

connection with New Zealand's Far Eastern relations, and to that extent the briefing of the delegates has been the concern of the Department.

2. JAPANESE PEACE SETTLEMENT

From the beginning of 1947 there was a quickening of interest among all countries concerned in the conclusion of the Japanese peace treaty. Important speeches made by General MacArthur and Dr. Evatt in March gave public expression to the view that the treaty should be concluded as soon as possible, without waiting upon developments in Europe. The New Zealand Government took an early opportunity of making known its view that all active belligerents in the war against Japan must be permitted effective participation in the peace conference. The Australian Government proposed a Commonwealth Conference to discuss the main aspects of the settlement. There was general agreement that an informal exchange of views among members of the Commonwealth would be desirable, although it was recognized as equally desirable that no broad, binding decisions should be made prior to the main conference. On this understanding, members of the Commonwealth accepted an invitation issued by the Australian Government to attend a conference at Canberra on 26 August, 1947.

In the months prior to the Canberra Conference the Department engaged in intensive preparatory studies. Policy on the military aspects of the treaty was prepared in association with the Chiefs of Staff, and on the economic aspects with an *ad hoc* inter-departmental committee whose sub-committees prepared a series of studies on subjects such as the level of economic life, industrial disarmament, reparations, shipping, scientific development, trade practices, and the property rights and interests of New Zealand nationals in Japan. The political aspects of the settlement were the subject of a series of departmental discussions and studies. Shortly prior to the conference, Mr. G. R. Powles, who during the last two years has been intimately connected with the Far Eastern Commission, was recalled from Washington for consultations. Finally, the main issues were brought before Cabinet by the Minister of External Affairs.

At the Conference, which lasted from 26 August to 2 September, 1947, New Zealand was represented by the Prime Minister and Mr. J. G. Barclay, accompanied by departmental advisers. Apart from its interest as being the first conference of British Commonwealth Governments to be held in the Southern Hemisphere, the conference was notable also as being the first meeting of Commonwealth Governments to be attended by representatives of independent