

1946
NEW ZEALAND

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(In Committee of Ways and Means, 15th August, 1946)

By the Right Hon. Walter Nash, Minister of Finance

MR. CHAIRMAN,—

A year ago to-day was V.J-Day.

For a year we have been freed from the constant dread for the safety of our men in the Armed Services.

That day, just a year ago, brought a victorious conclusion to the fight to the death for man's rights and liberties and for the personal ideals of man's ethical and spiritual life. It was a triumph for the free spirit of man and for the moral idealism which has shaped the values and ideas of our civilization.

Unfortunately the world was not entirely freed from the impact of pain and sacrifice that it had borne for six years, during which time it had suffered death, starvation, and destruction on a scale unparalleled in history. Inevitably, however, the havoc wrought by the incredible cruelties of the Nazi, Fascist, and Japanese aggression has left a tragic legacy in many lands. In the toll exacted of young lives New Zealand paid dearly, and now, as we stand on the threshold of the post-war era, it is appropriate to remember those who made this day possible, but who are not here to share it; to remember, too, homes saddened by their absence.

It is equally appropriate that any summing up of reorganization and reconstruction at this time should express thankfulness when we remember that we in New Zealand are among the most fortunate in a world still struggling in the aftermath of destruction, starvation, and disorganization. No country can withstand destruction and the dislocations of conflict, with its uprooting of peacetime standards of goods and services, and revert to them easily, or immediately, after so long a period. Free from invasion, or direct contact with the weapons of destruction, New Zealand enters the stage of reconstruction with its productive capacity comparatively unimpaired, but it could not avoid other effects of dislocation caused by conflict, both within and beyond its shores.