

Commodity Trade was established in 1954. At its last session the Commission adopted a practical and worthwhile work programme which takes into account what is being done in this field by other bodies. The Commission's decision to refer its terms of reference to ECOSOC has paved the way for advances into new avenues of usefulness. The most recent report of the Commission and the accompanying review of the international commodities situation both contain much valuable information and will be of considerable assistance to us in working out a constructive approach to commodity problems. GATT and the FAO have also taken a close interest in questions relating to trade in basic commodities and have carried out a great deal of useful work on the subject. At this moment in Geneva a high level committee of experts convened by GATT is carrying out a general study of commodity problems. This panel will report on the development of export earnings of the primary producing or non-industrial countries in relation to their economic growth, the effects of wide fluctuations in prices of primary products and in export proceeds, and the effects of agricultural protection on the development of international trade. FAO has been instrumental in establishing study groups on the great majority of commodities under its jurisdiction and this work has been of great value to the countries primarily concerned. Other study groups are operating under the auspices of the Interim Coordinating Committee. Canada welcomes the steps which have been taken through this body to convene a meeting this fall for the purpose of considering the position in regard to copper, lead and zinc.

Canadian Comments

At present therefore we have a number of international bodies in existence, each looking at commodity problems from a different angle and each playing a role in working towards effective methods of dealing with them. It is quite possible that at this session the Economic and Social Council will find that there is scope for making more and better use of this machinery. Our Delegation has already pointed out in its statement on the world economic situation that Canada shares the interest and concerns of the under-developed countries regarding fluctuations in commodity prices and is willing to consider sympathetically any constructive and practical proposals in this field. Canada belongs to all three commodity agreements presently in existence although we are a major producer of only one of these items. Moreover, our country has participated actively in the work of all the study groups now operating as well as the Commission on International Commodity Trade and the Commodity work of the FAO and the GATT. We therefore feel that we are in a position to offer a few general comments in the light of our own experience regarding the conditions which appear to be conducive to success in dealing effectively with commodity problems.