

against possible aggression. From the starting-point provided by the Brussels Treaty, consolidation of the power of Western Europe has in the past year been advanced by the negotiations for a Council of Europe and by the conclusion of the Atlantic Pact.

The Western Union Powers announced on 17 April, 1948, arrangements for the formation of a Consultative Council according to the provisions of the Brussels Treaty. The Consultative Council proper consists of the Foreign Ministers of the five participating countries; subsidiary bodies are a Permanent Commission (composed of the diplomatic representatives in London of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, and a representative of the United Kingdom) and a Permanent Military Committee.

By the end of March, 1949, a conference among representatives of the United Kingdom, France, the Benelux countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, and Eire had reached general agreement with a draft constitution drawn up by the Brussels Treaty Permanent Commission for a proposed Council of Europe. It was anticipated that the submissions of the conference would be approved by the Foreign Ministers of the Powers concerned shortly after Easter. The Council was to consist of a Committee of Ministers and a Consultative Assembly meeting at Strasbourg, both organs to have wide powers of discussion and recommendation, except on matters relating to national defence.*

Out of Western Union and the encouragement given to the Brussels Treaty negotiations by the United States and Canada grew the North Atlantic Pact. Its terms, published on 18 March, 1949, and proposed for signature on 4 April, provide that the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Norway, and Iceland will co-operate in meeting their common economic and security problems. The New Zealand Government has been fully in touch with the progress of negotiations through the agency of the United Kingdom Government and the office of the New Zealand High Commissioner in London. The New Zealand Minister of External Affairs, in welcoming the terms of the treaty, said on 19 March:—

This treaty, which not only binds its signatories to common action against aggression, but will give them the means of making this action effective, signifies at last that the strength of Western Europe and of the two great democracies of North America has been effectively organized for peace. The New Zealand Government warmly welcome the conclusion of the Atlantic Pact and fully support the purposes it is destined to serve.

* The Foreign Ministers of the Powers concerned signed on 5 May the Statute of the Council of Europe and an agreement concerning the establishment of a Preparatory Commission. It was proposed that Greece and Turkey and possibly other European countries be invited to accede.