

the equivalent of cash, and that the power of finally discharging losses and deficiencies from the Public Account is vested in Parliament, by whom any provisional writing-off must be subsequently validated.

It is estimated that a saving of something like £200,000 per annum will be effected in the total cost of stores and supplies by these reforms.

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE.

It is fitting, in view of its international importance and the far-reaching magnitude of the decisions arrived thereat, that I should make some brief reference to the Conference held at Washington in November, 1921, the sittings of which continued until February of this year. Honourable members will recollect that New Zealand was ably represented at this historic Conference by His Honour Sir John Salmond, who has submitted to the Government a most valuable report concerning the work of the Conference. This report will be laid before the House in due course, and an opportunity given to members for full discussion regarding it. It will be appropriate if I enumerate here a list of the most important of the treaties and other international instruments which have resulted from the Conference :—

- (1.) The Naval Treaty for the limitation of naval armaments ;
- (2.) The Pacific Treaty ;
- (3.) A treaty relative to the use of submarines and poison gas ;
- (4.) A treaty regarding the independence of China ;
- (5.) A treaty relative to Customs tariff in China ;
- (6.) The Shantung Treaty between China and Japan, and various resolutions relating to the internal administration of China.

It is earnestly to be hoped that the deliberations and manifold results of the Washington Conference, as briefly set out in the foregoing summary, will be a powerful factor not only in minimizing the danger of future wars, but also in promoting peace and harmony among the nations of the earth.

BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION.

The question of New Zealand's participation in the British Empire Exhibition to be held in London in 1924 was discussed at a Conference at which I was present in London in July of last year. I then indicated that the New Zealand Government would assist in making a success of the Exhibition, whose main objects are the fostering of inter-Imperial trade, the finding of fresh world's markets for Dominion and Home products, and of aiding the discovery of further sources of national wealth in the development and utilization of the raw materials of the Empire.

A visit is at present being paid to New Zealand by a mission headed by the Assistant General Manager of the Exhibition, with a view of interesting the citizens of the Dominion in the Exhibition and to ascertain from the Government the amount of money to be allocated for New Zealand's representation. Ample evidence has been received by the Government showing that a great interest is being taken throughout New Zealand in the Exhibition and that very satisfactory support is being accorded to it by intending exhibitors.

The Minister of Industries and Commerce has taken steps to secure the assistance, in an advisory capacity, of gentlemen who are prominent in the producing, commercial, industrial, and labour affairs of the Dominion, and has secured on behalf of the Government the active co-operation of these interests in making New Zealand's participation in the project worthy of the Dominion. The Government is particularly desirous of using the Exhibition as a means of making known the merits of the primary products of New Zealand, of increasing our exports of wool, butter, cheese, kauri-gum, hides, frozen lamb, frozen mutton, hemp, and tallow ; of showing the substantial development that has taken place in our secondary industries during recent years ; making better known the opportunities the Dominion offers for