

Economic and Social Council New Zealand and Australia can make a useful contribution by drawing on the experience of the progressive social systems which they have evolved.

THE PACIFIC

1. SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

The movement towards co-operation in the South Pacific, its possible scope and methods, and the benefits and economies which successful collaboration might ensure to the peoples and Governments of the region, were set down in some detail in last year's annual report.

The Agreement establishing the South Pacific Commission was signed at Canberra in February, 1947, by representatives of the six Governments which administer non-self-governing territories in the South Pacific area; its text was included in Departmental Publication No. 26. Preliminary arrangements for the establishment of the Commission pending ratification by the signatory Powers were entrusted to the sponsoring Governments of New Zealand and Australia.

In April, 1947, an Interim Organization was set up in Sydney with Mr. John Kerr, Principal of the Australian School of Pacific Administration, as Organizing Secretary. The New Zealand Government appointed an officer of the Department of External Affairs as their representative, and he was engaged for four months in this capacity at Sydney. A small staff, including an officer seconded from the Australian Department of External Affairs, carried out much of the preliminary organizational work which had to be accomplished before the first session of the Commission. Offices for the Interim Organization were obtained at Middlehead, Sydney, in a wing of the School of Pacific Administration, and office equipment was purchased. A small library was assembled, and critical studies made of the work of the Caribbean Commission, a regional body with objectives similar to those of the South Pacific Commission. The Caribbean Commission has been in existence for the past two years, and much valuable information was obtained from this precedent, particularly as the result of a report made by an officer of the Australian Department of External Affairs who visited the Caribbean region.

Unforeseen delay in holding the first session of the Commission is attributable to the failure of signatory Governments speedily to ratify the Agreement. By June, 1947, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australian Governments had accepted the Agreement,