

milk to schools now provide for approximately 161,000 children, or 57 per cent. of the school population, and an expansion shortly to be arranged will, it is hoped, extend the scheme to a further 16,000 children.

The increasing attention which my Ministers have paid to public health, particularly from the aspect of the prevention of disease, has necessitated the creation of new health districts, and important additions to the technical and field staff of the Department of Health are at present receiving the attention of my Ministers. A National Council of Physical Welfare and Recreation has been established, and is now planning a nation-wide campaign for the general health and well-being of the community.

My Government have paid particular attention to the special needs of the Maori people. The development and settlement of the lands of the Maoris have been vigorously pursued, and it is proposed to expand the present undertakings and to accelerate their rate of progress during this year. The necessity for improving the housing conditions of the Maori people has continued to receive the attention of my Government.

As an outcome of a conference of representatives of British Governments which took place in London last year, rates for telegrams exchanged within the British Commonwealth have been reduced. On the present volume of traffic the people of New Zealand will benefit by the reduction to the extent of over £23,000 per annum, while the total saving to users of the cable service throughout the British Commonwealth is estimated to amount to nearly half a million pounds per annum.

Arrangements have been completed for the Dominion to participate, as from next month, in the Empire Air Mail Service, and all letters posted in the Dominion for Empire countries served by the Australia-England and the England-South Africa services will accordingly be conveyed by air from Australia at the uniform rate of 1½d. per half-ounce. My Ministers believe that the consequent reduction in the transit time of letter-mails will not only be a great advantage to the people of this Dominion, but will further strengthen the bonds that already unite New Zealand with the Motherland and other portions of the British Commonwealth. Negotiations for the trans-Tasman Air Service are at present taking place between the United Kingdom, Australia, and this Dominion, and it is hoped that it will be possible to extend the service by air to New Zealand at an early date.

My Government have continued to give close attention to the matter of law reform, and the special Law Revision Committee that has been set up, comprising representatives of Government Departments, of the legal profession, and of the Faculty of Law, with the co-operation so helpfully and freely extended by eminent members of the legal profession, has been considering proposals for the removal of anomalies in our general law.

My Ministers are making all necessary preparations for the celebration in 1940 of New Zealand's first one hundred years of national life, and it is their intention that the scale of the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition and the Centennial celebrations generally shall be fully commensurate with the remarkable progress that this Dominion has made.

I pray that with God's blessing your deliberations may prove to the lasting benefit of the people of New Zealand.