

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH, 1949

INTRODUCTION

1. GENERAL

As in previous years, the character and scope of this report are determined largely by the necessity of presenting a concise record of Government and departmental activity in the field of external affairs during the period under review. The report does not purport to give a survey or commentary upon the international situation; such background and general information as is given has the primary purpose of enabling New Zealand's activity in this connection to be seen in its proper perspective. Certain topics which have been or are scheduled to be the subject of separate reports to Parliament are dealt with summarily in the present instance and rather more attention is given to matters not separately reported. The space allotted to the various subjects, therefore, is not to be regarded as an indication of their relative importance.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

The year under review has seen no substantial alteration in the basic organization of the Department, which has also continued to function in its special relationship with the Prime Minister's Department. Although it has become possible in recent months to achieve, in so far as the staff are concerned, a greater measure of differentiation between duties of an external affairs nature and those coming more properly within the scope of the Prime Minister's Department, a small number of officers are engaged on work touching on both Departments. This has been found convenient not only from the viewpoint of administrative economy, but also as ensuring co-ordination of policy generally and its extension into the international field.

Some progress has been made during the year in strengthening the staff of the Department in order to meet the increasing demands of participation in international activities, but the staff resources continue to be spread thinly over a wide field. In particular, the necessity of maintaining New Zealand's overseas posts at a level which enables such offices to attend to conference as well as representational work has presented a difficult staffing problem and a heavy burden has been placed on existing personnel. The world-wide tendency towards a greater degree of international co-operation has resulted in an increase in the number of international conferences