

conditions in New Zealand there can be no such certainty. It is with extreme regret, therefore, that we feel ourselves unable for the present to take any effective step in this connection.

Finally, I must refer to that portion of the report of the experts on Dominion legislation that deals with merchant shipping. Members will have noted that the report proposes complete autonomy on this subject as on others. The recommendations have been carefully considered by the New Zealand Marine Department, and, with one minor exception, they are regarded as entirely acceptable. The actual steps, if any, that we may decide to take to put these recommendations into practice here will, of course, be a matter for the New Zealand Parliament, and it is not proposed to take any such steps during this session.

In addition to the Conference itself, there will be numerous matters requiring my attention while abroad, and, in particular, it is hoped to negotiate trade agreements with Canada and with France.

I hope honourable members in discussing these subjects will understand the position if I find myself obliged to refrain from entering upon any subject that in my view would be better considered confidentially in the Conference before being submitted for public judgment.

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