

present 7s. 6d. In considering family benefits it should be noted that the receipt of an income in excess of £5 10s. per week will not be a barrier to the receipt of a family benefit. Every mother is qualified to receive the benefit so long as the total income does not exceed £5 10s. plus 10s. for each child under the age of sixteen years.

The new rates will become operative as from 1st October next.

The position of those on the lower levels of wages and salaries has recently been further considered and steps have been taken by the Government to meet the position where considered justifiable.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation has already been mentioned, and the policy of the Government in relation to fighting Services is well known. The debt due to the members of the Forces who have risked their lives to save our country cannot ever be fully repaid. The Government, however, desire to emphasize their policy that every member of the Services will be given an opportunity to fit into our economic life with as good a position as he or she would have had if the call of war had not rendered their services necessary in the military field.

The building of the foundation for a new and better world will cause all countries, and not the least our own, many difficulties before the fighting is over—and when peace comes—but no system can be permanent which leaves a person willing and anxious to work to the will of some other person to give or not to give him a job. The men who have fought will demand when this conflict is over the right to work and to a real income in accord with the productivity of our country. The duty to meet the right to work is a collective duty and is accepted by the Government. This does not lessen the responsibility of private companies or individuals—but by the nature of things inside the present economic order they are limited to action in accord with the profit or loss factor of their own activities. The Government will assist them to the fullest extent possible to meet their responsibility, but that in no way reduces the pledge of the Government that inside the production of the country work and opportunities will be available for all—and the resultant product will be fairly shared by all who work or serve, and also those in need who are unable to work.

Without interference with any productive and progressive activity through present channels, the Government accepts the responsibility of ensuring that to the extent that normal activity does not provide employment and real income, it will do so itself.

Our first responsibility is to maintain and expand the living standards of our own people, but our responsibility as a nation does not end there. We are a nation inside a world to which we have a responsibility. We are trustees of the land, sea, and air over which we exercise sovereignty. The Government accepts the responsibility of that trust to utilize the resources of New Zealand to bring into being desirable commodities, and, after conserving what is necessary for the health and prosperity of our own people, it is our duty to exchange the surplus resources with other countries—so that they in turn may improve their living standards.

Poverty and war

Whilst poverty may not have been in the past the cause of war, the research of the past generation has clearly revealed the grave menace to the world from the people of low living standards, and, with the other United Nations, we must do our part in removing this menace or leave our children and their children to face the continued possibility of war.

Given goodwill, understanding, and tolerance between race and race, nation and nation, person and person, we have the greatest opportunity of recorded history during the next decade of laying foundations that may bring permanent peace. New Zealand on its record will make its contribution to that foundation.

Victory

Commencing this Statement on the war situation, I finish with the same subject. Victory is certain—it may not come to-morrow, but each day brings it nearer—it will come soon if we put all our energy, physical, mental, and spiritual, into a concentrated effort, until the peace bells ring.

To do less than our limit would betray and sacrifice more of our young lives, which are so much needed in the world of the future. Given this concentrated supreme effort, I believe the day is not far distant when all will again be able to order their lives according to the simple philosophy of that great Englishman poet, artist, and craftsman, William Morris, who desired a world in which every man and woman would be able to “Work with hope,” and all would be able to “Sleep without fear.”