

previously undertaken by other branches of the Office. These include, for example, the handling of claims on behalf of New Zealanders in respect of property in ex-enemy countries and representation (in collaboration with the Finance Branch) on technical and special committees of Commonwealth officials, such as the Commonwealth Liaison Committee on the European Recovery Programme and the Sterling Area Statistical Committee. Apart from these additional duties, the Section has continued to maintain a close and useful liaison with the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office on a wide range of subjects. The regular meetings of Commonwealth High Commissioners in London, as well as several meetings with the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations and other Cabinet Ministers, have been attended by Mr Jordan and the External Affairs Officer.

The Public Relations Branch, which was set up in July, 1948, absorbing the Information and Publicity Sections, is working under constant pressure to fulfil the increasing demand for articles, photographs, films, and general publicity material on New Zealand. The "Meet New Zealand" Exhibition closed in July after a most successful seven months' tour of the country. This exhibition has proved an invaluable medium of publicity for New Zealand throughout the United Kingdom. Others, on a much smaller scale, illustrating various aspects of New Zealand life and conditions have been prepared for inclusion in local exhibitions. Inquiries by intending immigrants as to the prospects of settling in New Zealand continue unabated.

The effects of the alteration in the exchange-rate have added materially to the normal duties of the Finance Branch, which, during the year under review, included the ordering and shipping of bank-notes, cupro-nickel coins, crown pieces for the postponed Royal Tour, and postage-stamps. The Finance Officer was also associated with the issue of £7,000,000 3-per-cent. 1973-77 Government stock in February, 1949, the outstanding success of which can rightly be accepted as a reflection of New Zealand's high credit standing in London.

The function of issuing passports and *visas* is now undertaken by the General Branch of the High Commissioner's Office, which, during the year, has continued to assist the New Zealand Public Service Commission, local authorities, and the University of New Zealand to fill vacancies in this country. Among its wide range of activities the Branch is concerned with New Zealand rehabilitation bursars and other students in the United Kingdom, and comment has been made, incidentally, on the outstanding results achieved by a large number of these persons in their various fields of study.