

The Fourth Session of the Council was attended by my Minister of Finance and Customs, who then proceeded to London and Geneva to lead the New Zealand delegation during the discussions on the multilateral tariff agreements and the proposed Charter for an International Trade Organization.

My Attorney-General led the New Zealand delegation to the Conference of Paris which considered the peace treaties with Italy, Roumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Finland. The treaties as finally drafted were signed on behalf of New Zealand on the 10th of February last. Legislation to authorize my Government to give effect to certain provisions of the peace treaties will be proposed for Parliament's approval.

My Government have also given consideration to the peace settlements with Germany and Japan, which will probably be brought closer to finality in the coming year. It has been necessary to emphasize with some effect that the peace settlements should not be dictated to the other Allies by the Great Powers, but that countries which contributed as much proportionately to the Allied war effort should be fully associated with the drafting of the treaties.

In expressing New Zealand's views upon the control and future of Japan, my Advisers have placed great emphasis upon the need to secure now, and enforce for the future, the most thorough-going disarmament of a country which has for long been the chief menace to New Zealand's security. It is expected that discussions upon the Japanese settlement will shortly take place in Canberra among the countries of the British Commonwealth preparatory to the wider international Peace Conference.

My Government's efforts, in conjunction with the Government of Australia, to secure regional co-operation to promote the raising of living standards in non-self-governing territories in the Pacific, resulted in the signing of an agreement by the United Kingdom, the United States, France, the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand establishing a South Pacific Commission. The report of the New Zealand delegation to this Conference, indicating the further action which will be necessary, will be laid before Parliament.

My Ministers have continued to watch over the well-being of the island dependencies. The need for associating the people of the Cook Islands in a greater measure of responsibility in the government of the Group has been met by the formation of the Legislative Council of the Cook Islands.

At the meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and on the initiative of my Government, an agreement was reached to bring Western Samoa under the Trusteeship provisions of the United Nations Charter. The terms of this Agreement will be laid before you. In consequence of this change in the status of Western Samoa it will probably be necessary to ask Parliament to amend the Samoa Act, 1921.

The nature and strength of the Defence Forces of New Zealand and the international and British Commonwealth obligations and other defensive requirements upon which they are based have continued to occupy the close attention of my Advisers.

The Council of Defence has been reconstituted. The Chiefs of Staff of Army and Air have recently attended a Conference in the United Kingdom called by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, who will himself shortly pay a visit to New Zealand. Measures are being taken to reconstitute and reorganize the Regular Army and the Air Force. A naval recruiting campaign has been commenced, and the Royal New Zealand Naval Volunteer Reserve is being re-established and expanded.

The necessity to maintain their proportion of the occupation forces in Japan is fully recognized by my Government. By agreement with His Majesty's Governments in other contributing