

4. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL MARITIME CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION

New Zealand was represented at the United Nations Maritime Conference, held at Geneva from 19 February to 6 March, 1948, and convened by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to consider the establishment of an inter-governmental maritime organization.

International bodies to deal with shipping had been formed during and since the war. The first of these, the Combined Shipping Adjustment Board, was created in January, 1942, by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill "to adjust and concert in one harmonious policy the work of the British Ministry of War Transport and the Shipping Authorities of the United States Government." The second, the United Maritime Authority, 1945-46, derived from an Agreement on principles having reference to the continuance of co-ordinated control of merchant shipping, signed in London on 5 August, 1944. New Zealand acceded to the Agreement. The third, the United Maritime Consultative Council, came into being provisionally from 3 March, 1946, in succession to the United Maritime Authority, which terminated the previous day. New Zealand was represented at both sessions of the Council, held in June and October, 1946. The Council ceased to exist on 31 October, 1946, and was succeeded by the fourth body, the Provisional Maritime Consultative Council, which held one meeting (at which New Zealand was represented) in Paris in May, 1947. It was agreed that the Provisional Maritime Consultative Council should terminate upon the entry into force of a constitution for a permanent inter-governmental organization, or when membership fell below twelve members.

Thirty-two countries were represented at the United Nations Maritime Conference at Geneva, which used as a basis for discussion the draft constitution for a permanent Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization drawn up by the United Maritime Consultative Council at its meeting in October, 1946. An overwhelming majority of the countries represented favoured the creation of an inter-governmental maritime organization. Some countries wished it to be a specialized agency of the United Nations, while others, including New Zealand, wanted it to be a commission or sub-commission of the Economic and Social Council. It was finally decided that the organization should be recognized as the specialized agency in the field of shipping. The Conference adopted a Final Act recording the work and decisions of the Conference, a Convention on the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, and three resolutions, one for the establishment of a Preparatory Committee of the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, a second on the Safety of Life at Sea