this and succeeding Sessions of this Parliament will be in implementation of the Government's policies to promote the social advancement of the people of New Zealand. Ministers believe that a stronger, more self-sufficient society can only be built on the basis of thriving local communities themselves, composed of strong and self-reliant family units. The Government is aware of the many strains and pressures which are exerted on the family by a too-materialistic approach to life. In the administration of their portfolio responsibilities and in the proposals for legislation which they will submit for your consideration, Ministers will seek to use the resources of the community to strengthen family ties and promote an appreciation of community values. In so doing they will be advancing a concept of New Zealand as a free community of families caring for the quality of life of each of its members.

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