

The Director-General referred in his report to the criticism that UNESCO is trying to do too much in too many different directions. "If the Organization is to fulfil its functions adequately," he said, "it must adopt the principle of undertaking some activities in each main subdivision of the various major fields of its competence." The weakness of this attitude, according to the New Zealand point of view, is that it implies activities which are not essential, or which range too indefinitely into the future. If departments must justify their existence simply because they are thought to be within what has come to be known as UNESCO's "field of interest," they will be constantly in danger of looking for projects which cannot satisfy urgent and practical needs. This dispersion of energy and resources means that the slender programme of allocations must be spread too widely and thinly. More money is needed for fundamental education, for instance, while money that could be used for it is being diverted to rather nebulous projects.

The retention of unessential interests makes it harder for the work of UNESCO to be presented convincingly to the general public. Criticism will always be directed against the weak places, and there is already a tendency for critics to speak as if these weaknesses permeated the entire Organization. This is far from being the truth. UNESCO is doing a great deal of work of the utmost value, and it would be tragic if concrete achievements were overlooked or depreciated because undue attention was given to the less satisfactory features of the programme.

The central difficulty is undoubtedly to be found in the nature of international co-operation. Many different racial and national viewpoints are constantly being reconciled. The programme of UNESCO represents a compromise between the ideas of people whose thinking is determined by contrasted ways of life. In the circumstances, it cannot be surprising if the general policy should lack the incisiveness which can be given to a policy derived from cultures which—as in the Anglo-Saxon groups—have broad similarities. The surprising fact, indeed, is that so much constructive work is already being done by an infant Organization. And this illustrates the growth of an international spirit which is the outstanding achievement of UNESCO. The General Conference brings together many hundreds of people from all parts of the world. They learn to meet one another and to do their work in an atmosphere of trust and good will. The friendships formed at these Conferences, and the wider knowledge taken from them, must become genuine contributions to international understanding.