

of lasting and unquestioned peace can be established steady progress becomes possible. The Economic and Social Council has been given the function of pointing the way towards that progress, of helping mankind to move forward to a fuller and richer life and toward the attainment of those larger human freedoms to which we all pledged ourselves in our Charter .... When we examine the activities of the Economic and Social Council, we see a picture of work and progress. Admittedly there have been instances of disappointing and costly, if sometimes inevitable, delay; but happily there has been no suggestion of frustration or stalemate. While there has as yet been little in the way of completed achievement, a careful examination of the work in progress reveals developments that may prove profoundly significant in the gradual establishment of a truly successful international organization. Because much of the Council's work thus far has necessarily been concerned with the preliminary problems of organization, progress has been slower than many hoped or expected. While this organizational period has not yet been completed, during the past year particularly, real progress in problems of substance has admittedly been made." In this statement, as well as by full participation in the sessions of ECOSOC and those of its various commissions, the Canadian Government has shown its strong belief in the importance of the work which, under the Charter, the Economic and Social Council has been assigned.

(b) The Problem of Refugees

72. During 1946 the General Assembly debated at great length the question of giving aid to people who had been displaced as a result of the war and who had refused to return to their places of origin. The political issues which emerged during these debates revealed clearly the extent to which the refugee question was a cause of international misunderstanding and distrust. The states of origin of the refugees (i.e. the Eastern European States) insisted that the majority of people in the displaced persons' camps would willingly accept repatriation if they were genuinely free to do so. If they persisted in choosing exile it was, according to these states, because they were being wilfully misinformed about conditions at home or because they were being subjected to force to make them accept resettlement. The response of the western democracies, including Canada, was based primarily on the principles which had been set forth in the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly on this subject - namely that innocent political refugees (i.e. other than war criminals and traitors) should be assured the right of asylum. From this it followed that no innocent refugee should be forced against his will to accept repatriation to his place of origin.

73. After nearly a year of debate the General Assembly drafted in the autumn of 1946 a constitution for the International Refugee Organization (I.R.O.) and called on member states to sign and ratify this constitution. While recognizing that the task of repatriation was a major function of the proposed I.R.O., the draft constitution, as approved by the Assembly, contained provisions for the re-settlement overseas of political dissidents who did not wish to return to their countries of origin. This draft constitution of the I.R.O. was bitterly opposed by the Soviet Union and the other states of Eastern Europe.

74. Canada had taken an active part in the discussions leading to the drafting of the I.R.O. Constitution and, on August 7, 1947, following approval by its Parliament, Canada ratified the I.R.O. Constitution, thus becoming one of the first major states to accept membership in the I.R.O.