

PART III—OVERSEAS TRADE DIVISION

SECTION 1—INTRODUCTORY

The principal functions of the Overseas Trade Division, which was previously known as the Commerce Division, are to deal with those questions regarding New Zealand's external trade relations and export policy that come within the scope of the Department's activities and to assist the conduct and development of New Zealand's overseas trade. The Division is, on the one hand, closely linked with the New Zealand Trade Representation Service, and on the other it works in close collaboration with such other Departments as External Affairs, Customs, Treasury, and Marketing, as well as with the Dairy Products Marketing Commission, the Wool Disposal Commission, and the Meat-producers' Board. Some of the more important aspects of the work are elaborated on below.

SECTION 2 COMMERCIAL POLICY

(a) GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

In the 1948 report (at page 21) it was recorded that negotiations held in Geneva in 1947 had resulted in the drafting of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. This agreement was later accepted by Parliament. This Department has co-operated with the Customs Department in making preparations for further negotiations on tariffs and associated subjects between a wider group of countries than had worked in Geneva in 1947. The further negotiations commenced at Annecy, France, in April, 1949, and this Department is represented in the New Zealand Delegation.

(b) TRADE RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES

The maintenance and development of good trading relationships with all countries are made important by New Zealand's desire to share fully in the expanded world trade which the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the proposed establishment of the International Trade Organization of the United Nations are designed to encourage.

Predominant factors influencing the direction of our trade are the long-term contracts for the sale of meat and dairy products to the United Kingdom and the continued necessity to curtail purchases from hard-currency sources. Pressure of demand for imports upon the funds provided by our exports makes it necessary still to use import controls. Despite these factors, which tend to keep trade within defined channels, there are few trading countries in the world with which New Zealand does not have commercial dealings.

This Department shares with the other Departments concerned the responsibility for dealing with the various questions which arise regarding New Zealand trade relations with those various countries. Contact is maintained with their Trade Representatives who are stationed in or who visit this country, and all possible assistance is given to overseas businessmen who come here to investigate trade prospects. New Zealand Trade Representatives overseas also assist in promoting healthy trade relations between New Zealand and their respective territories.

Ex-enemy countries are again becoming important in the trade field, and although all difficulties have not yet been overcome, normal trading relations are once more being developed with them. It is our endeavour to keep New Zealand importers and exporters advised of the procedures affecting trade with these countries.