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GENERAL SURVEY

The introduction to this report on the work of the United Nations during the year 1957 can, of necessity, mention only the outstanding issues and activities as indeed this volume must by the very limitation of its size also do. One of the first accomplishments of the twelfth session of the General Assembly was its unanimous decision to implement the recommendation of the Security Council to appoint the Secretary-General, Mr. Hammarskjöld, for a new five-year term of office. The representatives of numerous delegations paid tribute to the Secretary-General who was described by the President of the Assembly as being "surely our supreme international civil servant, dedicated to his task, superbly equipped for it, and self-effacing in its performance".

Only one new member, the Federation of Malaya, was admitted to the United Nations during the twelfth session bringing the total membership to 82. Canada took pleasure in co-sponsoring with other members of the Commonwealth the Assembly resolution endorsing the Security Council's recommendation that Malaya be admitted. The Secretary of State for External Affairs in a statement supporting Malaya's admission said in part: "It is most gratifying to me . . . on this happy occasion, to welcome a new member of the Commonwealth to membership in the United Nations". On October 1 Canada, Japan and Panama were elected by the Assembly on the first ballot to membership on the Security Council for a two-year term commencing January 1, 1958. Canada's participation in United Nations activities has, therefore, been increased by its responsibilities as a member of the Council.

Disarmament has been an objective since the founding of the United Nations and during the period under review intensive negotiations were conducted in London and New York in an endeavour to reach an agreement on this vital question. For months during the spring and summer the Sub-Committee on Disarmament, composed of Canada, France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union, met in London and the debate on disarmament and related items at the twelfth session of the General Assembly was the lengthiest of all items. In August the Soviet Union rejected in the Sub-Committee on Disarmament the Western proposals on disarmament and in December in the General Assembly the Soviet Bloc voted against a 24-power resolution embodying the Western proposals and a resolution enlarging the Disarmament Commission. The Soviet Union in fact stated categorically that it would not participate in the Commission as constituted. Canada was a co-sponsor of the Western proposals and the relevant resolutions but its position has been and continues to be that the disarmament proposals with which Canada is associated are not to be considered the only means by which progress can be made towards disarmament, and the hope is held that the Soviet Union will reconsider its decision not to participate in the Disarmament Commission so that negotiations can be resumed and an agreement reached. Canada has also insisted that there must be, for its security, a measure of inspection that will ensure that undertakings are being carried out. The negotiations and proposals arising from them are discussed in more detail later in this volume.