

The machinery side of the co-ordinating function may be illustrated by the cable section of the two Departments. This is a central office for the handling of inter-governmental (especially intra-Commonwealth) telegrams to and from New Zealand. Copies of approximately twenty thousand telegrams annually are processed and distributed without delay to Ministers and Departments, who are all informed at the same time exactly where the responsibility for action lies. Staff and materials are thus economized and co-ordination of action and method is maintained. The section also acts as a secure channel of communication with other British Commonwealth Governments and with New Zealand establishments and delegations overseas.

Numerically the staff of the Department remained unchanged during the year, but the staffing needs in New Zealand and in the posts overseas require that a certain increase, especially of diplomatic secretaries, be made in the coming year.

THE UNITED NATIONS

1. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly consists of the fifty-five States which are members of the United Nations. Each member has one vote in Assembly. Each member may send to a session of the Assembly five representatives, five alternate representatives, and as many advisers and experts as it considers necessary.

The regular annual sessions of the Assembly begin on the third Tuesday in September. The average length of a session will probably be five to eight weeks. Special sessions may also be held. Thus a special session has been called to constitute and instruct a special Committee to prepare for the consideration of the question of Palestine at the second session of the General Assembly.

Each regular session opens with a general debate, during which the head of almost every delegation gives a speech outlining the approach of his delegation to the questions on the agenda of the session. The items on the agenda are then referred to the Committees of the Assembly. The Committees report back resolutions to the Assembly.

The Assembly has six main Committees, on which each delegation is represented :—

First Committee : Political and Security (including the regulation of armaments).

Second Committee : Economic and Financial.

Third Committee : Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural.

Fourth Committee : Trusteeship.

Fifth Committee : Administrative and Budgetary.

Sixth Committee : Legal.

The Assembly also has two special permanent committees—an Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, consisting of nine persons ; a Committee on Contributions, consisting of ten persons. The steering committee of the Assembly is called the General Committee. It consists of the President of the Assembly, seven Vice-Presidents, and the Chairman of the six main Committees. These officers are elected at each session.

The Committees take decisions by a majority of the members present and voting. The Assembly decides important questions by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, and other questions by a majority.

The Assembly met in the second part of its first regular session from 23rd October to 15th December at Flushing and Lake Success, on the outskirts of New York, under the presidency of M. Spaak (Belgium). The New Zealand delegation was led by Sir Carl Berendsen, New Zealand Minister in Washington, who was elected Chairman of the Third (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural) Committee.

In the course of the session the Assembly admitted Afghanistan, Iceland, Sweden, and Siam as members of the United Nations ; elected Colombia, Syria, and Belgium to vacancies in the Security Council ; elected or re-elected the United States, Venezuela, New Zealand, Byelo-Russia, Turkey, and the Netherlands to vacancies in the Economic