

A GLANCE THROUGH THE REVIEWS

UNESCO's Role in a Changing World, by René Maheu, *Travail Social, Paris.*

...What has been called Unesco's operational action is, in fact, the putting into practice of humanitarian ideas. The ever-widening gap between under-developed countries and advanced countries will be reduced, little by little, only by dint of education on a vast scale. What is first needed is the training of key-workers in the emergent States which have recently acquired independence and also a programme of assistance to these States in the organisation of their own educational systems in the light of results obtained in other countries but adapted to indigenous conditions. All men must be given the benefit of scientific achievements by making available to all the modern techniques designed to improve living conditions.

The lightening rapidity of scientific progress in the last few decades has hastened the advent of a world civilization based on technology; but we cannot expect the spiritual value of this civilization to be uniform. In order to maintain and promote differences based on quality, the preservation of cultural standards remains one of the essential objectives. Unesco is concerned with making the characteristic and irreplaceable values of national cultures better known.

Aspects of Economic Development, *Basic Study No. 8.* Published by United Nations Office of Public Information.

We saw that most of the world's inhabitants live in the economically underdeveloped countries, which did not participate in the "Western" industrial revolution that began in the late eighteenth century in England, where special circumstances favoured its growth. The underdeveloped countries now share widespread overpopulation, underemployment, poverty, illiteracy and extremely low standards of living and health. They are underdeveloped chiefly because they lack certain essential means to exploit their resources. These means include precise knowledge of what those resources are, capital for essential investment to develop them, administrators, trained personnel and skilled workers, transportation and power and the existence of steady markets.

To-day's underdeveloped countries face formidable obstacles in the struggle to increase the earning power of their people. Often there is no mercantile class ready to become the entrepreneurs of a new historical phase, and in many lands the educated classes show active distaste for the industrial or commercial life. Inadequate knowledge of the prospects before a new industry is an added deterrent to those who have capital. The mass of the people is far too poor to have money for investment or for the purchase of manufactured goods. Land reform and other social changes may be an essential preliminary to any substantial increase in the earnings of the people. New attitudes of mind which machinery and industrialization require on the part of masses of men are also a conspicuous need. At the same time, care must be taken to preserve, as far as possible, those social and other values of the non-industrialized culture which might otherwise be needlessly sacrificed in the helter-skelter of change.

In these circumstances, governments have come to play an important role in economic development, for in all the countries concerned, development involves tasks—economic, educational and social—of a magnitude which calls for some degree of central planning and coordination. But, while the role of national governments may be vital, governments themselves require international help in carrying out these huge tasks.

Help is given by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Bank through technical and pre-investment assistance through international loans and through the machinery for regular consultation and for specialized publications provided by the international organizations. These publications have established themselves as a unique source of information on economic and social development. Side by side with numerous bilateral programmes of technical aid, the United Nations and the specialized agencies are assisting governments on request by providing them with internationally recruited experts and with fellowships for their own nationals to study abroad.

Not the least important aspect of economic development is the remarkable opportunity it is giving for international discussion and exchange of knowledge. For the first time, technical assistance and related activities are making it possible to bring the entire world's experience and skills to bear upon each individual country's problems. While the international organizations are using economic development, as the Charter requires, to help raise living standards, they are also finding in it a means to further world cooperation and to promote the friendship of nations.
