

1944
NEW ZEALAND

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(In Committee of Supply, 3rd August, 1944)

By the Hon. WALTER NASH, Minister of Finance

MR. CHAIRMAN,—

On 3rd June, 1943, it was my privilege to present to this House the financial statements and accounts for the period ended on the last day of March in that year, together with the financial proposals for the year then opening. At that time I pointed out the position of the world war, the contribution of our Forces, and the steps the Government felt were required if we were to go forward. On that day last year the German drive against Russia was in course of preparation, and, being launched on 5th July, was repelled by the Russians, who commenced their own offensive from Leningrad to Stalingrad and have not yet been stopped for any lengthy period. The United States and the Allied Forces were commencing their forward movements in the Pacific. New Guinea was still largely occupied by the enemy. India was menaced through Burma. North Africa had just been freed. The submarine menace had not yet been fully met. China was, and is still, menaced, but her Army continues to fight. The arrogance of the enemy remains, but his power has been challenged and is fading. To-day, whilst there is still much to do, conditions are different. General Eisenhower and General Montgomery have organized successful landings in Normandy, and each day brings news of the liberation of further areas of France. The Russian Army has won amazing successes, and may shortly be on the German shores of the Baltic sea. The men of the Russian Army have shown unprecedented valour, courage, and fighting capacity. Their Generals have out-thought and out-fought the Armies of the Axis; and the United States Navy, Marine, Army and Air Forces have, in a manner unparalleled, gradually occupied strategic forward areas which have changed within a few months the whole position in the Pacific. Britain, having saved the world in September, 1940, to April, 1941, still stands a monument to a great people with a great leader. Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, and the colonies, with our own Forces, have made, and are making, a great contribution to the work which makes a new world possible. Last, but not least, the signs of dissension are apparent in both Germany and Japan, and those with vision look forward to the end of hostilities; and afterwards to the difficult tasks of reconstruction and development which are so necessary if we are to avoid like conditions arising again.

Every day of the past fourteen months men and women have lost their lives --and limbs. Some have had their bodies torn and will suffer pain for the remainder of their stay in this sphere. Our duty to those who have served and our task ahead is so to organize the economy of our country and to order our own lives in a way that will reduce to a minimum the possibility of war in the future.