

MISCELLANEOUS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ORGANIZATION (ITO)

In the year ending 31 March, 1949, the Department has again taken part in the efforts which are being made by international organizations in the field of world trade and employment.

The first of these is the International Trade Organization. As an aid to public discussion the Department has published during the year the text of the Havana Charter and the report of the New Zealand delegation to the Havana Conference. As at 31st March no Government had accepted the Charter and smaller countries have been deferring action pending its acceptance by the major Powers.

In the meantime, the Interim Commission for ITO, of which New Zealand is a member, has elected and delegated its powers to an Executive Committee of eighteen members, which has been instructed to prepare a provisional agenda for the first session of the Conference of ITO after the Charter is accepted and to be prepared to make recommendations to the Conference on administrative matters and relationships with other international agencies. New Zealand is not a member of the Executive Committee, but was represented at its second session at Geneva in August, 1948, by an observer and the Department is kept fully informed of its activities.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

On 30 June, 1948, New Zealand signed the Protocol of Provisional Application to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, drawn up by representatives of twenty-three countries at Geneva in October, 1947. The agreement is designed to contribute to the expansion of world trade and the improvement of standards of living, and, to this end, the contracting parties entered into negotiations on a mutually advantageous basis. The schedules of tariff concessions arising from these negotiations are incorporated in the agreement, together with general articles concerning the conduct of trade between the contracting parties. The concessions granted by New Zealand were applied as from 26 July, 1948, involving reductions of duty on numerous articles.

New Zealand was represented at the second session of the contracting parties at Geneva in August, 1948, and then and later signed protocols amending the agreement to bring it into conformity with the relevant articles of the Havana Charter. During the year, the Department published the text of these protocols.

The third session commenced at Annecy on 8 April, 1949, New Zealand being represented by a delegation competent to negotiate Tariff concessions with a number of countries wishing to join, and to discuss other matters arising from the provisions of the General Agreement.