

One of these days brought to its close a four-day session of the Committee of Ministers of Economics of the Central American Republics. They had adopted resolutions regarding future technical assistance to their countries, for improving transportation, creating a school of public administration to provide trained civil servants for their governments, and providing a uniform system of customs nomenclature. They had also established a committee to study unification of their customs procedure - something for which any American exporter to Central America or any American traveller passing from one to another of those republics should give three rousing cheers. Before adjourning the committee changed its name to the Committee on Economic Cooperation in the Central American Isthmus. If it lives up to its new name, this body which the U.N. has fostered will bring a genuine advance in this field of world trade.

Throughout one of these days various U.N. delegations and members of the Secretariat held a briefing conference for 230 United States army officers from the War College at Carlisle Barracks, giving them information on the world picture as it looked from the vantage point of the international organization. On the same day, also, the U.N. published 11 books (including the Yearbook of International Trade Statistics which is invaluable to all Americans who trade overseas) and 12 special bulletins, plus 11 official records of its proceedings in English, French, Russian and Chinese.

There is a condensed list of some of the things that were happening at the U.N. or under its auspices, during just three typical days. Probably not a single one of these was mentioned in the press or over the radio. But every one was of genuine importance. And this takes no account of the services which were being rendered during those three days by more than a thousand technical experts and advisers who, in more than fifty countries, were showing the inhabitants how to guard their health, improve their housing, increase the amount and quality of their food, life their educational standards, prepare their young men and young women for high-grade government service or to carry through many kinds of needed community enterprises.

If you look at a chart of the United Nations organization you will see boxes which designate 24 subsidiary and affiliated bodies. These work with the third major organ of the U.N., its Economic and Social Council. This ranks right along with the General Assembly and the Security Council, and it is possible that as the years pass it may become more helpful than either of the others in securing the sort of world where wars will not always be threatening. Not all these humanitarian, technological and financial organizations can be listed or discussed here. Since they are commonly referred to by their initials, they are the agencies that make up what the jokesters have called the U.N.'s "alphabet soup."

But in that part of the world where a billion people never have enough to eat, where the average yearly income is under \$50, where a child at birth has scarcely one-third the life expectancy it would have had if it had been lucky enough to be born in the United States, where preventable diseases still rage almost unchecked and where illiteracy still condemns most of the population to poverty and hopelessness - in such places the U.N. "alphabet soup" is no joke. On the contrary, it is the brightest promise on the horizon for the under-developed nations and their people.