

No. 53/64 REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Text of a statement made on October 30, 1953, by the Canadian Representative, Mrs. A.L. Caldwell, in the Third Committee of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York. Agenda item 12.

This general debate which is now unfolding with respect to Chapters IV and V of the report of the Economic and Social Council provides an opportunity to comment on much of the constructive work that is being carried out in the social, humanitarian and cultural field by the United Nations, carried on without controversy, without fanfare and without discord.

One cannot fail to be impressed, on reviewing the relevant sections of Chapters IV and V of the ECOSOC report, by the quietly effective nature of the work of such bodies as the Social Commission, the Population Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Narcotics Commission, and others. No one can deny that these Commissions are working industriously and zealously, and in most instances, effectively. Most members would, I am sure, agree that they are fulfilling with reasonable efficiency the functions and purposes for which they were established.

The very fact that these undertakings are being pursued so effectively, and so quietly, tends to condemn them to semi-oblivion: they pass almost unnoticed in the debates of the General Assembly and of the Third Committee. Few resolutions are brought forward concerning these matters: no controversy centres around them. They represent in fact the solid core of accomplishment on the part of the United Nations in the social, humanitarian and cultural fields. To such an extent is this the case that one is almost led to the conclusion that it is in those areas of United Nations activity where the General Assembly has passed the fewest resolutions - where it has contented itself instead with laying down broad policy directives in the early years, and has left future initiatives to the subordinate organs - Councils, Commissions, Sub-Commissions, and so on - established to deal with particular problems that the most real progress is being made.

In most instances these subordinate organs of the United Nations have succeeded when left to work out their problems themselves, and their reports come forward to the ECOSOC and to this Assembly in a form which makes it possible for their problems to be faced and dealt with on a reasonable basis of clarity, conciseness and despatch.

This was not always the case, . . . My delegation recalls for example the very considerable difficulties which certain of the Commissions, notably the Social