

REPORT OF THE NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION ON THE CONFERENCE HELD AT CANBERRA FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING AN ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC

I have the honour to present to Cabinet the report of the New Zealand delegation, of which I was the Chairman, on the South Seas Commission Conference held at Canberra from 28 January to 6 February, 1947.

2. The Conference was convened by the Australian and New Zealand Governments, who jointly invited the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and the Netherlands to take part. (The text of the invitation is attached as Appendix A.)

I.—NATURE OF REPORT

3. The report outlines the course of the discussions which resulted in the signing of an Agreement establishing the South Pacific Commission, and gives details of the attitude taken by the New Zealand delegation in regard to the more important questions which arose. (The text of the final Agreement is attached as Appendix B.)

II.—PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

4. The purpose of the Conference was to discover means of establishing a Regional Advisory Commission for the South Pacific. The establishment of such a Commission was first proposed in the Australian-New Zealand Agreement of January, 1944, and during the later Australian-New Zealand conversations of November, 1944, agreement was reached between the two Governments as to the general structure of the proposed Commission.

5. A precedent for regional co-operation in welfare matters between Governments responsible for non-self-governing territories exists in the Caribbean area, where the United Kingdom and the United States of America established the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission in 1942. The Commission was expanded in 1946 to include France and the Netherlands.

6. Unlike the Caribbean area, the South Pacific territories do not comprise a compact and homogeneous region. The inhabitants in the Western Pacific territories are Melanesian in origin, while those in the Eastern Pacific are Polynesian. Between the two groups there are marked differences, both