

My Government have affirmed that no alteration in the position of New Zealand in the British Commonwealth or in its firm allegiance to the Crown resulted from the decisions of these meetings. While regretting that the Government of India could no longer accept a common allegiance to the Crown as the basis of the Commonwealth, my Government welcomed the agreement that India continue in full membership of the Commonwealth and her acceptance of the King as the head. They regard this agreement as evidence both of the capacity of the Commonwealth for adjustment to changing circumstances and of the desire of peoples of different races to conserve within their political life the principles and traditions inherent in the Commonwealth association.

It is the intention of my Ministers to co-operate in any action which may be taken by the powers principally concerned with a view to the conclusion of peace treaties with Germany and Japan and the consequent termination of an abnormal and unsatisfactory situation.

In the furtherance of their policy of supporting the purposes and principles of the United Nations, my Government continues to participate in the work of the various United Nations organs and specialized agencies. On the Economic and Social Council the New Zealand representative, Mr. James Thorn, has been elected President. At the meeting of the United Nations Assembly held in Paris my Prime Minister led the New Zealand delegation. Of the matters dealt with on that occasion, the adoption by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is considered by my Ministers as being of outstanding importance.

The North Atlantic Treaty appears to my Advisers greatly to reinforce the security of the most important group of democratic States. They also welcome the Treaty as helping to consolidate the framework of Western Union which I commended in the name of New Zealand at the opening of the last Session of Parliament.

My Government fully recognize the close affinity, arising from common traditions of democratic government, and from shared experiences in the defence of liberty, that exists between the people of New Zealand and the peoples associated in the North Atlantic Treaty. They are confident that this community of interests would provide a basis for the conclusion of similar arrangements in the Pacific region involving both self-help and the pledge of mutual support.

My Government, which, in common with the Government of Australia, promoted the establishment of the South Pacific Commission, continue to lend their whole-hearted support to its activities for the improvement of the social and economic conditions of the peoples of the South Pacific area.

During the past year the political situation in East Asia has engaged the particular attention of my Ministers. They are devoting careful consideration to the developments which have recently occurred and to the implications which they may have for the security of New Zealand and of the British Commonwealth as a whole.

In accordance with their normal responsibilities, and particularly in the light of the deeply-disturbed international situation, my Government are concerned to ensure that essential provision is made for the adequate protection of New Zealand's vital interests in the Pacific area, and for the maximum contribution to the protection of those of the British Commonwealth, with which New Zealand's life and destiny are inseparably linked.

While in London last year and earlier this year, my Prime Minister was able to discuss problems of defence with United Kingdom Ministers and Service authorities.

These discussions have enabled my Advisers to appreciate the position in detail and assisted them in their consideration of the measures that must be taken to ensure that the defences of this country are so organized as to enable New Zealand to meet her obligations immediately in the event of any emergency. My Ministers do not take the view that conflict is inevitable, and they will on every