

Even greater priority is being given to the rationalisation of energy planning, development, and use. The Ministry of Energy is working towards the publication of a comprehensive energy plan in 1980, which will bring together the coal, gas, and electricity sectors for the first time. Urgent attention is being paid to the question of how best to use Maui gas. The Liquid Fuels Trust Board has been established to give impetus to the investigations into alternative transport fuels.

Close scrutiny is being given to the possibility of using the very extensive lignite deposits discovered recently in Southland. Research is continuing into "energy farming" where the use of indigenous renewable resources such as timber and special crops could be of significance to our country in the future.

The Government recognises the importance of tourism to the country and the significant contribution this industry can make to overseas exchange earnings. The Tourism Advisory Council has recommended options for growth. These are being considered as the basis for a development policy to enhance the contribution of tourism to both the economy in general and to regional development and employment opportunities in particular—in a manner which will not damage the quality of the New Zealand way of life.

The Government will introduce the final Bill to complete the complex task of revising and consolidating the Municipal Corporations Act and the Counties Act into a single measure, which will deal with most of the functions and powers of regional and united councils and territorial authorities.

Public works legislation, which also influences regional planning, has been under study by a review committee. The study is nearing completion and a Bill amending and consolidating the Public Works Act will be introduced.

Policies designed to promote regional development, often based on surveys made by the regions themselves, are making and will continue to make a significant contribution to employment and investment opportunities in agriculture, horticulture, tourism, and fishing. Special encouragement will continue to be given to these activities as well as to manufacturing and processing ventures.

Forestry also provides a significant boost to regional development as well as making a major contribution to overseas earnings. During the next decade large volumes of exotic timber will become available as a result of the large plantings made by the State and private interests in the early 1960s; the Government will examine the market possibilities for these crops.

It is the Government's intention to ensure that the nation's forests are managed so as to satisfy the needs and aspirations of all New Zealanders. Public entry into indigenous forests is being encouraged to foster a greater appreciation of our forest heritage. The Government recognises that forests play a preservation and recreational role as well as being an economic investment for the future.