

The prospectus for the first instalment of the war loan—namely, for £15,000,000—will be available on the 4th May and will provide for the issue of 2½-per-cent. short-dated stock maturing on 15th September, 1947, and 3-per-cent. long-dated stock maturing on 15th September, 1952–55. The minimum subscription to the loan for the purchase of stock has been fixed at the low figure of £10, but, in view of the known desire of thousands of people whose ability to subscribe does not reach this figure, plans are under way for a scheme which will enable any one with £1 or upwards to become a direct subscriber to the loan. The terms of the war loans are similar to those of last year's war loans, and I would urge all sections of the community to support these loans to the full extent of their ability. All will agree that our armed forces should be provided with all the arms and equipment that can be obtained and be trained to the highest possible standard of fighting efficiency. This loan is an essential part of the financial programme to meet the requirements of the armed forces and every one is vitally concerned in making it an outstanding success. By doing so they are not only assisting in the war effort, but providing liquid funds for themselves for use in the post-war period.

We are passing through the most difficult period ever experienced in the history of this Dominion. It is not a pleasant duty to impose heavier taxation, but the demands of war leave no alternative.

It is not merely a question of facing up to the demands of the moment, heavy and pressing though they be, but there is the necessity also of taking steps now to avoid for the future a legacy of social disaster and individual misery.

We have before us still fresh in memory—and bitter memory—the world-wide lessons of the last post-war period. Such problems cannot be passed by us for solution to the generation that will survive this war, and it is my bounden duty as trustee of the people to recommend the steps which must be taken if more serious financial difficulties are to be avoided later.

I have laid the financial position of the country freely before this House and before the people, with confidence that every demand which is being made will be fully and willingly met. Every New-Zealander worthy of the name wishes to undertake some direct part in the war effort, but while all cannot bear arms, there is no one who cannot do something useful to assist.

The family and the home are the real sufferers of war. They bear the bitter losses whatever victory the nation may achieve, but those losses would be, inevitably, more bitter and more cruelly poignant in the event of a defeat at the hands of the Japanese, the Nazis, and their other Axis partners.

This is essentially a struggle to protect our families and our homes, the lives of all who are dear to us, our way of life, our country and all it means to us. Above all, we are fighting to retain the most precious privilege of a precious heritage—that of liberty itself—a privilege enjoyed for so long that it is regarded, I am afraid, as a commonplace. The long-drawn-out and bitter struggles by which slaves and bondsmen became free are all too often unknown or forgotten at the present day. Yet this is but a continuation of that age-old conflict which we must not lose.

It behoves every citizen in these times to recall the issues at stake. They affect equally each and every one of us, and the realization of these facts will, I am sure, stir the hearts and stiffen the resolve of every citizen to work and to give of his best without stint or qualification. Thus will we be able to play our part in the titanic struggle in which the British Commonwealth and our Allies are engaged—a struggle that friend and foe alike agree will turn the destiny of mankind for many centuries to come. Here in New Zealand all that we have, even life itself, is not too high a price to pay to keep our shores inviolate and to crush the foul menace which threatens to strip us of everything we hold dear and to engulf our very civilization itself. The financial measures which I have described and the additional war taxation which it is the Government's intention to impose are indeed but an insurance against the grim possibility of invasion of New Zealand itself and the loss of precious lives among our people.