

The members of the United Nations have pledged themselves to act both jointly and severally to overcome these difficulties. As a result the inaction of one member does not constitute an excuse for similar inaction on the part of another. Happily the achievement of the difficult task of realizing fully the treaty obligations with respect to human rights will be facilitated for the members of the United Nations by the help which they will receive from the International Organization presided over by Mrs. Roosevelt, the Commission on Human Rights of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

This Commission met for the first time in New York at the beginning of this month. It entrusted to its Chairman, Mrs. Roosevelt, together with the vice-president, Dr. Chiang of China, and its rapporteur, Dr. Malik of Lebanon, the task of preparing a tentative draft of an International bill of Human Rights with the assistance of the Secretariat of the United Nations.

This draft will be submitted as a resolution for approval by the General Assembly and it must be transmitted to the other members of the Commission by the 25th of June, 1947. Mrs. Roosevelt and her colleagues, therefore, have only four months to carry out the exceedingly difficult task of preparing a satisfactory draft for an international bill of Human Rights. In your name, allow me to offer to them, as well as to Professor J.P. Humphrey, formerly of McGill University, and now Director of the Division of Human Rights at the Secretariat of the United Nations, who as such will be their principal adviser, all our good wishes for their success.

Mrs. Roosevelt and her colleagues will have at their disposal a number of draft declarations on human rights already prepared by distinguished sociologists and statesmen of several countries.

I shall refer only to two of them. One was prepared approximately three years ago by a committee of "The American Law Institute" on which sat Dr. P. E. Corbett, formerly of McGill, and Mr. C. W. Jenks, legal adviser of the International Labour Organization, now a Montrealer.

The other one appeared in the magazine "Free World" nearly two years ago. "Free World" patterned its draft on that of "The American Law Institute" and made certain additions. I mention these two drafts because they both assert in their preambles principles that are basic.

Here is how "Free World" expresses these principles. The first:

"The individual man, woman and child is the cornerstone of culture and civilization. He is the subject, the foundation, the end of the social order. Upon his dignity, his liberty, his inviolability depend the welfare of the people, the safety of the State and the peace of the world."

The second one is expressed thus:

"In society complete freedom cannot be attained. An individual possesses many rights but he may not exercise any of them in a way which will destroy the rights of others. No right exists in isolation from the other rights. The liberties of one individual are limited by the liberties of others, and by the just requirements of the democratic state. The preservation of the freedom of the individual requires not only that his rights be respected, preserved and defended but also that he respect, preserve and defend the rights of others by fulfilling his duties as a member of society."

The third principle is expressed thus:

"The state exists to serve the individual. He does not exist to serve the state. The state exists to promote conditions under which he can be most free."