

The San Francisco Meeting

(The Tenth Anniversary Meeting of the United Nations)

The full texts of Mr. Pearson's speeches delivered at San Francisco were carried in the July-August issue of "External Affairs". The following is a survey of the speeches made at the tenth anniversary meeting.

There was general agreement in the course of the commemorative meeting on the following points:

- (a) the United Nations is an indispensable organization;
- (b) while in the political field it has been less successful than in dealing with economic, social and humanitarian projects, its record over the first ten years is one of impressive accomplishment;
- (c) because of its flexibility, great hopes are warranted for the future and it should receive full and determined support.

In addition, the various speeches made disclosed some views on the part of many member states as to the operations, procedures, and structure of the organization: an attempt will be made to summarize them in this paper.

A Forum for Solving Disputes

While a good many speakers stressed the point that the United Nations has failed to provide security, it is interesting to note that, for many, the chief purpose of the organization is not so much to provide force to curb aggression as to become a forum where disputes can be solved. Thus Mr. Macmillan states: "the statesmen at San Francisco ten years ago saw that it would be unrealistic to try to fashion the United Nations as a kind of World Government. The world was not ready for that. Nor could it be a sort of projection of the Grand Alliance of war. They saw clearly that if a World Government was not to be set up, the United Nations would have to rely on persuasion, discussion and conciliation in order to settle disputes. For no sovereign state can be compelled by force." The same view was expressed very clearly by Mr. Eban of Israel: "a disservice may have been done to the United Nations by the unrealistic emphasis originally placed upon the coercive powers. We have become a forum for conciliation and not as originally conceived, an instrument for the enforcement of security by collective action." Representatives from Pakistan, the Netherlands, and Lebanon spoke in the same vein.

Except for Mr. Skaug of Norway, who cautioned against a tendency to by-pass United Nations machinery, many spoke in favour of allowing full scope to other forms of adjustment. As long as the principles followed were in harmony with those of the Charter, the outcome could only be favourable to the achievement of U.N. objectives. This line was followed, for instance, by Messrs. Van Kleffens, Macmillan, Munro, Spender and Entezam. There was no inclination, it seems, to suggest that the United Nations should monopolize attempts to promote compromise or substitute itself for older and still useful forms of diplomacy. It was perhaps natural that such a point should be made on the eve of the Geneva meeting.