

PART III.—COMMERCE DIVISION

SECTION 1.—INTRODUCTORY

132. The Commerce Division has, throughout the past year, been fully engaged in the preparatory and developmental work associated with the furtherance of the basic objective for which it was established in 1945—namely, the promotion and expansion of New Zealand's overseas trade.

133. Through the effective linking-up of the Trade Commissioner service with the Commerce Division, an organization has been created which is now in a position to provide an efficient service to the commercial and business community in New Zealand on any matter in the sphere of overseas trade and commerce. This service can be of considerable value to both the manufacturing and importing interests.

134. In broad terms, this assistance consists in the arranging of contacts between New Zealand and overseas traders, surveying potential overseas markets, attending to trade inquiries, disseminating commercial intelligence, locating overseas sources of supplies for industry, facilitating the release and shipment of goods to New Zealand, and assisting exporters to meet problems connected with the entry of New Zealand goods into other countries.

SECTION 2.—COMMERCIAL POLICY

135. New Zealand is a member of the Preparatory Committee of the International Conference on Trade and Employment, and this Department, in conjunction with other Government Departments, has been directly concerned with the negotiations which arose out of the proposals published by the U.S.A. in December, 1945, for the establishment of an international trade organization. The first session of the Preparatory Committee which was convened by resolution of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations was held in London in October–November, 1946. Prior to the commencement of this session British Commonwealth countries discussed the general implications of the proposals in relation to Imperial preference and the Ottawa Agreements. The later discussions of the Preparatory Committee, consisting of some seventeen nations, centred mainly on the proposed Charter as presented by the U.S.A. and on procedural matters connected with future discussions on tariffs. The Charter, as redrafted at London, was referred to a Drafting Committee (which included New Zealand) and which met in New York in January and February, 1947.

136. The second session of the Preparatory Committee, which commenced at Geneva in April, 1947, was preceded by British Commonwealth discussions at London in March. The Geneva session will be concerned with three main phases: (a) negotiation of multilateral tariff reductions among the countries who are members of the Preparatory Committee; (b) discussions on the Charter as redrafted by the Drafting Committee at New York in January–February; (c) provided the two preceding phases are successfully completed, the Preparatory Committee will decide on the date and place of the World Conference on Trade and Employment, to which it is proposed to invite all members of UNO.

137. The work of the Commerce Division has included the co-ordination and preparation data on trade and industry for the use of the delegation to the second session of the Preparatory Committee at Geneva, and three officers of the Department were members of this delegation.

138. The outcome of the proposals for the establishment of an international trade organization will be of considerable importance to New Zealand. All agreements entered into at Geneva will, of course, be subject to ratification by the New Zealand Parliament.

SECTION 3.—TRADE COMMISSIONER SERVICE

139. The reorganization and strengthening of the Trade Commissioner Service has proceeded during the year. The New Zealand Supply Missions in U.S.A. and Canada have given place to Trade Commissioner offices, and these, as with our other overseas