

Approval of the seminar for news personnel was given on the understanding that due emphasis would be given to the promotion of freedom of information. While most members of ECOSOC supported the general aims of the proposal, there were many, including the Canadian Delegation, who thought that the seminar was more a matter of public information than of freedom of information. The news personnel seminar was subsequently held in Geneva during the twenty-second session of ECOSOC in July-August 1956, and the view was expressed there that the seminar had in fact taken a direction which was outside the scope of human rights, and that in future such a project should not be carried out under the programme of advisory services in the field of human rights.

It was generally recognized that the programme of advisory services would necessarily be undertaken on a modest scale in the beginning, but that it could nevertheless make an important contribution to the promotion of human rights. The United Nations Secretary-General, after consultation with the Specialized Agencies concerned, was to determine during 1956 the areas or types of activities in the field of human rights in which assistance might be requested. Therefore as a result of these preliminary investigations and consultations, it is expected that the programme will be given more concrete expression during 1957. Several governments have expressed interest in acting as host for regional seminars under the programme, and plans have already been made for a seminar for Asian women, to be held in Bangkok in 1957¹.

World Calendar Reform

At its tenth session, pursuant to an initiative of the Delegation of India, the Economic and Social Council empowered the Secretary-General to solicit the views of governments, both members and non-members of the United Nations, on the general question of the desirability of calendar reform.

At its twenty-first session, ECOSOC re-examined the question in the light of these replies to the Secretary-General's questionnaire. Three governments were in favour of calendar reform more or less along the lines proposed by the World Calendar Association; twenty-one governments were opposed to calendar reform; and fifteen governments adopted a middle course—that there were arguments both for and against calendar reform and that even though there appeared to be little world sentiment in favour of such reform at this time the question might possibly be studied further, taking into account the opinions of the highest religious authorities.

Since it appeared from the debate in ECOSOC that the time was not ripe for calendar reform, the Council decided to adjourn discussion of the matter *sine die*. The Canadian Delegation abstained from voting on the resolution on the grounds that Canada was unwilling to vote in favour of an indefinite postponement since the continued study under United Nations auspices might be worth while, taking into account religious, commercial, scientific and technical interests; at the same time, Canada was unwilling to oppose the Council's resolution because it was recognized that there was

¹See "Commission on the Status of Women" above, p. 41.