

## MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

During the recess my Minister of Finance, Customs, and Marketing has visited Great Britain for the purpose of discussing, with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, the question of trade between Great Britain and New Zealand, and negotiations for a trade agreement, having as its objective a mutual expansion of trade, are still proceeding. My Minister took advantage of his visit abroad to discuss with His Majesty's Government in Canada, and also with the Governments of a number of foreign countries, the trade relationships between them and this Dominion. It is expected that these discussions will, in a number of cases, lead to the conclusion, at an early date, of trade arrangements which should provide increased opportunity for the disposal of this Dominion's primary products. In other cases the possibilities of arranging trade agreements to the benefit of the Dominion are to be further investigated.

The public accounts for the financial year ended 31st March last resulted in a surplus of £472,000, and the Dominion has proved able to provide for the whole of its financial requirements without recourse to overseas markets. Steps were taken, however, to convert, to the extent of £4,000,000, the 6-per-cent. stock, totalling £5,870,000, issued in London in 1921, the balance required to redeem this issue being provided from New Zealand. This conversion loan, issued at 30s. per cent. discount and bearing interest at 3 per cent. per annum, has resulted in a substantial saving in interest charges.

A scheme for invalidity pensions, and for an increase in the rates of existing pensions, both civil and military, inaugurated as a result of legislation passed during last session, has proved of great benefit, and proposals will be placed before you having for their object the extension of the system to cover certain classes of invalids not at present provided for. At the same time, it is my Ministers' intention to introduce a comprehensive measure establishing a system of national superannuation and health insurance, the benefits of which it is hoped will be reflected in every household.

## HONOURABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The welfare and advancement of the Maori people have received the fullest attention of my Government during the past year, and vigorous methods have been pursued in promoting the development and settlement of their lands and in improving their living and housing conditions. It is the intention of my Government to continue and to accelerate these measures for promoting the health, prosperity, and happiness of the Maori race.

My Ministers have in preparation a comprehensive scheme for improving by sport and physical training the health and fitness of the people generally; and the arrangements for the supply of milk to children in schools, which were successfully inaugurated early this year in the principal cities, and which now reach about one-third of the school population, are being extended to other centres. At the same time facilities for the training of school dental nurses have been enlarged, and my Ministers hope to be in a position, very shortly, rapidly to increase the number of school dental clinics.

Preliminary consideration has been given to the reorganization of the education system. The views of educational authorities, associations of teachers, and other bodies interested in education have been obtained, and the recent New Education Fellowship Conference provided an opportunity for obtaining much helpful information from distinguished educationists visiting New Zealand. It is proposed to introduce legislation amending the Education Act, 1914.

Realizing the importance of forestry as a means of creating a valuable national asset, and at the same time of providing employment, my Ministers have under consideration a long-term programme of indigenous forest improvement (having due regard to the necessity of providing for the better preservation of native bush) in addition to the establishment of further exotic plantations.