

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, the Government's energy policies are aimed at reducing our dependence on imported oil. Projects have recently been initiated to produce synthetic gasoline and chemical methanol from the Maui natural gas resource. Priority is being given to the development of alternative transport fuels, as evidenced by the growing use of compressed natural gas and liquified petroleum gas. Legislation will be introduced to ensure the safe handling of these products.

To avoid too much reliance on natural gas, research is also being undertaken into the future potential of coal and biomass as transport fuels. Investigations are continuing into possible uses of the extensive Southland lignite deposits, and the Government will receive reports on their utilisation during 1980. In order to extend our indigenous fuel resources, further efforts to discover off-shore oil will be made this year, and on-shore drilling will continue.

Later this year the Ministry of Energy's first energy plan to incorporate all energy sectors will be tabled in the House. A Bill revising the gas industry legislation will also be introduced. To ensure that the required skills are available as the energy programme gains momentum training courses will be accelerated.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, the Government will introduce an amendment to the Transport Act to give effect to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Road Safety. Among the matters to be included in the Bill will be the elimination of unnecessary procedural steps in the prosecution of traffic offences.

The Shipping and Seamen's Act 1952, which provides the foundation for safety of shipping and conditions of employment of seafarers, is also under revision. The amendment of this Act will enable New Zealand to ratify the 1974 Safety of Life at Sea Convention.

The review of the Public Works Act 1928 has been completed and a Bill will be introduced this Session to update and consolidate existing legislation. The compensation provisions for land acquired compulsorily will be further liberalised, and the powers of compulsory acquisition and the right of entry on to land modified.

Within the current limiting financial restraints the Government will continue to support an adequate programme of public works. Studies are being undertaken to assist the National Roads Board to ensure that funds are more equitably distributed. Procedures for regional district and maritime area planning are being re-examined.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, you will be asked to consider amendments to the legislation governing differential rating to introduce more certainty into differential rating schemes and foster a better understanding of the schemes by ratepayers.

It is intended to repeal the film renter and exhibitor licensing provisions in the Cinematograph Films Act 1976 in accordance with the Government's policy of encouraging free and open competition and removal wherever practicable of restrictions.

A Bill will be introduced to amend the Racing Act 1971 to enable full totalisator licences for off-course betting to be issued to Greyhound Racing Clubs.