

adoption by member Governments. The Commission also considered ways in which statistical services at the national level could be improved, and recommended that a study should be made of an international programme for training statisticians, particularly in under-developed countries. This proposal was approved at the seventh session of the Economic and Social Council. The Commission continued its work of acting in an advisory capacity to the Council in co-ordinating the statistical activities of other United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies.

(ix) *Narcotic Drugs Commission*

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, while supervising the administration of existing conventions, has been concerned with important policy matters, including possible means to limit production of raw materials and the consolidation of present agreements for narcotics control into a single convention. A significant immediate advance was the final approval by the United Nations General Assembly of a protocol designed to extend international control to synthetic drugs which are capable of inducing addiction and which, particularly since the war, have represented a threat to the whole protective system. This protocol, which was signed by New Zealand on 18 November, 1948, requires twenty-five signatures before it comes into force.

At the eighth session of ECOSOC, during the discussion of the report of the Permanent Central Opium Board, a statement was made on the increase in the New Zealand consumption of diacetylmorphine (heroin). It was emphasized that there could be no suggestion of illicit traffic in New Zealand, and that measures already taken (in co-operation with the medical profession) had secured a reduction in consumption. It was noted that in New Zealand, as in other countries, there was a division of opinion on the desirability of the prohibition of the use of the drug. A further step has been the addition of certain preparations containing heroin to the list of those which may not be supplied free under social-security legislation.*

(d) *Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East*

The United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East was set up at the beginning of 1947 to assist the economic reconstruction of the Far Eastern region. The Commission now includes among its members Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union, as well as the Asian members of the United Nations—Burma, China,

* Drug Tariff (September, 1946), Amendment No. 1, effective 1 June, 1949.