

the delegations of Greece and Bulgaria had had an opportunity of presenting their views. The Commission heard the Bulgarian delegation, who used their appearance before the Commission to press their claims for the Greek territories of Western Thrace and for an outlet to the Aegean Sea.

In the ensuing discussion in Commission on their statements the extraordinary situation developed in which five Allied and Associated Powers (the Eastern Slav bloc) supported, apparently wholeheartedly, the claims of an ex-enemy State, Bulgaria, against an Ally, Greece. These tactics were doubtless adopted to offset the Greek claims for rectification of the present frontier, which as events had proved, provides little security for Greece. This was a question upon which the New Zealand delegation could not fail to take an active interest, as it was precisely this strategic weakness in Western Thrace that had so impressed the New Zealand Government when they were called upon to make their decision in 1941 regarding the despatch of the Second New Zealand Division into Greece.

Under a Chairman who gave wide latitude in debate, the delegations of the Eastern Bloc were given ample opportunity to draw unfavourable comparison between the relative democratic policies of Bulgarian and Greek Governments. The concentrated attack by these delegations upon Greece and her Government remained one of the features of discussion in this Commission, and indicated how sharply defined was the line of cleavage between Greek and Bulgar policies, now deepened and widened by the active Slav support for Bulgarian claims.

Greek experience of three distinct acts of aggression by Bulgaria, still vividly in the national memory, was reflected in her delegation's anxiety to provide greater security for her northern provinces. Their amendment to this Article I (C. P. (Bul/P), Doc. 9) sought a rectification in favour of Greece of the present frontier. In addition, a resolution was proposed by the Greek delegation requesting the Military Commission to examine the military implications of this proposal and to report on the measure of security which Greece would gain from certain strategic advantages implicit in the amendment. In view of the technical military nature of the question involved, a majority of the Commission supported the Greek resolution.

The answer from the Military Commission was as follows:—

“ The Military Commission considers that any extension or diminution of territory would probably strengthen or weaken the possibilities of local defence ; but that strategic security in the form in which it is mentioned in the Annex of the letter (from the Bulgarian Political Commission) would cover political, economic, and ethnical problems which are not within the purview of this Commission.”

This clearly demonstrated the reluctance of a majority of the Powers to reopen the delicate question and must certainly go down in history as a classic example of international question-begging.