

(c) Former Italian Colonies

The terms of the peace treaty with Italy provide that the ultimate disposal of Italy's former colonial possessions should be decided by the Big Four taking into consideration the views of other interested Governments and the findings of any Commission of Investigation which might be sent to the affected territories. If no agreement is reached within twelve months of the treaty's becoming effective, the problem must be referred for decision to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

In October, 1947, Deputies appointed by the members of the Council of Foreign Ministers met in London to frame rules of procedure for the hearing of interested Governments and to draw up an itinerary and terms of reference for a Commission of Investigation. Despite strongly worded requests by certain Governments to be allowed to participate, this activity was confined to the Deputies alone. Subsequently New Zealand and other interested Governments were asked to indicate whether or not they wished to express views on disposal of the colonies.

In reply the New Zealand Government protested against the excessively restrictive interpretation which the Great Powers had placed upon the treaty in inviting interested Governments to express opinions only on the substantive issue of disposal. Opinions of maximum meaning and value could be presented only if full documentation were available. The New Zealand Government did not therefore intend to state their views until they had had the opportunity of studying the reports of the Commission of Investigation and other relevant information.

Present indications are, however, that interested Governments are likely to be called upon to express their views in the near future. Since no copies of the Commission's reports have yet been received and since the report on Libya (in the liberation of which New Zealand was most concerned) will almost certainly not be available for a considerable time, New Zealand will probably be obliged to express her views on inadequate evidence. The right to express supplementary opinions at a later date will not remedy what the New Zealand Government have stated to be a grave and unjustified weakness in the Deputies' procedure.

6. GREECE

Throughout the period covered by this report Greece has been divided by a war between the guerilla forces of the northern territory and the army of the established Government at Athens. This crisis assumed international significance by reason of the assistance given