

Years ago John Foster Dulles called the Assembly "the town meeting of the world". The name has stuck because it is so apt. Any conceivable question, provided it bears on the maintenance of peace, can be handed to the Assembly by any member. If its steering committee agrees that it is a question which should be considered, it goes to the appropriate committee for recommendation. From there it comes back to the full Assembly. Actions on important matters have to be by a two-thirds majority; on other matters by a simple majority. But actions in the Assembly can only be advisory. They depend for their influence on the moral weight of world public opinion behind them.

Alongside the General Assembly the U.N. has its Security Council of eleven member-nations. This was planned as a sort of executive committee and it was given power, not only to investigate and consider situations which threaten peace (as the Assembly also does), but to take action against aggressors. To make sure, however, that such action was not taken against the wishes of the greater powers, the Security Council was set up with five veto-holding permanent members and six non-permanent who rotate in two-year terms.

The Security Council is always, theoretically, in session. But it can act in important matters only when seven members including all the permanent members - China, France, the U.S.S.R., Great Britain and the U.S.A. - agree. In other words each of these five has a veto on actions which might be supported by all the others. Before Americans grow too indignant at the Russians for the way in which they have used their veto power again and again, let them remember that when the U.N. was formed the United States demanded that there should be such veto powers.

These two bodies - the General Assembly and the Security Council - are what might be called the peace-keeping and peace-making agencies of the United Nations. But there are other agencies which in other ways also serve the cause of peace.

There is the Economic and Social Council, which is designed to deal with those human problems of food, work, living conditions, educational opportunity and so on which so often have caused the misery out of which international trouble has come.

There is the Trusteeship Council, which supervises all "trust territories," as they are called, under their administering nations, and is trying to bring them along as rapidly as possible to the point where they are ready for self-government. In addition, it keeps an eye on all the colonial administrations in the world - there are about 70 - and gathers annually reports on how well they are being administered, all to the end that their peoples may be prepared for eventual self-government.

Then there is the International Court of Justice, which sits at the Hague. Its name sufficiently suggests its function. And finally there is the Secretariat - the company of about 4,500 international civil servants who are the technicians who make the multitudinous committees and commissions and agencies work. These are drawn from all the member-states but they are pledged to put the peace of the world ahead of the interests of their own nations. To an