



CANADA

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## CONTENTS

The United Nations and World Social Conditions .....	1
National Parks Branch Changes .....	2
Stimulus to Auto Industry .....	3
Ancient Eskimo Sites Studied .....	3
Ground Observer Corps Disbanded .....	4
Czech-Canadian Wheat Pact .....	4
Fair-Employment Manual .....	4

St. Lawrence Seaway Traffic .....	4
New Breakwater Design .....	5
Forestry Ministers Convene .....	5
Gold Production .....	5
Artistic Centre Urged for Ottawa .....	6
National Technical Diploma Favoured .....	6

## THE UNITED NATIONS AND WORLD SOCIAL CONDITIONS

*Addressing the Third Commission of the United Nations on October 23 regarding the report of the Economic and Social Council, the Canadian representative, Mrs. Margaret Konantz, spoke as follows:*

... The United Nations Community Development programme has a unique and indispensable role to play. Having had some experience in several community-development programmes in action in African and Asian countries, UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, FAO, and ILO are to be congratulated for the outstanding contributions they are making in this field and the fine example that is being set by all these Agencies in the spirit of teamwork. Interest in the advantages of community development is spreading throughout the world, for these programmes are designed to strengthen the ability of whole communities of people to advance through local action. It is particularly important at this time, when the demand for assistance is steadily rising and the United Nations is receiving many more requests than it can handle, that there be a special emphasis on community development as a local initiative. We would hope that the developing countries would increase their efforts to organize themselves on a local and regional basis so that they may understand their own particular needs, determine those which should have priority, and ensure that their local resources are fully utilized. In this way they will see their own immediate problems and will be better able to anticipate what future action should be taken and from what particular projects they would most benefit.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development is a slow process and the fact that too much has been expected in the past has probably created some impatience with this slowness. The task ahead is a tremendous one but it is unrealistic to think that the United Nations can do it alone. The countries which benefit from United Nations programmes should prepare the groundwork by taking the necessary steps to inform their people of all the advantages in community development, both on the local and national levels. If the people themselves are not aware of the tremendous need for community development, projects instituted will be of little value.

## VOLUNTEER ROLE

I might mention here the role that volunteer agencies can play in community development in the developing countries as they have done in many of the industrialized countries, by making the community aware of their own ability to remedy their problems without waiting for government assistance. In Canada, for example, volunteer groups have often taken the lead in promoting action in education, social welfare and cultural activities. In view of their previous experience in this field, the Canadian people are following with great interest the progress which the developing countries are achieving through this same approach. Indicative of the interest in Canada in this subject were the two seminars recently held, one called "Adventure in Development" and the other "Challenge in World Development".

UNICEF has played a most important role in community development and at a period when requests

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