

FREEDOM FROM HUNGER CAMPAIGN

The International Review has mentioned in previous numbers the campaign launched in 1960 by F.A.O., the climax of which was the World Food Congress in Washington last year. F.A.O. published a report summarizing the work of this Congress and we give below some extracts ¹ :

The Congress achieved one of its main objectives, that of bringing together people having the duty and the means of providing assistance, those in a position to direct national policies and to plan for development, and those with the ability of influencing public opinion and of inducing nations to take up this great challenge to all mankind's will to progress. Leading personalities from countries giving assistance and from countries receiving it were able, during the Congress, to examine together the scope and the limits of national efforts and international assistance. More especially it clearly made apparent the fact that only an all-out effort on a world scale, combining the active participation of peoples and governments would make it possible to vanquish hunger and malnutrition.

It was manifestly impossible for a meeting of over one thousand persons from one hundred or so countries to lay down a general plan of action. However, the Congress did make recommendations for the direction to be taken by future work and for the drawing up of a scale of priorities at national and international levels ; the next stage is to implement these recommendations.

All aspects of food production were dealt with by the Congress, including not only the food industry itself, but also distribution ; cultural and economic obstacles to the full application of present-day knowledge ; aspects of development relating to finance and education ; as well as the need for widespread participation by society in general in the struggle against famine and malnutrition.

¹ *World Food Congress Report*, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, Rome, 1963.

MISCELLANEOUS

It was evident that, confronted with such an enormous problem, this large gathering would in the short time available not be able to draw up a wide-scale plan of action. It did however play an essential rôle, that of giving the greatest possible publicity to the nature and scope of the problem. The first essential was to arouse the governments and the peoples of the whole world to reality and to a sense of responsibility. To do this, the significance of the work undertaken and the vast programme which will be confronting the international organizations, governments and even the peoples, had to be brought home to those attending the Congress. The whole problem of famine and malnutrition had to be reviewed to reveal that all its aspects, technical, educational, and financial, are indissolubly linked. For this reason, stress was laid on the repercussions which the agenda would have on plans for organization and development, in preference to discussing the technical aspect of such plans.

The items on the agenda were dealt with by four Commissions : technical, economic and social ; education and research ; propaganda and collective activities ; food production. The special meetings of this fourth Commission made it possible for the Congress to discuss in general terms the contribution which could be made to increased agricultural production and improved diet in under-developed countries by the fertilizer, food-processing and agricultural machinery industries.
