

the Prime Minister offered the Committee access to a wide range of the Department's documents on questions under consideration. The Department gave some thought to the form of documentation which would be most convenient to members. In the case of the Japanese and German peace settlements, where vast documentation is involved, guides to the chief documents were prepared; in other cases copies of documents were distributed, or summaries were made of much scattered material. An attempt was made to supply information on any matters raised in the Committee.

On 6 February, 1948, the Committee met to hear and discuss reports from the New Zealand Ministers to the U.S.A. (Sir Carl Berendsen) and to the U.S.S.R. (Mr. C. W. Boswell).

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

1. GENERAL

Co-operation in imperial defence, and in the system of Imperial economic preferences, and special nationality and citizenship arrangements, are among the many outward evidences of New Zealand's association with the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. But perhaps the most fundamental is her participation in the comprehensive exchange of information and continuous consultation among members. While this exchange still centres largely round the United Kingdom, it is becoming many-sided as the Dominions develop their own foreign services, so that on some important questions every member of the Commonwealth knows the views of every other member. The New Zealand Government have constantly sought to develop this full intra-Commonwealth consultation. Again this year various sections of the report show the system of consultation in action—the daily activities of the High Commissioners' offices, the contacts between Government Departments, including the Service Departments (made directly instead of through the Foreign Office, which is customarily the sole channel of communication between Sovereign countries), the regular meetings of High Commissioners with Cabinet Ministers in London, the close contacts in foreign capitals between Commonwealth diplomatic representatives (all of whom are appointed in the name of the King), and the occasional high level meetings like that at Canberra, recorded elsewhere in this report, to discuss the peace settlement with Japan. There was not, in the year under review, a meeting of Prime Ministers, though such a meeting, to discuss many grave post-war issues, is in prospect.