

THE FAR EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

1. GENERAL

In 1946 the Far Eastern work of the Department was concerned primarily with Japan. It was, however, already apparent last year that, with the post-war emergence of many Asian countries from conditions of dependence, New Zealand would be brought into contact with a growing range and variety of Far Eastern questions. This trend has continued. During the year the Indonesian, Korean, and India-Pakistan questions have been actively before the United Nations, while there has also been a steady flow of Commonwealth exchanges on the insurrection in Malaya, the civil strife in Burma, and the changes taking place in China. The Department has also been kept informed through Commonwealth channels of the more important developments in the Philippines, Siam, and French Indo-China.

There have also been more direct contacts with the Far East than in preceding years and an increase in the number of conferences held in the area. Delegates who attended ECAFE conferences* in India in June, 1948, and in Siam in March, 1949, were able to furnish the Department with useful information on conditions in those countries. Departmental officers who have passed through Singapore during the course of the year have had discussions with officers of the organization of the Commissioner-General in South-east Asia. Reports were also received from the New Zealand Government Trade Representatives in Tokyo and Bombay, who attended respectively the ECAFE Study Group in Shanghai August-September, 1948, and the New Delhi Conference on Indonesia 20-23 January, 1949. These reports of New Zealand representatives have been supplemented by interviews with Far Eastern visitors to New Zealand, included among whom have been this year Dr Usman Sastroamidjoyo (Representative of the Republic of Indonesia in Australia), Sir Ramaswami Aiyer (former Premier of Travancore), Mr B. R. Devarajan (Assistant Secretary, Ceylonese Ministry of Commerce and Trade), Major-General Mrigendra Rana (leader of the Nepalese Delegation to the ECAFE Conference at Lapstone), Mr G. P. Pillai (Indian Government Trade Commissioner for Australia and New Zealand), and Mr K. H. Rahman (Pakistan Trade Commissioner in Australia). The Department has also sought the views of informed unofficial visitors who have returned from China or Japan.

Because New Zealand has a voice in the Far Eastern Commission and in the General Assembly of the United Nations, special attention has necessarily been given in the work of the Far Eastern

* The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East is discussed more fully in the section dealing with the Economic and Social Council.