

Now that the country's immediate housing needs can largely be met from the existing stock of houses, the Government has given a new emphasis and direction to its housing policy by offering those borrowing from the Housing Corporation a greater freedom of choice to buy either a new or an existing home. These moves have been coupled with direct support for the building industry.

Increasing importance will be placed on the use of the existing housing stock and particular attention will be paid to policies for its renewal and rehabilitation as well as the better use of existing urban services and amenities.

A major consolidation of the Education Act 1964 is planned for this year. It is a complex undertaking and the intention is to introduce the Bill late in the Session for study by a Select Committee during the recess.

In the meantime it is proposed to amend the 1964 Act to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee on the Registration and Discipline of Teachers.

A number of major studies will be undertaken during the year on various aspects of education and its administration. In the conduct of these studies the concerns expressed by both parents and teachers will be given proper emphasis.

The Government's principal aims in its foreign policy are:

- to contribute actively to the strengthening of peace and stability, especially in the neighbouring areas of the South Pacific and South-east Asia,
- to develop co-operation and friendly relations with the states of these and other regions, and thus
- to promote conditions in which it can diversify and increase its overseas trade.

To ensure that these objectives continue to be pursued effectively, the Government will consider further aspects of the report of the Plimmer Committee on foreign service administration.

In the present uncertain international climate the Government is determined to maintain the armed forces at levels which ensure their ability to preserve national security and control of our own area, including the Exclusive Economic Zone, and to promote security in the South Pacific region.

Having completed a comprehensive review of its defence policy the Government will take steps this year to upgrade certain items of equipment and to initiate studies to select other major items planned for replacement.

The Government is committed to the maintenance of law and order.