

constitution and functions of territorial local authorities. This legislation will combine and bring up to date the present Municipal Corporations and Counties Acts, and incorporate the Local Government Act 1974.

The Government intends to introduce early in the session a Bill reviewing the funding of the fire services, aimed at reducing substantially the share borne by ratepayers, and spreading costs more equitably. Discussions are being held with affected parties to examine the administrative and financial implications of nationalisation of the fire services.

The Government is determined to improve the health services of New Zealand. It has issued a White Paper entitled "A Health Service for New Zealand" setting out the principles for a major restructuring of our health services. Submissions have been invited on the proposals and progress towards reorganisation will proceed through consultative groups. It is intended that necessary legislation will be introduced to Parliament during the 1976 session with a view to implementation on 1 April 1978.

You will be asked to consider a Bill to provide financial and other assistance for the disabled and handicapped. The Bill will provide support services for the rehabilitation of disabled people and will give assistance to voluntary organisations concerned with providing welfare facilities, sheltered employment and day care of the physically and mentally handicapped.

The Government will continue to implement its policies for the improvement of education. Particular emphasis will be placed on early childhood and continuing education.

Should the current negotiations lead to a fair and just conclusion, provision will be made for the introduction of the proposals as outlined in the report of the State Aid Conference Steering Committee for the conditional integration of private schools into the State system.

The final recommendations of the Educational Development Conference will be carefully considered with particular reference to its proposals for the reorganisation of the education system, for the in-service training of teachers and for those who have special educational needs.

Legislative proposals arising from the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Sale of Liquor will be presented for your consideration.

A parliamentary committee is considering amendments to the electoral law and its recommendations will form the basis of legislation during the session.

You will also be asked to consider a Bill to control the use of listening devices and to deal with other aspects of privacy. Legislation will also be introduced to provide for the establishment of small claims courts.

In the latter part of 1973 and early 1974, Ministers were concerned about the exceptionally high numbers of immigrants. Steps were taken then to exercise greater control and a continuing close watch is being kept on the level of immigration in the light of our employment and housing situation.