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THE FUTURE ORGANIZATION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ECONOMIC
AND EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION AND ITS SUB-COMMISSIONS

Additional communication received from a Member Government:

A. New Zealand. The comments of the New Zealand Government on this matter are enclosed. In submitting these the Minister [of External Affairs] desires to emphasize the importance attached by the New Zealand Government to a solution of the problems which are the concern of the Commission, and in particular the questions of full employment and economic development. The suggestions in the enclosed comments have been submitted in the hope that, in accordance with existing procedures and the responsibilities of the specialized agencies, they may be of assistance in reaching a solution of employment and development problems. They are necessarily made without knowledge of the comments of other Governments and the suggestions of the Commission for the future organization of its activities, and in the meantime the Government desire to reserve their final position.

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COMMENTS OF NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT
ON FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF
ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

The reasons which prompted the Economic and Social Council to assign wide terms of reference to the Commission are appreciated, but it is suggested that account must now be taken of the changes in the structure and scope of international organization and activity in the economic field since the establishment of the Commission.

The number of specialized agencies concerned with economic problems has considerably increased, and several agencies, which were in 1946 only in the preliminary stages of their activities, have since actively prosecuted the discharge of their responsibilities. The United Nations itself has assumed direct responsibility for various activities relevant to the functions assigned to the Economic and Employment Commission.

The question of economic development, with which may be associated problems of reconstruction, was one of the principal problems on which
/the Commission

the Commission was to advise the Council. In this field the regional economic commissions were established after the formulation of the terms of reference of the Economic and Employment Commission, and have assumed direct responsibility for much of the work which would have been the concern of the Commission. Other activities of the United Nations relevant to this question include the provision of technical assistance to under-developed countries and the publication of surveys of the problems facing these countries.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organisation, and, in fact, nearly all the specialized agencies are concerned either directly or indirectly with problems of development and reconstruction.

Outside the United Nations itself, reference may be made to the work of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation, which has substantially changed the nature of the problems calling for action by the United Nations.

Problems of economic development are also referred to in the Charter of the International Trade Organization. Although this organization is not yet in existence, its potential responsibilities should be recognized and it would appear unwise to forestall the activities of the Organization by insisting that primary responsibility for problems of economic development, or for other problems coming within the Charter of the Organization, should rest with the Economic and Employment Commission.

The problem of full employment and economic stability was also referred to the Economic and Employment Commission. In this case also various specialized agencies, of which special mention may be made of the International Labour Organisation and the projected International Trade Organization, have different degrees of responsibility while the activities of the agencies, of the regional economic commissions and of the Economic and Social Council are relevant to the problem, the importance of which is fully appreciated by the New Zealand Government. A suggestion for the possible interest of the Economic and Employment Commission in the particular aspect of this matter is mentioned later.

The terms of reference of the Economic and Employment Commission refer also to certain questions of co-ordinated action by the specialized agencies and commissions of the Council. Since these terms of reference were formulated, the machinery for co-ordination has been established by the Economic and Social Council, and it is felt that that machinery is adequate, subject to the supervision of the Council, to discharge the main problems
/of co-ordination

of co-ordination in the economic field.

In the light of the foregoing, it is suggested that it is neither necessary to require the Economic and Employment Commission to discharge the wide functions expressed in its present terms of reference nor possible for a commission, in view of the scope of international activity in the economic field, adequately to discharge those functions.

It is recommended that the emphasis of the work of the Commission should be directed, under the supervision of the Economic and Social Council, rather to the consideration of particular problems not being actively dealt with by a specialized agency or by some other organ of the United Nations.

It will be necessary, no doubt, for the Commission to keep itself informed on the progress of the work of the specialized agencies as well as of the United Nations, but it should be possible for the Commission itself to propose a number of specific problems, either long-term or short-term, which are appropriate for study by a United Nations organ with the assistance of the Secretariat. By way of illustration two possible questions are suggested:

(a) Governments have recently responded to a questionnaire for information on measures adopted nationally to maintain full employment. No doubt the replies are being analyzed at the present time by the Secretariat but it is suggested that there is scope for a study of them by the Economic and Employment Commission, on the basis of which it might formulate proposals for the further development of work in this field.

(b) The Economic and Social Council has decided to review in 1951 the work of the regional economic commissions. The Economic and Employment Commission might undertake a study of this question.

It is accordingly suggested that there is scope for useful activity on the part of the Economic and Employment Commission if its activities are directed to the study of specific issues requiring practical solutions and not already under action by the United Nations or the specialized agencies.

Although, if this viewpoint is accepted, it might be advisable to amend the present terms of reference, this is not considered essential as the position could be covered by appropriate interpretation of the existing terms of reference by the Economic and Social Council and the Commission.