

to Japan in January, the New Zealand delegation, led by Sir Carl Berendsen, had a valuable opportunity to acquire first-hand impressions of the country and of the occupation machinery. Since that time Sir Carl Berendsen, as a member of the Commission and Chairman of its Steering Committee, has continued to give vigorous expression to the views of my Government.

It is a source of particular pride that New Zealand was able to respond so speedily to the call for a force to assist in the garrisoning of Japan. This force is both a symbol of Commonwealth solidarity and an earnest of the sincerity of the efforts of this country for world security.

The New Zealand Brigade, totalling some four thousand, in association with a squadron of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, has assumed important responsibilities in its section of the British Commonwealth Occupation Zone. The bearing and efficiency of the troops has won high praise, and my Ministers are anxious to do everything possible for their welfare. The first draft of volunteer replacements has already landed at Kure, and with the despatch of another contingent from New Zealand next month it will be possible for the last of those who served with the 2nd N.Z.E.F. in the Central Mediterranean Force to return home.

The responsibilities which New Zealand bears as a Sovereign state in the comity of nations, and, in particular, the obligations which have been assumed under the United Nations Charter, necessitate the creation of an effective defence system. My Ministers are devoting the closest attention to wider questions of defence policy, and it is their intention at a very early date to constitute a new Council of Defence. Whole-hearted support will, I am sure, be given to the announcement of New Zealand's willingness to accept a greater proportion of responsibility in the sphere of British Commonwealth defence than has been accepted hitherto.

The interim Army which has been set up will form the basis of a post-war Force, and in the meantime it is being utilized in servicing and maintaining warlike stores, and recruiting and training volunteers.

Until the basis of the post-war Air Force is established, an interim Air Force has been formed, and in the Navy there has been an increased rate of recruiting for continuous service personnel.

A Civil Aviation Conference was held in Wellington during February and March, at which the Governments of the United Kingdom, Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand were represented. The Conference considered the establishment of British trans-Pacific air services and the organization of ground facilities in British territories in the South Pacific Area. The Governments concerned have since agreed to the recommendations of the Conference for the establishment of a South Pacific Air Transport Council and British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines.

During last year a Telecommunications Conference was held in London, at which all the Governments of the British Commonwealth were represented, and unanimous agreement has been reached in regard to its recommendations for the better ordering and strengthening of the telecommunication services of the British Commonwealth and Empire.