

Canada is a member of all the Specialized Agencies; during the period under review it served on the governing bodies of some of them; and was represented on four of the functional commissions of ECOSOC¹. It also participated in the work of a number of other subsidiary bodies reporting to the Council, including UNICEF and the Technical Assistance Committee.

Although most of the current United Nations programmes in the economic and social fields have been in operation for a number of years, fresh subjects are continually being introduced, new programmes constantly evolved, and established programmes subjected to examination and adaptation to meet changing circumstances. During 1956, for example, ECOSOC held an initial discussion of new sources of energy; a United Nations programme of studies on industrialization was discussed and put into effect; certain aspects of the United Nations technical assistance programmes were studied and some changes were made in the operation of those programmes; problems of co-ordination between the programmes of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies were reviewed; an analysis and assessment of the programmes of concerted practical action in the social field was instituted; a new programme of advisory services in the field of human rights was begun; a programme of periodic reporting from governments on developments and progress achieved in the field of human rights was undertaken as well as a new series of studies of specific rights or groups of rights. Other subjects considered ranged from calendar reform to infringements of trade union rights. Among the economic matters dealt with, proposals to establish a Special United Nations Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED), and discussions concerning international commodity problems, attracted widespread interest and were the subject of vigorous but inconclusive debate.

The following sections in this Chapter describe in some detail the more important topics in the economic and social fields which were discussed by the Council, by the functional commissions and by the General Assembly during the year.

Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council

Introduction

There are eight functional commissions of ECOSOC: Transport and Communications, Population, Social, Statistical, Status of Women, Human Rights, Narcotic Drugs and International Commodity Trade Commissions. Of these eight, Canada was a member of four² during the period under review: Population (until December 31, 1960); Statistical (until December 31, 1959); Narcotic Drugs (indefinite term); and International Commodity Trade (until December 31, 1959). Canada was represented at meetings of the commissions of which it is a member, but the Social, and Transport and Communications Commissions did not meet during the period covered by this publication. Four³ of the ECOSOC functional commissions meet every second year, and membership on these commissions entails serving

¹See "Functional Commissions of ECOSOC" below, p. 37.

²On May 3, 1957 Canada was elected for a three-year term on the Status of Women Commission.

³Population, Social, Statistical, and Transport and Communications Commissions.