

Canada and the United Nations

Economic and Social Council: 21st Session

This year, after a three-year absence, Canada re-occupied a seat on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations for a third three-year term. At the Council's twenty-first session, held at headquarters in New York from April 17 to May 4, Canada was represented by a delegation headed by Dr. R. A. MacKay, Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, and including Dr. O. J. Firestone, Economic Adviser, Department of Trade and Commerce; Mr. Marcel Cadieux, Department of External Affairs; and Mr. W. H. Miller, Director, Surveys and Mapping Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys.

Mr. Hans Engen, Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, was unanimously elected President for 1956, with Dr. José Vicente Trujillo, Permanent Representative of Ecuador, and Mr. Said Hasan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, as Vice-Presidents. (The two Vice-Presidents acted as Chairmen of the Social and Economic Committees of the whole).

The session was businesslike and the atmosphere, for the most part, cordial. Basic differences between Communist and non-Communist states nevertheless came to light in the debate on forced labour and on two occasions when the wording of "members of the United Nations and/or of the Specialized Agencies" in regard to conventions and invitations to conferences was challenged by the U.S.S.R. as being too restrictive. It was noted that all Soviet bloc countries emphasized two themes: the possibilities for fruitful trade with under-developed countries; and the value of regional economic commissions and inter-regional co-operation.

In addition to representation by various specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, observers were present from Australia, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, the Philippines, Poland, Venezuela and from three new members of the United Nations, Bulgaria, Hungary and Roumania. The latter three did not fail to find occasion to make statements in plenary session.

Energy Sources and Economic Development

Useful ground work was done on three aspects of power production in relation to economic development, namely water resources, the application to economic development of atomic energy, and other new sources of energy. Although this was the first session in which Canada had participated since 1952, the Canadian Delegation played an active role, particularly on the items dealing with industrial development and the improvement of industrial productivity, international co-operation on cartography, the United Nations Children's Fund, and international co-operation with respect to water resource development.

Both in committee (with Dr. Firestone as Rapporteur of the Working Group) and in plenary, the Delegation contributed substantially to the drafting