

As a result of such meetings the UN is accumulating new agencies and programs at a rate that strains the capacity of governments to service them and of the public to understand them. Moreover, the distinction between "technical" and "political" tends to dissolve when the issues at stake are as much the distribution of the benefits of technical progress as of the nature of technology itself.

Nevertheless, a major benefit of the kind of multilateral exchange and conference diplomacy conducted by the United Nations has been mutual political education and the growth of related networks of functional expertise. Representatives from diverse continents, civilizations, cultures and states of development have come to know, understand and appreciate each other better. Modern communications keep these contacts and exchanges alive in between meetings. Newly-independent countries with few diplomatic missions abroad have enjoyed, through their membership in the United Nations, a much wider spectrum of foreign interests and contacts, knowledge and understanding than would have been the case if their foreign-policy preoccupations had been restricted to their immediate neighbours and daily problems. The consciousness of belonging to one world has rapidly gained in the process, and the proud but often excessive nationalism of many members can sometimes be seen to erode in the wash of this continuing United Nations dialogue.

Yet it would be naive to expect that the evidence of interdependence is accepted by all states as evidence of progress. For the new states the key concepts are justice and equality rather than interdependence. Unless the last-mentioned helps to bring about better prospects for social justice and economic opportunity, most members of the UN will ask whether it is simply a Western slogan designed to hide unequal relationships. While a universal system for the promotion of peaceful change and common standards, such as that offered by the United Nations, is bound to remain a desirable goal for most governments, it will not become a reality unless the system generates real, if not equal, benefits for all.

#### G. Finances

The budget of the UN covers a two-year period, and the level of expenditures approved for 1976-77 totals \$737 million (versus \$19 million in 1946). If the Specialized Agencies (minus the financial institutions) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are included, a further \$986 million must be added to the total. In 1976 Canada paid about \$26 million in assessments to the various UN organizations. A further \$1.5 billion was received by the UN in voluntary contributions, of which Canada provided about \$313 million in cash and commodities. (See Chapter II D, "Economic and Social Development", and Appendix B.)

The costs of running the United Nations and its system of agencies are borne by member states. Expenses are apportioned among countries according to their capacity to pay. The United States pays the maximum amount allowed -- 25 per cent (\$92 million in 1976) -- while close to half the membership, chiefly from the developing countries, pays the minimum of .02 per cent (\$60,000 in 1976). Collectively the