

OPENING SESSION

The Director-General opened the debate in the plenary session with his report on activities during 1947. He pointed out that it was only at the Executive Board meeting in April, 1947, that final approval was given for the programme and budget for the year, so that his report covered only four months of actual work. He expressed himself as pleased, however, with the progress made in the time. One of his greatest difficulties had been in finding men and women of first-rate standing and ability to take all the key positions in the Organization. The details of the Director-General's report can best be dealt with later in this report under the heading of "Programme."

In their opening speeches many leaders of delegations, particularly those from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the British Dominions, and the Scandinavian countries, strongly expressed the view that the programme should be reduced to more workable proportions. With this point of view the New Zealand delegation was in complete agreement. The leader of the delegation said that the people of New Zealand were not expecting miracles of UNESCO, but there were three questions to which he knew they would want answers: Has UNESCO an efficient organization, which has within it the nucleus of a completely first-rate staff? What is it doing to solve its most urgent problem—the reconstruction of education, science, and culture in the war-devastated countries? And has it a programme that is crisp, precise, and practical, a programme thought out in terms of ways and means and not just in terms of desirable ends? "The greatest danger facing UNESCO," he said, "appears to New Zealand to be that of attempting to cover far too much ground and covering it too thinly. We believe that UNESCO will show wisdom and strength not by the number of projects we can initiate, but by the number we can leave untouched in these early years." He said that, whilst New Zealand, in common with all small countries, is feeling the strain on finances and personnel which international responsibility entails, yet her main reason for pressing for a reduction in the programme was not financial. "The limiting factor in UNESCO's programme of activities for the next two years will not be money—the limiting factor will be the energy, time, and mental grasp of the Director-General and his half-dozen closest colleagues. They and they alone can unify the many separate projects and fuse them into a positive programme of action . . . We feel strongly that the solution is not more money and staff, but a more manageable programme." He conveyed to the Conference the New Zealand Government's offer to provide £15,000 for UNESCO fellowships