

My Government is concerned at the appalling road toll and is determined to make every effort to improve the situation. Speed limits will be rigidly enforced; there is no doubt that a reduction in speed decreases the severity of accidents. The recommendations of the 1973 Select Committee on Road Safety will be placed before Parliament as quickly as possible. The committee will also be asked to report on the possibility of the recent reduction in speed limits being made permanent.

Tourism is providing increasing employment opportunities. It is a valuable earner of overseas exchange. The Government will continue to place due emphasis on the simultaneous development of both domestic tourism and that from overseas. It is proposed to introduce legislation to enable the Tourist Hotel Corporation to be more effective. My Government will increase the availability of training courses for personnel employed within the industry.

My Government will continue to improve the quality of education giving proper recognition to the social as well as the economic needs of the community. The Educational Development Conference will bring forward recommendations extending from pre-school to beyond the normal years of formal schooling. Legislative reforms and appropriate resources to give effect to this major review of education will have a high priority.

Community involvement in all aspects of education will be encouraged and vigorously promoted.

In the past, the environment has suffered needlessly as a result of developments undertaken without adequate knowledge of the social and physical consequences. New procedures which will apply to Government works will be implemented from 1 March 1974. The procedures allow a comprehensive analysis of the environmental impact and will increase public participation in decisions affecting the environment.

The Government will also continue with its policy of appointing guardians to protect areas of particular environmental significance. Ministers will be taking further steps to facilitate the recycling of waste products to promote the conservation of natural resources and ensure the preservation of a wholesome environment.

Legislation will be introduced this year which rewrites much of the Town and Country Planning Act. The Act will be simplified and greater emphasis given to the protection of the environment and to the rights of the individual. An amendment to the Harbours Act will be introduced which will include provision for environmental impact reports on significant works on harbours and foreshores.

My Government has assigned a high priority to the provision of additional housing and considerable progress has been made during the last year. With the number of State houses completed in the past year increasing by over 25 percent, the total number of all houses built will be an all time record in housing construction. It is the Government's intention to achieve a substantial increase in the coming year. Commercial building construction has also continued apace.

A number of steps have been taken recently to ensure that home ownership remains an attainable objective for the majority of New Zealanders. In particular, measures have been introduced to help young people and those on lower incomes to obtain houses. The State Advances Corporation, as the main lending agency, will continue to be provided with adequate funds for the building of new homes, the purchase and improvement of existing homes and, as necessary, the refinancing of mortgages to alleviate hardship.