

to the Commission in its work, the Secretary-General was asked to obtain the views of governments and Specialized Agencies. The Canadian reply, transmitted to the Secretary-General on February 5, 1953, considered that the existing programmes of the Specialized Agencies and other United Nations organs constituted in themselves a useful programme of action in the social field. Accordingly Canada suggested that the plan which the General Assembly called for might consist of a review by each agency of its programme and an overall review by the Council after the Social Commission had submitted its recommendations. The communication added that Canada did not favour any expansion of programmes for the time being but would consider any suggestions to this effect which might be put forward.

The Commission agreed with the Secretary-General and the Directors-General of the Specialized Agencies concerned that an effective programme of action would require a reorientation and further concentration of effort, wider geographical coverage, improvement of methods and techniques, and additional resources. The Commission considered it essential that the projects decided upon under such a programme should be carried out with a sense of urgency, that social and economic development should go together, that all proposals should recognize and protect the family as the basic social unit, and that emphasis in the programme should be directed towards under-developed areas.

These recommendations of the Social Commission are now receiving the attention of ECOSOC, which will report on them to the eighth session of the General Assembly.

Freedom of Information

Since 1946, when the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations approved a Philippine proposal to hold a world-wide conference on freedom of information, international discussions of the subject have shown that there is no uniformity in what different countries mean by freedom of information. Debates in the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies reveal that, in some countries, including Canada, freedom of information implies a minimum of interference with speech, the press, and other *media* of communication and opinion, while in others it means freedom, ensured by government controls and restrictions, from what may be regarded as the abuses of the press.¹

The conference called for in the Philippine resolution of 1946 was convened in 1948, and since then four other United Nations bodies have studied this matter: a Sub-Commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press, established in 1949 by the Commission on Human Rights at the request of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); ECOSOC itself, which discontinued the Sub-Commission in 1952; the General Assembly; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). When the Sub-Commission expired in 1952, the fourteenth session

¹See *Canada and the United Nations 1951-52*, pp. 74-76.