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Extract from the Evening Standard newspaper in 1944 on New Zealand becoming a Dominion
(PRO ref: DO 35/1245)

MOVE CAUSES
CONTROVERSY

Criticism

5a

[5b](#)

New Zealand to Adopt Statute Of Westminster

MOVE CAUSES CONTROVERSY

Surprise has been expressed in New Zealand at the announcement by the Governor-general, Air Marshal Sir Cyril Newall, of the New Zealand Government's intention to ask Parliament formally to adopt the Statute of Westminster, reports Reuter.

The Governor-general said this was being done to remove doubts in the eyes of foreign Powers about the sovereign status of New Zealand.

Neither in peace nor war in recent years have abstract questions of constitutional status received attention or evoked interest in New Zealand.

Other self-governing Dominions adopted the Statute years ago with

How to use this source

1 Study this source carefully. Ask yourself whether the source supports or contradicts the view that:

- The British left as soon as the people wanted them to
- The British left because of the actions of important individuals
- The British were forced out by peaceful political protests
- The British were forced out by armed resistance
- The British wanted to leave because the area was causing them problems
- The British left because they felt the country was ready to rule itself democratically

2 If you were an **admirer** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

3 If you were a **critic** of the British empire, explain whether you would be able to use this source to support your viewpoint.

[Background](#) | [Worksheet](#)

adopted the Statute years ago with
some provisos applicable to their
own positions and problems.

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Source 5a

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Source 5b

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New Zealand was convinced then, and has since shown no evidence of a change of opinion, that the Statute of 1931 did no more than define an equality of status already existing; which through the years had proved a wholly satisfactory and a valuable bond of unity.

Criticism

The Wellington newspaper Dominion says there is no evidence to show that a change is either necessary or desirable.

"On the contrary, experience shows that the 1931 decision was a wise one, and the status New Zealand already enjoys as a self-governing unit is very satisfactory.

"The duty devolves upon those who are now seeking to superimpose this legal formality to provide convincing evidence of the desirability of the step.

"The proposed constitutional change the Government has decided to spring on the people will be received with distrust as being unnecessary and undesirable."