

commerce in opium in their country. This development in Afghanistan's narcotics policy will, however, result in severe social and economic consequences for a considerable proportion of the population; the Commission, and subsequently the Council, drew attention to this situation and to the important aid which United Nations technical assistance could provide in helping the country achieve its aims.

The Commission also considered recurring items on its agenda, including the report of the Permanent Control Board, the problems of drug addiction, and the implementation of international narcotics control under the different international treaties. It paid particular attention to the new opportunities offered by making technical assistance available in connection with narcotics control.

Commission on International Commodity Trade

The Commission on International Commodity Trade (CICT) held its sixth session in New York May 5 to 16, 1958. The main items on its agenda were the customary review of international trade in primary commodities, (covering the year 1957 and the early part of 1958) and a study of fluctuations in commodity prices and in the volume of trade. The Commission also considered submissions by governments concerning international commodity problems, the stage reached by the Food and Agriculture Organization in its discussions of the proposal to establish a world food reserve, various proposals for amending the terms of reference of the Commission, and other matters relating to commodity trade.

The Commission noted the general decline in primary commodity prices in the second half of 1957 and in the first quarter of 1958. This decline contrasted with a slight increase in the prices of finished goods entering into international trade. As a result the terms of exchange between primary commodities and manufactured goods had become progressively less favourable to the former and by the end of 1957 had declined to the lowest level of the post-war period.

The main factors accounting for the decline in commodity prices were considered to be the economic recession in North America, the slowing down in the rate of economic growth in Western Europe and Japan and the enlarged capacity for producing primary commodities. The sharpest declines in prices during 1957 and in the early part of 1958 were registered by wool, sugar, butter, rubber and non-ferrous metals. In contrast cereals, meats and beverage crops showed little change and lumber and wood pulp experienced a more moderate decline.

A number of proposals were placed before the Commission aimed at securing wider participation in its work by amending to some extent its terms of reference. It was decided however that this matter should be left for the consideration and decision of the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-sixth session.

The terms of reference of the Commission were in fact modified, though not substantially, at the 26th session of the Economic and Social Council. The text of the resolution adopted by the Council, with minor revisions, was sponsored by Chile, Costa Rica, France and the Netherlands. It represented a compromise which made it possible for the United States and the United Kingdom to agree to participate in the work of the Commission. Under its new terms of reference, the main task of the Commission will be to