

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH, 1948

INTRODUCTION

1. SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report is a record of the actions of the Government and the Department in the field of external affairs during the period between 1 April, 1947, and 31 March, 1948. Its aim is to give sufficient information to enable these actions to be judged in their setting; it is not in itself a survey of nor commentary upon the international situation. The report deals summarily with any topic which has already been the subject of special report to Parliament, but opportunity has been taken to record in more detail those topics which have not otherwise been brought to Parliament's attention. Since, moreover, many important matters are barely mentioned or ignored completely because the Government was not called to take a position on them, the space given to a subject is not necessarily an index to its importance.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

The annual report for 1946-47, being the first, sketched the history of the Department, from its beginnings in 1926 as the Imperial Affairs Section of the Prime Minister's Department to its establishment, under the provisions of the External Affairs Act, 1943, for the purpose of co-ordinating and conducting New Zealand's ever-expanding relations with the other members of the Commonwealth, with foreign Governments, and with international organizations. The last report noted also that New Zealand's interest and responsibilities in the field of external affairs had continued to increase with the expansion of intra-Commonwealth consultations, the preparatory work involved in the peace settlements, and the enormous expansion of the area of international co-operation.

Though the report deals essentially with the Department of External Affairs, there is in fact no clear line between this and the Prime Minister's Department. The Prime Minister is also Minister of External Affairs, and his two Departments, for the economy of both, are run as one. The Secretary of External Affairs is also the Permanent Head of the Prime Minister's Department; the Assistant Secretary is Secretary to the Cabinet and to the Council of Defence. The staff of the Departments is held in common, and, though some officers are engaged on work peculiar to one Department, the work of the majority involves both.