

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, the Government recognises the public disquiet over the effectiveness of our penal policies in combating our social problems. A committee, chaired by Mr Justice Casey, has been established to conduct a comprehensive review of these policies.

In the broader area of justice, legislation will be introduced to implement the proposals of the Industries Development Commission for promoting competition in the wholesaling of wine. Bills consolidating the law relating to law practitioners and summary offences are to be introduced. You will also be asked to consider a Bill to consolidate and modernise the Friendly Societies Act 1909 which will also include a new code for the establishment and operation of Credit Unions.

The Government will continue to give attention to the special needs of the Maori people and will intensify the tu tangata policies, particularly the kokiri approach which will give priority to the achievement of educational and traditional skills. The New Zealand Maori Council is preparing a draft Maori Affairs Bill which will be given wide circulation to test it against Maori opinion. It is the intention to have the Bill ready for your consideration in 1982.

Mindful of the need to be prepared for natural disasters, a Bill will be introduced to consolidate and modernise the Civil Defence Act 1962 and to set out the powers and responsibilities of regional and united councils.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, the outlook for international peace has deteriorated in the past 12 months and the Government is accordingly determined to strengthen existing relationships with our allies and with other like-minded countries. The ANZUS Treaty, therefore, remains a cornerstone of our foreign policy. The Government welcomes assurances by the new administration of the United States of America that there will be full co-operation and close consultation on all matters affecting its allies.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, the quality of Government decisions is enhanced by the participation of a well-informed public. Following the report of the Committee on Official Information, chaired by Sir Alan Danks, a Bill will be introduced to make official information more freely available, to give citizens proper access to official information