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GENERAL SURVEY

In the course of the year under review the activities of the United Nations continued to demonstrate the essential role which this Organization is capable of playing as an instrument for international co-operation. There remain limits to the effectiveness and authority of the United Nations, arising out of the sovereign equality of its member states and from prevailing antagonisms and tensions which affect international relations within as well as outside of the United Nations. It remains unrealistic to expect that at this stage the membership of the United Nations will accord to the Organization such responsibility and authority that the United Nations could, within the foreseeable future, achieve constructive and final solutions to all the problems which now threaten international peace and security. Nevertheless, by requiring its members to consult together at regular intervals, by providing the opportunity and the facilities for fruitful negotiation, and by bringing to bear the overwhelming interest of its membership in the promotion of peace and well-being, the United Nations is making a continuing and effective contribution to the improvement of international relations and human welfare generally.

One of the chief accomplishments of the Organization during 1958 was the successful intervention of the Security Council in the political situation of the Middle East. In June the Council was called upon to consider the complaint of Lebanon concerning intervention in its internal affairs by the United Arab Republic. In accordance with a formal decision of the Council, an observation group (UNOGIL) was sent to Lebanon with a view to ensuring that there was no illegal infiltration of personnel or arms across the Lebanese borders. Canada, which as a member of the Security Council had put forward this plan, was called upon, with a number of other countries, to provide officers for the new United Nations body. The Canadian contribution eventually rose to 78 out of a total of 591 officers and men from 19 countries. UNOGIL wound up its activities some five months later having made a significant contribution towards tranquillity in the area throughout the critical events of the summer.

On July 14 the situation in the Middle East had been further disturbed by a sudden and violent revolution in Iraq, which led to the overthrow of the monarchy, the proclamation of a republic, and Iraq's withdrawal from the newly-formed Arab Union. In the following days, at the urgent request of the Governments of Lebanon and Jordan, the United States landed forces in Lebanon and the United Kingdom in Jordan, to assist the local governments to preserve their territorial integrity and political independence, pending United Nations action which would achieve this end.

An emergency special session of the General Assembly was summoned on August 8, 1958, to consider urgently these developments, in accordance with a resolution submitted to the Security Council by the United States. This session adopted unanimously a resolution presented by all the Arab members of the United Nations, which re-affirmed Arab League pledges of