

Newsprint

Early in 1951, the International Materials Conference (IMC) was established in Washington. This is an independent association of states which is not allied with the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or any other international organization. Its formation was originally sponsored by the United States, the United Kingdom and France, and the object of the conference was to provide international co-ordination in the distribution of scarce raw materials. Separate committees were established to deal with a number of specific commodities or related groups of commodities, each committee being composed of the principal producing and consuming countries for the commodity in question.

In April 1951, a pulp-paper committee of IMC was formed to study supply and demand problems for newsprint and for kraft pulp and dissolving pulp (materials used in the production of newsprint). The committee was to make recommendations to the member governments for appropriate action in connection with the distribution of these commodities. Canada, which is the world's largest producer of newsprint, became a member of the pulp-paper committee.

Newsprint itself proved to be the greatest problem facing the committee. Although demand exceeded supply by only three or four per cent, a number of countries faced serious deficits. The committee immediately set to work to devise means of meeting the emergency needs of all countries. A special emergency allocation was made to France in May 1951, and this was followed in June 1951 by the first general emergency allocation to a number of countries. By the end of 1951, 33,650 tons of newsprint had been allocated to 18 countries. This action, it may be emphasized, had no connection with the United Nations.

In the meantime, however, the subject of newsprint had been raised in various Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, initially by France and Belgium, beginning at the sixth session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris in June 1951. At that session the preliminary discussion showed that several countries were in favour of calling an international conference, under the sponsorship of UNESCO, to consider international action to increase world production of newsprint and to ensure fair distribution. Canada was, of course, keenly interested in the newsprint situation; it sympathized with countries experiencing shortages, and was anxious to see these shortages alleviated as quickly as possible through international action. At the same time, Canada recognized the substantial progress already achieved through IMC. For this reason, and to avoid duplication of effort, Canada opposed the calling of an international conference under UNESCO. Instead, recognizing that there were long-range aspects of the problem which were more suitable for study by the United Nations than by an organization such as IMC, Canada supported a resolution which was adopted by the sixth session of UNESCO inviting the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in its capacity as co-ordinating agency for the various United Nations organs and agencies concerned, to "draw