

THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

of the United Nations

A new step forward in international co-operation will be taken on October 16 in Quebec City, when the Food and Agriculture Organization, of the permanent bodies planned by the United Nations, formally comes into existence.

In a world in which the longest distances can be covered in a few hours, the affairs and welfare of each nation are clearly a matter of intimate concern to all the others. Isolationism is as out of date as economic theories under which it flourished.

Out of a growing awareness of their inter-dependence the United Nations which learned in war to pool their resources to win a common goal, have resolved to continue their co-operation to build a peaceful and prosperous world. From the pressing and complex problems awaiting their solution food is the first to be tackled. Out of their preliminary study of the matter, begun two years before the end of the war, has come the Food and Agriculture Organization.

It is as if its economy called, grew out of the idea expressed in the Atlantic Charter, of a peace

which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands will live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

The Organization believes that the ideal of "freedom from fear and want" is realized in fact. It considers that the first step towards freedom is freedom from hunger, and this will be its primary aim.

It is not, however, a relief agency, and its business is not with immediate problems of feeding the hungry millions of the earth—that is the job of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. It is a permanent body with a long-range program of increasing world productivity of everything that grows. Besides food it will be concerned with fisheries, with forestry and primary forest products, and with such non-agricultural products as cotton, wool, linen and silk; hemp, jute and other fibers; vegetable oils; hides, skins and furs used in clothing and industry; beverage materials; and tobacco. Its broad aim, in brief, is to promote economy of abundance throughout the world in the field of food, clothing and shelter obtainable from the soil.

Historical Background

World interest in problems of food and agriculture is not a new phenomenon. In the early years of the century the International Institute of Agriculture was set up in Rome and for nearly 40 years has done valuable work in collecting agricultural statistics and furthering collaboration among nations in numerous technical agricultural projects.

In the depression years of the 1930's when great numbers of people were unemployed while millions went hungry, public attention was drawn to the problem of food. At the same time scientists were demonstrating the profound effects of adequate food on health and the prevention of such of specific diseases.

In 1938 the League of Nations, the International Institute of Agriculture and the International Labor Organization together undertook work on the relation of nutrition to social, agricultural and economic conditions. The League set up two special committees, the Technical Commission on Food and the Mixed Committee to report on the nutritional requirements of food and the Mixed Committee to report on the