

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs held its sixth session in New York from April 10 to May 24, 1951, and its seventh session in New York from April 15 to May 9, 1952. Colonel C. H. L. Sharman of the Department of National Health and Welfare, represented Canada at both sessions.

The most important item discussed by the sixth session was the formulation of principles for a proposed protocol on limitation of the production of opium. The Commission had earlier tried to reconcile various conflicting views in an effort to draft a convention limiting the production of opium through the establishment of an international opium monopoly. It became evident during the Commission's session that, despite prolonged efforts to reach agreement on the basic principles involved, no generally acceptable agreement could be found at that time. Therefore, the idea of an international monopoly was put aside for the time being and the Commission spent most of its sixth session drafting principles for a proposed protocol, on the limitation of the production of opium, based on the "free order" system of the 1931 Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating the Distribution of Narcotic Drugs. Substantial agreement was reached on these principles and they were submitted by the Commission to the thirteenth session of the Economic and Social Council.

The seventh session of the Commission passed a number of resolutions for adoption by the fourteenth session of the Council. One of these recommended international co-operation for control of the illicit traffic in narcotics and urged governments to take immediate steps to establish direct communication between national administrations controlling the illicit traffic.

Another resolution, dealing with illicit trafficking by the crews of merchant ships and civil aircraft, requested the Secretary-General to compile a list of merchant seafarers and members of civil air crews convicted of offences against narcotic laws and to send the list to the governments of all states with the recommendation that they take appropriate measures to revoke the certificates and licenses held by these persons. The proviso was added that, if such a course did not accord with national law or usage, the recommendation to the government concerned should be to send the "black list" to all competent authorities and to take such legal measures as might be possible to prevent the seamen or airmen convicted of narcotics offences from carrying out their professions.

The problem of the chewing of the coca leaf (which has alleged narcotic effects) was the subject of another resolution. In this the technical assistance services of the United Nations were asked to study the possibility of undertaking experiments which had been proposed in this connection within the framework of existing technical assistance programmes in Bolivia and Peru. It also requested the governments of Bolivia and Peru to take steps to limit the production of coca leaf to the amounts required for lawful