

LEBANON
IMPRESSIONS OF A UNESCO CONFERENCE



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By

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To My Fellow-Travellers:
E.B., R.G.R., D.C.,
and H.N.P.

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FOREWORD

THE THIRD SESSION of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was held in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, from November 17 to December 11, 1948. I was a member of the New Zealand delegation, and I thought that I would like to prolong the experience by writing about it. An international conference seems dull enough from the outside. Those who take part in it, however, find themselves interested in people, stimulated by the exchange of ideas, and enriched by participation in common tasks. At the end of a conference a delegation prepares an official report, which can be obtained by members of the public; but it is necessarily a document of limited interest. I thought that an informal narrative might make it easier for people who are interested in Unesco, or who would like to know more about it, to understand what happens when the representatives of member States meet in conference.

This small book is a series of personal impressions. A detailed account of procedure would be tedious, and some features of the conference remained outside my knowledge. I have tried to show the events, the discussions and the background through the eyes of an individual; and although the narrative must be incomplete it may be the best way of sharing a great experience. In writing of an organization which lives on ideas, it is necessary to express opinions. I should like to explain, therefore, that I have written unofficially. Although I owe much to the National Commission for Unesco, and to the other members of the New Zealand delegation, I have no right to become their spokesman. The opinions in this book are entirely my own.

ARRIVAL IN BEIRUT

IT RAINED HEAVILY for two days; and on the third morning, although the clouds were lifting, the long ridges of Lebanon were grey and damp in mist. Delegates newly arrived in Beirut for the conference looked through the windows of their hotels and exchanged information about the climate. The weather, they had been told, was unusual at this time of the year. It should have rained a month earlier, and afterwards the country should have settled down to an Indian Summer that would give the conference a smiling background of blue sky and sunshine. Undoubtedly, therefore, the downpour was unseasonable, and must shortly come to an end.

Even while the matter was being discussed, the weather was changing. Watchers from hillside hotels saw the fog roll back and silently disappear. Far below them, revealed in sunshine, was the promontory and the city, white and smokeless against the Mediterranean. Later, as motor cars began to glide downhill, it seemed to visitors that the sunlight lay with special brightness around the cluster of buildings near a beach south-west of the city. This, no doubt, was merely a fancy, although it could have been aided by the simple lines and freshness of the conference hall. For there it stood, newly completed and virginal; and in the early hours of sunshine, while it showed an architectural clarity to those now looking upon it for the first time, it was still possible to wonder what would be said in many tongues within its walls, and what might be the results in countries from which hundreds of delegates had come hopefully to Lebanon.

There is a sort of hush about the introduction to an international conference. It was especially noticeable in Beirut, where the Government and the people had provided an immaculate setting. The conference rooms were in a state of purity, like ideals that had not yet been diluted by practical strivings. Moreover, they stood as an enclave on a soil that was old in history.

Many armies have marched along the coastal roads of Lebanon, and the ruins of lost civilizations are like bones pushing up through the earth. Here was an appropriate meeting place for those who believed in the essential unity of all peoples. The new idea had to be measured against the facts of history, made visible in so many monuments and relics of defeated nationalism. How far, and how clearly, could its truth be proclaimed amid the reminders of human weakness and failure?

* * * *

Not long after the morning fog had been dispersed, our plane came circling in from the Mediterranean and made a somewhat bumpy landing. Three of us had come from London, changing at Cairo from a high-flying Constellation to a Viking operated by Misr Airlines. The flags of many nations were displayed at the airport of Beirut, and as soon as it was known that we were Unesco delegates our passage through passport and customs offices became the barest formality. It was a welcome change from what we had experienced in other countries, and we could not help wishing that Unesco privileges could be extended widely. Best of all, however, was the sight of two New Zealand faces in the vestibule. People who find it hard to believe that the Dominion has acquired a character of its own would think differently if, in a strange land and in the midst of many racial types, they saw some of their countrymen approaching. Everything about them is unmistakable—faces, voices and bearing. There were quick introductions, a shaking of hands; and thereafter a tiny New Zealand colony was established in Lebanon.

A delegation at an international conference becomes a sort of organism, and is worth studying as a subject of psychological interest. More will be written later of this group from New Zealand; but something should be said of it immediately. The leader, a friendly and deliberate man, was principal of a technical college. Every delegation must have its scientist; and the Doctor, a professor of chemistry, brought to our group the healthy scepticism of the scientific temper. A third delegate, who was present mainly as secretary and executive officer of the National Commission for Unesco, was also a scientist. Finally, we had been

given the services of a young woman from the High Commissioner's office in London. We were soon calling her Eileen.

This, then, was the New Zealand delegation which now, in a car placed at its disposal by the Government of Lebanon, was driven by an Arab chauffeur known as Thoma to the heights of Broumana, where for the duration of the conference it was to stay in a small hotel managed by an Englishwoman. 'Cedarhurst' had been built in 1892, and it was essentially a summer hotel. It lacked the luxury of more modern places in the city below; but it was clean and comfortable, and the cook was an artist who served meals that in days to come were to lie smoothly in stomachs a little disturbed by the anxieties of debate. Only one other delegation was housed there, and it seemed appropriate to the New Zealanders that it should have come from South Africa. One of the minor results of an international conference was therefore an endless discussion of Rugby football. And when, in one of the last plenary sessions, a South African amendment was defeated by a New Zealand amendment, it was suggested hopefully by one delegate that the voting—14 to 10—might prophetically indicate the score in one of the test matches of 1949 between All Blacks and Springboks.

Broumana was a little more than eleven miles from the centre of Beirut, so that the drives to and from the conference buildings became events with a growing interest. On bright mornings it was stimulating to swing down the roads through villages and olive groves, passing scenes and landmarks which were to become fixed in five different memories. We would not easily forget the sheep being killed in the doorway of the butcher's shop, the women gathering olives, the overloaded buses and trucks, swaying around the bends, the large citizen riding sedately on Brother Ass, the women with veils which were frequently raised while dark eyes looked at the foreigners, the corner building with an odd signboard announcing the existence of a 'morally united high school,' the old men gossiping in the cafes, and the interplay of light and shadow among buildings that rose massively above the streets and lanes of the city.

These scenes could not always be noted tranquilly. In common with all the car drivers of Beirut, Thoma was a man of moods.

He was much addicted to fast driving, and when his foot was on the accelerator his hand was also on the horn. The Lebanese drivers used their horns, not merely to give warnings, but also for conversation. It was instructive to hear them talking to one another as they climbed and swerved; and although the hooting was sometimes amiable—a mere exchange of courtesies, beginning at long range, and continuing indefinitely—it was more likely to be insulting. Thoma was a master of invective, both on the horn and in his native tongue. In moments of stress—when, for instance, a passing car had taken flakes of paint from a mudguard—he would spit out a few words in Arabic which sounded hot and searing to our western ears. We were told later that they meant no more than the derisive comments of drivers in English-speaking countries: ‘Where do you think you’re going?’; ‘Call yourself a driver?’; and so on. Yet so deadly can be Arab gutturals when anger is behind them, or the feigning of anger, that we were constantly surprised at the absence of blood feuds between taxi drivers. Away from the wheel, however, Thoma was the gentlest of men, in spite of his large and muscular body; and he was one of our friends before we left Beirut.

The end of the morning’s drive was always a little exciting. Large numbers of armed police were outside the gates: there was much blowing of whistles, waving of arms and animated discussion. The flags of more than forty nations hung from their poles on either side of the drive. Young women, in dresses which could have been designed in Paris, loitered on the steps of office buildings. In the middle distance could be seen groups of people, coming together and dissolving for the first hand-shaking of the day. Meanwhile our car, swerving around the border of lawns and gardens, would come to a stand in front of Batiment 8, where the New Zealand delegation had its room. Six times a week the day opened bravely, with a long drive through the colours of morning. It began to seem, near the end of our stay, that we had been doing this for a long time, and that we would go on doing it in the future, endlessly going down in a dream-like motion to the buildings and the flags and the voices speaking for Unesco.

The delegation’s office was a large room with doors opening on to a balcony from which we could look across to yellow sandhills

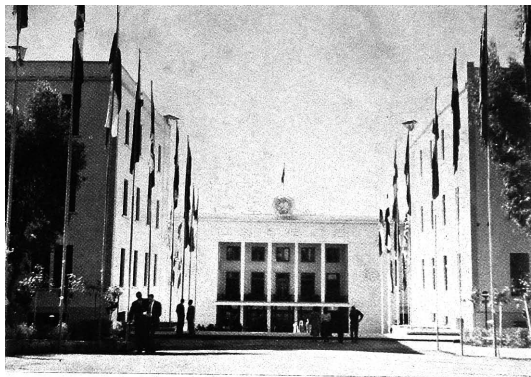
and the sea. It contained five desks, five chairs, three waste-paper baskets, a steel cupboard which could be locked, and a telephone. There were also heavy shelves which in time became loaded with documents. The first job of the day for Eileen was to call in at the Distribution Room, where a new pile of papers would be waiting in the pigeon-hole marked 'Nouvelle Zelande.' Upstairs in the office the documents were sorted and delivered, and there would be silence while the delegates glanced at the agenda for meetings. They then collected papers without which, at those meetings, they would be as persons grown deaf and blind. For an international conference is fed throughout the days and nights of its life by a stream of sheets that comes implacably from a battery of duplicators. Delegates must learn to make use of papers which have to be recognized quickly and handled with confidence. They must put aside the unessential documents and select those which will be needed in discussion. And so there is silence, except for a rustling of paper, while we look for 3C5, 3C/PRG/2.4 and 3C/9 addendum 2. It is now ten o'clock, and Eileen is at the telephone, asking Service to send up tea for five. There will be time to drink the tea, and perhaps to have a last and brief discussion, before we begin to move across the square to the glass doors guarded by police at the entrance to the main building. The day's work is beginning.

THE CONFERENCE OPENS

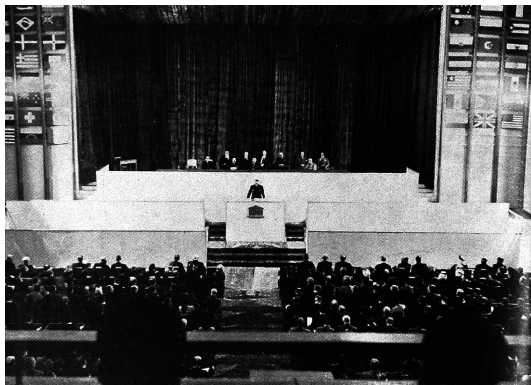
THE CONFERENCE WAS OPENED, with appropriate formality, in the presence of a large and brilliant assembly. All the pride and beauty of Lebanon seemed to have been brought together in the public galleries; and in an Arab country, where contrasts in habit and costume are taken from regions which lie in opposite directions across the seas and deserts, an audience of this sort could not fail to stimulate both the senses and the mind. The fez is worn indoors, and we saw it on more than one head that should have been of interest to an artist and a student of racial character. Women with the smouldering and voluptuous beauty of the Middle East were in the company of substantial citizens. We noticed faces that were like flowers which grow in cool and sheltered gardens, though in their eyes and warm mouths it could be seen that the sunlight had reached them. Priests in cassocks and cowls, some with beards of noble growth, sat here and there in a remoteness of their own making. Diplomats and merchants, politicians and soldiers, and men whose calling could not be guessed were with their wives and daughters, waiting for the band outside to make an end of expectation.

The address of welcome was given by His Excellency Cheikh Bechara El-Khoury, President of the Republic. Delegates and guests, sitting in the hall, were able to read the discourse, even while it was being spoken, in a publication handsomely prepared in French, English and Arabic. There were notable passages, and at the end was a solemn reminder: 'Lebanon expects of you those noble lessons which you will leave in your wake and which will make of this conference one of the episodes of our history. You are doing, ladies and gentlemen, a human deed in a land eminently human and peaceful.'

Perhaps it was then that we first realized what a Unesco conference can mean to the country which plays the host. The



SCENE OF THE CONFERENCE. The main building, specially constructed for the occasion, may be seen in the centre.



FIRST WORDS. A view of the hall used for plenary sessions, taken on the morning when the conference was officially opened.

delegates from New Zealand had no illusions about their capacity for giving 'noble lessons': they regarded themselves as plain individuals who had come to assist in an annual process of examination and revision. They believed in Unesco as an organization which could do work of increasing value, even though in its early years it fumbled a little, and made mistakes. They were slightly embarrassed in later days by some of the sentiments expressed in high-sounding phrases from the rostrum, and they were happiest when they could be critical about matters of policy and administration. There is an Arab proverb which says that 'None will rub your skin like your own fingernail.' The function of a delegate, according to the New Zealand point of view, was not to indulge gently in the scratching of a broad international back, but to probe for weak places, and if possible to induce in them a mild state of inflammation. For if we believe in an idea or vision, we must try to make it work in practice; and self-criticism is therefore a constant requirement.

In a country which entertains a conference, however, the central idea of Unesco acquires a new importance. The assembly is not merely another event in the life of the Secretariat, or a coming together of delegates from many different parts of the world, intent upon the preparation of a new programme and budget: it is also 'one of the episodes' in the history of a nation. Long before the individual delegates knew that they were to be sent overseas, the Government and people of Lebanon were preparing for visitors. They looked about them for a suitable site, and found it near yellow sandhills, where in other years the French had built barracks for their troops. Here were buildings which could provide offices for the delegations and the Secretariat. But there was also need of a conference hall, and only a few months were available for its erection.

Dr Julian Huxley told the conference that when he visited Lebanon earlier in the year the site of the building was a series of markings on the bare earth. Yet on the day of the opening it was ready for occupation—a structure of modern design and ample proportions. It was also necessary to arrange for the accommodation of many strangers. Plans had to be made for exhibitions during 'Unesco Month,' for transport on a grand

scale, and for entertainment that would satisfy a generous and truly Arabic conception of hospitality. A small nation which undertakes a task of such magnitude will afterwards see Unesco as part of its history; and this, perhaps, is one of the best results of an international meeting. The conference buildings at Beirut, we were told, will be incorporated later in a university. If Unesco becomes a force in world culture, there may be one seat of learning which will be proud to trace its birth to the third session of the General Conference.

It is necessary at all times to strive for balance between the ideal and practical manifestations of Unesco. The delegate from a country which is fortunate in its situation—knowing no frontier except the sea—and in economic and social conditions, may sometimes become impatient with people who lean too much on aspirations. But there are countries less fortunately placed. We were reminded of this on the day that delegates were taken to Damascus as guests of the Syrian Government. The first place to be visited was the Syrian University, where more than two thousand students are lectured exclusively in Arabic. As we walked through the grounds we passed among children—scouts and girl guides—drawn up in guards of honour. Outside the entrance were two groups of very small girls. We were told by our guide that one group, wearing grey dresses, red trousers and glengarry caps, belonged to a kindergarten known as 'Flower of Children.' They were holding a placard inscribed with an address of welcome in words so affectionate and moving that we were overwhelmed by a feeling of inadequacy.

What could we possibly do, in our committee meetings and tough administrative discussions, to justify the high conception of Unesco that was being implanted in these young minds? Why should the people gather in the streets to gaze upon ordinary men and women from other parts of the world? What was there in the idea of Unesco that could make us feel fit to walk undisturbed between lines of soldiers standing at attention outside the show places to which we were presently taken? And yet, as we walked in the Street Called Straight, and looked beneath the colours of the bazaars to signs of poverty and social difficulty, we found it easier to understand why Unesco could be a symbol of hope. In these

places there are still many people who can neither read nor write. No doubt they have only the vaguest notion of what can be done by an international organization to remove their disabilities. But at least it could be said that the family of nations was looking to its collective responsibilities. Little enough has been done, and in the end it must be the nations themselves which will do most of the work. Yet a conference may supply guidance in hard tasks, and out of common experience and resources may come an impulse that will be like the spreading of light above a shaded landscape.

Already, then, we were beginning to see that a general conference has different aspects. From the outside it may be impressive, especially when procedure takes the solemnity of ritual. The idea shines through, and is bright enough to leave some trace of splendour on faces that are seldom noted when seen singly in the streets. Yet the view changes a little on a nearer approach. A delegate who has attended previous meetings may glance about him with an air that is more resigned than expectant. He knows that he will hear themes growing stale by repetition, that newcomers will have awkward enthusiasms, and that some of the veterans will make familiar objections. Members of the Secretariat, politely concealing their conviction that everything has happened before, prepare themselves for encounters with delegates who have yet to learn the rules by which the affairs of Unesco are conducted. There are careerists among them, as in all international organizations; but among them also are men and women who believe profoundly in the work they are doing, and who dislike for unselfish reasons the interruptions and diversions that are to be expected from a general conference. I remember talking with one of these officers at Unesco House, a few days before leaving Paris for Lebanon. We had been discussing some of the weaknesses and values of the organization, and he admitted that there were times when he felt frustrated and depressed. The depression, he added ruefully, was always deepest after a conference.

On the day of the opening, however, these were thoughts barely to be separated from impressions of colour and movement and oratory. The first plenary session followed its usual course. Dr Francisco del Rio Y Canedo, who had presided at Mexico City in 1947, made a brief and forthright statement, reminding us that

we were there to work, and that time need not be wasted on too many preliminaries. It was announced, amid applause, that the new president was to be M. Hamid Frangie, Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Education. Vice-presidents were named, and the way was open for the setting up of commissions and sub-commissions—bodies which during the next two or three weeks would do the hardest work of the conference.

Once again, then, the representatives of member States were assembled and organized. The curious mixtures of old and new, of age and youth, of east and west, of idealism and realism, of attitudes shaped by the scientific temper and the uninhibited practice of the arts would be rubbed together in a remorseless friction of minds. There would be much effervescence; but it was possible to hope that when all the fumes of oratory were safely dispersed, when all the gestures had been made and the lobbying was ended, a sediment could remain which might be recognizable as the grains of solid achievement. To expect more than that, would be to misunderstand the nature and possibilities of international co-operation.

CLEARING HOUSE

THE ORGANIZATION of a general conference is a technical matter which could not be described in detail without inducing in readers a mood of tedium. It may be sufficient, therefore, to indicate broadly the way in which a large and amorphous body is reduced to efficient working units. The plenary session is, of course, the full conference. All functions are delegated from it to commissions and committees. The three commissions are concerned respectively with Programme and Budget, Administration and External Relations. Of these three, the Programme and Budget Commission has to deal with the largest and most varied range of subjects, and it therefore divides into eight sub-commissions, which in turn may set up *ad hoc* committees to discuss special topics or to draft series of resolutions. The sub-commissions send *rapporteurs* to announce the results of their deliberations to the Programme and Budget Commission; and all the commissions present reports to plenary meetings. It is therefore possible for an issue which has been discussed by a sub-commission to be reopened at a commission meeting and later in a plenary session. Various committees, comprised in some cases of heads of delegations, and in others of selected representatives, are like watch dogs for the conference as a whole: their task is to control procedure, to keep an eye on the agenda, and to see that the administrative machinery remains in working order. Always in the background is the Constitution, a document bristling with sanctions and prohibitions which delegates sometimes discover painfully in debate.

Administration is the essential function of Unesco, a fact which is not sufficiently realized in member States. An organization with a budget of less than eight million dollars cannot initiate large and spectacular projects: its task must be to stimulate and promote enterprises in different regions, to obtain and disseminate information about what is being done in education, science and the arts,

and to co-ordinate activities which have an international significance. It can be made easier for backward countries to share in social advances of the age if they are able to receive guidance from nations which have already obtained better conditions. A nation striving to overcome illiteracy will do better work, and avoid wasteful effort, if it is informed of methods which have been used successfully elsewhere; and the work can be still better if experts are sent to them during experimental periods. New ideas in education can be spread widely and quickly if seminars are attended by teachers from different parts of the world. Educational missions can be sent to countries which are asking for guidance among the problems of reconstruction. New fields of research in the social sciences can be uncovered if there is an international body which collects and distributes information from the great research centres, and which fosters co-operation between academic workers. In education, science and the arts there is need of a central clearing house through which ideas and methods may be brought to the notice of interested individuals and groups. No advance can be made in international politics unless there is intellectual co-operation. The world's resources in knowledge are being pooled, very slowly, for the common good.

These then, are the principal functions of Unesco. Before they can be performed adequately, the Secretariat must be organized; and it is the task of the Administrative Commission to strengthen the machinery which permits the programme departments to do their work. Contributions by member States to the budget, the condition of the revolving fund, changes in the staff and allowance system, and regulations governing appointments are not matters in which the public can be expected to feel deep or passionate interest; but they require careful attention from delegates to a general conference. There were delegates in Beirut who devoted themselves exclusively to questions so technical that only those who took part in the debates could be expected to have a full understanding of what was done, and their labours won them applause that had few echoes outside the delegation rooms.

A wider interest could be found in the work of the Official and External Relations Commission. It was obliged to discuss such matters as the functions of national commissions and co-

operating bodies, relations with Germany and Japan, the admission to Unesco of 'diminutive' States (for example, the Principality of Monaco, which applied for, and received, full membership during the Beirut conference), and relations with international bodies of a non-governmental character. There could be high moments in the business of this commission—as, for instance, when a grant of 20,000 dollars was made to the Seventh Pan Pacific Science Congress, to be held in New Zealand; but it was in the sub-commission meetings, where programme items passed under review, that delegates felt themselves nearest to the work of Unesco.

The programme of the organization, the tasks and projects to which it was committed, or which it could be persuaded to undertake, would receive the closest attention from the outside world. When everything possible had been done to reduce the costs of administration, to improve and strengthen the Secretariat, and to establish good relations with member States, the question had to be asked: What use was being made of the funds that were available for the promotion of education, science and culture? To what extent were the aims and purposes of Unesco, of which so much had been heard in hopeful speeches across habitable parts of the earth, being translated in action? What was being done to express the ideas embodied in resolutions passed at previous conferences? How many of these resolutions could now be revised or discarded? What new ideas were being brought forward for discussion?

In answering these questions it is necessary to take notice of differences in national outlook. I think it would have been better for a delegate to have stayed at home if, after taking part in the discussions, he could still accept superficial beliefs about racial characteristics. Thought does not become deep or shallow by pigmentation of the skin, though I believe it to be influenced by climate. And it should not be forgotten that men who belong to educated minorities in countries where millions are still illiterate may be affected in their ways of thinking by the twilight at the base of intellect. There were times when it was tempting to decide that some groups were clear-headed as if by biological dispensation, and that others were lost forever in a congenital vagueness. But

beneath the vagueness could be felt an energy of mind drawn up from inarticulate masses. Although it could seem merely confusing to those trained in precise habits of thought, it had to be given respectful attention. For the programme of Unesco must be the product of minds formed in different cultures, and there is no divine right of leadership.

It might have been true that English-speaking people at Beirut were better able than others to explain in concise terms what they thought was desirable, and better able to make use of the means open to them for reaching their objectives. Even this truth, however—if it were a truth, and not merely a prejudice—must be qualified. ‘English-speaking’ has become a large and comprehensive term: it must be applied, not only to those who use the language by right of birth and environment, but also to representatives from countries where English is widely spoken. English and French were the working languages at the conference,* and some delegates could speak both of them fluently. In the conference room it was noticeable that the Danes, the Norwegians, the Dutch and the Egyptians relied mainly on English; and with these people it was possible to reach an easy sympathy of outlook. The New Zealand delegation found that its ideas were quickly understood, and often supported, by representatives from Scandinavia and the Low Countries. Egyptians were less predictable, but they were men of wide learning who could express themselves firmly and clearly.

English was also spoken fluently by the Indians, although the effect was not the same as when the familiar words were used by people from northern and western Europe. It would be easy to use the term ‘Asiatic’ to describe ways of thinking which differed sharply from the European, but the word would be misleading. There was, I thought, an interesting similarity between the speeches of Indian and South American delegates. The Latin Americans placed a high value on oratory, and seemed at times to speak more for effect than for practical purposes; but the Indians showed an equal fondness for words, and although they brought forward many resolutions and amendments they left an impression that

* Arabic was used also in plenary meetings.

they were concerned with ideas which had not been brought into a sufficiently strict relationship with the purposes and methods of an international conference. I sometimes thought, while listening to an Indian speaker, that practical interests were precariously balanced above vast and formless aspirations. The vastness and the dimness of outline were not individual or national weaknesses, but rather indications of the difficulties which have to be overcome by a nation which in a political sense is still breaking free from the jungle. Beneath the smooth sentences, spoken sometimes with Oxford precision, could be felt influences which subtly changed the meanings of words. We who speak for a small and homogeneous people may pride ourselves on what we believe to be candour and clarity; but we do not always remember that we speak with a voice which can be heard and understood by all our countrymen. In listening to those who use the same tongue at a conference we must make allowances for conflicts of race and history which are unknown on our fortunate shores.

There is a tendency to speak of the South American States as if in a cultural sense they formed a unified group. It is true that they have many common interests, and if they decide to work together, and to join forces with some of the smaller States of the Middle East, they can powerfully influence the voting on important issues. They are, perhaps, a little more tenacious than western peoples in the pursuit of regional interests; and as a general rule they are more colourful in their speaking, more prone to make the ample gesture, and to approach their points through a circuitous eloquence. Yet appearances may be misleading. I have heard blunt and terse speeches from a Mexican delegate who looked as if he could not open his mouth without entering upon florid discourse. He was, indeed, a man with a flair for the dramatic, and his bluntness often concealed a tactical subtlety. It would have been unwise to take him always at his face value—particularly on that occasion when, rising with bristling moustaches at a somewhat confused meeting, he spread out his hands appealingly. ‘Mr Chairman,’ he said, ‘I am sorry I am so dumb; but I do not know for what we are voting. Is it for what, or is it for what not?’ South America is not necessarily Latin America, and there are

influences from the north and west as well as from the Mediterranean and the high sierras.

The French are curiously *inward* speakers. They approach a subject carefully, and without haste: their intention is apparently to look at it from every side, and they advance as it were from the perimeter to the centre. While they are doing this they appear to be withdrawn from the audience, and are so deeply immersed in what they are saying that it is always a little surprising when they produce definite conclusions. They are eloquent in an effortless way. There is much use of gestures: the hands speak as well as the voice, but the movements are obedient to the rhythm of thought, and are not needed or intended, as in the speeches of tub-thumping demagogues, to thrust incoherent ideas forcibly upon the listener. Frenchmen have a fine disregard of time. In the last half-hour of a meeting, when delegates are beginning to wonder how the business of the day can be brought safely to its conclusion, they will speak as unhurriedly as if the day were just opening. At such moments in Beirut I am afraid I felt dismayed when a Frenchman caught the chairman's eye. But at other times I found myself sitting back to listen and watch with an enjoyment which seemed oddly aesthetic for a working conference.

When we speak of 'racial' differences we are inclined to think of characteristics which have been fixed immutably in branches of the human family. They have been made dramatic by writers of fiction, and the effect on most of us has been stronger than we should like to admit. In some parts of the world the facts of geography and history have fostered attitudes which are not easily understood by western minds. But there is nothing mysterious in these attitudes. The Englishman who skilfully uncovers the weaknesses of a programme resolution, and then suggests improvements that shortly will be embodied in a lucid and correctly worded amendment, is not different in any fundamental way from the Asiatic delegate who speaks on the same subject without leaving any clear impression of what he really means. (There are, of course, Asiatics of liberal education who can state their opinions with admirable clearness in a language that is not their own. The contrast used here is intended merely to indicate the widest racial difference.) The fact to be remembered is that the Englishman

has behind him a tradition of parliamentary usage, a history of economic progress and a rich culture made possible, at least in part, by a long immunity from military invasion.

Generations of service in Parliament, and in a highly organized civil service, have created reservoirs of experience from which English delegates draw freely and naturally their qualities as speakers and thinkers. They are unruffled in an emergency because they have been trained to deal firmly with the unexpected. Moreover, they work as members of a team which has had a full and careful briefing. The work of Unesco in the United Kingdom has been organized in a democratic way, so that men who expound policies to a sub-commission are speaking with a wide authority. No matter what issue is raised, they know in a general way the opinions of their national commission or co-operating bodies. Subjects which have been fully discussed at home can be treated with balance by men who have shared the preparation.

Similarly, the United States delegation makes use of men and women who have taken an active part in shaping a national policy for Unesco. Further, it is accompanied by experts and advisers, some of whom may be required for a single occasion. The Americans have behind them the resources of the most powerful nation on earth; and although their representatives use their strength modestly, they have advantages which are quickly felt by smaller delegations. I thought sometimes at Beirut that comparisons between the United Kingdom and United States delegations revealed interesting differences in the democratic systems of the two countries. Both teams had outstanding individuals; but the British organization appeared to be tighter and more effective. The explanation may be partly that the United Kingdom is older in administrative experience, and partly that the United States has to reconcile interests and aspirations which, in a federal system, are more widely divergent than in a closely-knit society. Whatever the reason, the two delegations gave an impression of strength in different ways—disciplined and economical in the one, and slightly prodigal in the other.

The larger countries do not always have advantages in debate. A member of a small delegation, who must speak on a variety of subjects without any assistance except that which can be taken

from the collective experience and advice of his colleagues, will sometimes influence a discussion so decisively that it cannot be recaptured by experts. Firm convictions and plain speaking can be more effective than tactics and lobbying, and a consistent policy may prevail against the big battalions. For a member State has only one vote, and in the final battle its spokesman remains an individual who can do no more than he is allowed to do by men and women of many different nationalities who sit with him around the table.

I have written at some length of differences in national temperament and method. They are important because they have to be understood by delegates who hope to take any effective part in the proceedings at a conference. If allowance is made for them, it becomes easier to see the difficulties which have to be faced by those who are striving to reach agreement in the preparation of a programme. We cannot look up and down the table at people from Europe, Asia, the Americas and the young countries of the Pacific, and hope in a flash of insight to anticipate their reactions when a specific issue is about to be discussed. Those reactions will be made plain during the debate. But delegates who have once discovered the variations of opinion must learn to classify them broadly in terms of national background. They must become aware of prejudices and aspirations which are too deeply rooted in history to be loosened by smiling gestures and friendly eloquence. They must take notice of susceptibilities which are outside their own range of personal experience. Above all, they must understand the need for patient effort. The first lesson of internationalism is the discovery that, although men of different races have common needs and purposes, they are working at different levels of social development. If this lesson could be learned more widely, we should hear it said less often that Unesco has done too little in the years of its infancy.

A MORNING'S WORK

THE VERBATIM REPORT of a morning's work by a sub-commission or committee would be dull reading for the uninitiated. Indeed, some of the comments, and much of the procedure, would be incomprehensible. People who read reports of this kind would feel more strongly than before that international conferences are expensive ways of wasting time. They would be in the same position as newspaper readers who judge the value of debates in the General Assembly or the Security Council of United Nations by the brief extracts of speeches printed on the cable pages. The extracts are taken from context and separated from procedures which create an internal life that can be intensely absorbing.

On my return from Beirut I was frequently asked if I had not found it depressing and frustrating to be attending an international conference while world affairs were in a sad and chaotic condition. My answer was that I had been too busy to think of such things. The difficulties, of course, are much in the minds of delegates; but they do not seem to be insuperable while progress is being made and while there is evidence that people from all over the world are eager to find possibilities of agreement. To be able to take part in the work is the best antidote to anxiety. Unfortunately, the number of workers must be limited, and it is not easy to promote vicarious participation. There is little scope in a conference for excitements of the imagination. Administrative work is concerned with details which may seem to have only a faint connection with ideas expounded fervently from the rostrum in plenary session. Yet it is concerned also with men and women, and perhaps for some of them the ideas have a lingering glow—in much the way that bones, which seem depressingly bare to the layman, may be beautiful to the anatomist.

An attempt can at least be made to look in from the outside. The first impression is not likely to be encouraging. Morning

meetings at Beirut were usually supposed to begin at 10.30, but at that hour only a handful of delegates might be present. Members of the Secretariat were up at the top table, and the chairman, vice-chairman and *rapporteur* were in their places. If there was to be 'consecutive' interpretation ('simultaneous' interpretation was available only in the main hall and in one other chamber), the two interpreters would be punctual. But it was often nearly eleven o'clock before the chairman, glancing about the room, decided that he had a quorum. Then came a tap of the gavel, a shuffling of chairs; and the meeting was called to order.

Let us suppose that the subject discussed was what is known at Unesco as the Free Flow of Information. The Mass Communications Department is responsible for this inquiry, and one of its tasks is to see what can be done to remove trade barriers to the importation of educational and cultural materials. Resolutions passed at previous conferences had authorized the project, and these were set out in a document prepared by the Executive Board. The business of the meeting, we were told by the chairman, was to hear from the head of the department an account of what had been done during the year, and then to arrive through discussion at some agreement on what was needed to carry the work a stage further.

There was a pause while the chairman's remarks were interpreted. As usual on such occasions, we sat back with no need to listen again to remarks we had already heard in English, and watched with respectful admiration the young woman who was now reproducing the sentences in fluent French. Interpreters are highly paid (in English money their salaries and allowances are somewhere between a thousand and fourteen hundred pounds a year), but nobody who watches them in action could think for a moment that they are overpaid. The high value placed on their services is indicated by the fact that the five or six men and women sent to Beirut from Headquarters in Paris were not allowed to travel in the same plane. If a few delegates had been lost in an air crash, the news would have been received with regret, but their enforced absence would not have interfered seriously with the work of Unesco. Without the interpreters, there would have been no conference.

To a New Zealander, who comes from a country where few opportunities may be found for speaking in foreign tongues, the professional interpreters are remarkable people. Although their methods vary a little, they are alike in their facility for the quick reproduction of words and meanings. They are sensitively organized, so that sounds which move more or less sluggishly along the nerves of ordinary listeners are with them swept instantly into complex tissues of the brain where messages are received and sifted. The tall young woman with dark hair and delicate features was taking notes while the chairman was speaking; but the notes were cursory. At the end of the speech she had several pages, each with a few words which apparently were the keys of sentences. Yet now, as the chairman leaned back and waited, she spoke in a clear voice for several minutes, without the slightest hesitation; and while, with a graceful gesture of dismissal, she tossed the pages one after another across her shoulder and allowed them to float gently to the floor, she was repeating in French the full substance of the speech.

At the end of the interpretation the chairman called upon the representative of the Secretariat to recapitulate briefly the work that had been done by his department since the preceding conference. Then came the familiar question: 'Does anybody wish to comment?' The New Zealand delegate had been waiting for this moment. He was interested in the subject, and he was anxious to turn the discussion into a certain channel before other speakers had introduced different issues. Therefore he put up his hand, caught the chairman's eye, and was named the first speaker.

'I have been looking,' he said, 'at Resolution 2.2211, which lays down that there shall be inquiries, on a continuing basis, into obstacles to the free flow of information. The New Zealand delegation believes that the collection and distribution of information is an essential function for Unesco, but it believes also that in this case the inquiries have been taken far enough. We are all fully aware of the obstacles, and there seems to be little point in further investigations unless we can be sure that they will lead to action.' He described briefly the situation in his own country, where favourable treatment was given to educational materials imported by Government non-trading departments; and he went

on to explain that materials of a similar nature could not be sent to the United Kingdom and elsewhere because customs duties were prohibitive. 'If,' he said, 'these difficulties exist between old friends, the problem as a whole can be seen to be formidable.' The point of his argument was that time and money should no longer be wasted on the collection of information which could be shown to be superfluous.

After he had been interpreted, the New Zealander was followed by a delegate who merely expressed agreement without taking the discussion any further. But then came Sir John Maud, speaking for the United Kingdom. He was, perhaps, the most formidable debater at the conference. Tall and self-possessed, he was adept in handling delicate issues; and he was most dangerous when he smiled as he spoke. He was smiling now as, turning towards the end of the table, he conceded the fairness of the criticism made against trade obstacles in the United Kingdom, but disagreed with his friend from New Zealand who 'spat upon' the proposal to collect more information. There were still some matters, he thought, about which we could be better informed, and he made specific reference to newsprint and the availability of low-priced radio receiving sets.

The debate was now fairly started. There was much agreement with New Zealand's criticism; but a spokesman for the Secretariat made an explanation which left some of the delegates with an impression that the enterprise was more realistic than it had seemed to be, and the United Kingdom strengthened the defence with an amendment which, after a discussion that ended on the stroke of one o'clock, was finally adopted. Throughout the morning there had been a noticeable change of atmosphere. Delegates must listen closely to everything that is said; and the continuous attention, shared by men and women who think in different languages, has a tensing effect on the nerves which can be felt in its collective manifestation by a sensitive observer. If the issues discussed are controversial, the 'feeling' of the meeting becomes stronger.

As at all meetings, international or otherwise, the interest is deeper if delegates can be critical. It is always easier to take a proposal to pieces, and to reveal its weaknesses, than to suggest



THE NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION AT BEIRUT. From left to right,
R. G. Ridling (leader), Mrs E. Beswick (secretary), H. N. Parton,
D. Cairns and M. H. Holcroft.



HOTEL AT BROUMANA. The front view of 'Cedarhurst', where the New Zealand and South African delegations stayed during the conference.

improvements. This sometimes leads to the assumption that criticism is wholly negative, and that those who indulge it too noticeably, especially in places where the intention is to do good works, are shabby fellows with voices that fall harshly on ears attuned to more delicate and hopeful suggestions. There is, however, no place where criticism should be practised more freely than at an international conference.

Unesco's programme has been devised at three successive conferences, and therefore—in the nature of things—it has been prepared too rapidly. It seems unreasonable to suppose that men and women who in 1946 met at the first session of the General Conference in Paris were endowed collectively with the insights of genius. Nor need we believe that the delegations to the second session were equally inspired. Their deliberations were earnest and hopeful; but the decisions of Paris and Mexico City should not be regarded as parts of a sacred canon, on no account to be disturbed or modified. Much healthier, indeed, would be the belief that they included a great deal of what in New Zealand would be known as 'dead wood,' and that no opportunity should be lost to cut it away from a programme which can be useful only if it is allowed to become a green and living growth.

There was evidence at Beirut that these notions were not unwelcome. The Executive Board, in its preparatory meetings, had already suggested the deletion of some resolutions and the consolidation of others; and at the sub-commission meetings some of the vaguer proposals were quietly discarded. Nevertheless, it is not easy to impose changes of outlook or policy on an international organization. If a conference instructs the Director-General to take action in ways defined specifically in resolutions, the various departments of Unesco must be organized to meet the demands of the programme. Specialists are appointed, documents are produced, and projects are started. The Secretariat may not feel much enthusiasm for the work it is being asked to do; but it carries out instructions to the best of its ability, and its representatives come to a conference armed with facts which are intended to satisfy the delegates that progress is being made. If, therefore, a delegate informs a meeting that the original conception is unrealistic, and that a department should not be wasting its energies

in that particular direction, but *should be doing something quite different*, the officers from the Secretariat are alarmed and depressed. Vested interests have grown up which must now be defended. The work that has been done must not be wasted, and the thought of changing a programme lies heavily on the spirit. Moreover, delegations which helped to frame the original proposals are not likely to feel that they should now be abandoned, or changed drastically. The work that has been done may not correspond exactly with the vision that was announced to the conference a year earlier; but it is easier to go forward than to turn backwards; and in this way the organization is obliged to persevere with activities which cost rather more than they are worth in money and human effort.

An additional problem has been raised by the over-ambitious ideas of those who founded the organization. Unesco would have been more effective, even at this early stage, if it had been allowed to grow slowly, if its programme departments had been limited strictly to fields which lend themselves naturally to the functions of a clearing house. Education, the social and natural sciences provide ample opportunities for international co-operation; and it is with them that Unesco can show its best results. But an interest in Mass Communications, although laudable and potentially valuable, must impinge too broadly on enterprises that are already being carried out efficiently by private and national organizations concerned with press, radio and cinema. The most that can be done in the meantime is to act as an agent for the collection and distribution of information, and perhaps to enter tentatively into production in limited fields. Similarly, philosophy and the arts are well able to look after themselves. They have the elusive quality which may be noticed in the individuals who practise them, and they are stubborn in their resistance to the lightest and gentlest forms of organization. Little can be done by an international body to stimulate activities which depend on the wilful energies of creative spirit. Departments that are instructed to take care of these matters will do their best to translate into practical terms the somewhat wide and vague resolutions framed by idealists. It would have been far better, however, if in the earlier years of its development Unesco had been able to concentrate

on subjects which obviously require international treatment.

Nothing is more to be feared than a forced and artificial growth, and a small budget can be used to best advantage if it does not have to be spread too widely and thinly. The promotion of international understanding is one of the finest enterprises in which the human race is at present engaged, and the one most likely to have its ultimate effect in the reduction of political tensions. But the vision has been weakened by those who, driven by the urgency of the world situation, have advocated an attack, with limited resources, at many points on a front too broad for decisive action. The true friends of Unesco are men and women who understand the need for patience and humility, and who believe that modest achievements in selected fields will make it easier to go forwards and outwards. Trees must be saplings before they can stand proudly and strongly in the forest.

These were thoughts which could come rapidly while we listened to the interpreters or waited for a conscientious delegate to finish an address which was moving too far from the point under discussion. They came most frequently in meetings where the programme was farthest from concrete and practical proposals. Yet it should be emphasized that while one sub-commission was struggling with weaknesses imposed on it by resolutions passed at Mexico City and Paris, another was strengthening a successful project which had come to it from the same sources. There was much to criticize and much to approve, and the evidence of failure had to be placed beside the evidence of success before there could be just appraisal.

A morning's work could be disappointing and frustrating: it also could have rich rewards. To see people working selflessly for aims in which they believed, even though for some of us the aims had been obscured by ideas that should be rejected, was to feel a renewal of faith in the central idea which was the breath and life of the conference. And what was a morning against the years of striving that were still untouched in time? A little of the weariness left us as we came out into the sunshine and saw the citizens of Beirut streaming away from the public galleries. The day was bright under a blue sky, and the Mediterranean was tranquil. Soon we would be gathering in the restaurant for food

and conversation. If we spoke there in an unbuttoned mood, making free comments on what had been said and done at our different meetings, we knew nevertheless that we were in an enterprise much bigger than ourselves—to which, even when we were most critical, we were pledged in spirit. But now the waiter was at our elbow, the beer was on the table, and the meal had been ordered. It was time to think of other things.

INSIDE A DELEGATION

THE RESTAURANT, a minute's walk from the conference building, was a place for meeting as well as for meals. After one o'clock it filled rapidly; and although some people went into the city, preferring to lunch away from the sights and sounds of Unesco, there were few empty tables by one-thirty. The meals were expensive by New Zealand standards, but not by those prevailing in London and Paris. A three-course luncheon, with a small bottle of beer, usually cost 500 livres, which would be about nine shillings in New Zealand currency. The food was excellent, and the service good. It was obvious that the French had left their influence on Lebanese cuisine.

It was always interesting to notice the way in which delegations became fluid and dispersed during the eating of meals. This was true especially of the larger delegations. Smaller groups remained unified, though even with them there was a certain amount of social movement. A glance around the restaurant would show that obstacles to the free flow of information did not exist at a Unesco conference. At one table we might see an American, an Indian, an Englishman and a delegate from Nicaragua or Brazil. A Frenchman or a Belgian might be talking with an Italian, an Austrian or a Mexican. If two tables had been placed together, and eight or ten people from different countries were grouped around them, we could be sure that one of the *ad hoc* committees was clearing the way for more formal discussion. In this way, it could be said, the conference remained continuously in session. Many a resolution or amendment, to be placed before a commission, must have been conceived in a collision of minds made easier by wine and food. Arguments which came in with the soup were often smoothed into agreements by the time the waiter was coming round with his basket of oranges and bananas.

When people eat much together they enter a companionship

which inclines easily towards intimacy. The sharing of food has symbolical as well as social implications; and I suppose it is natural that when I think of the New Zealand delegation I should see hands breaking bread—a mealtime habit which follows you from Paris to the Middle East—and the raising of glasses. More than once, looking around the restaurant in the precincts of Unesco, I found myself wondering what sort of relations existed between people who had been brought together to represent their countries. What were the differences in outlook brought about by variations in size and quality? And how far did national characteristics reveal themselves in weeks of intimate association?

Of these matters it is possible to speak only from personal experience. Life in the other and larger delegations must remain mysterious to me; I can say only what I saw and heard and felt with my three countrymen. Yet I think that in trying to understand what takes place at an international conference we must give some thought to the special conditions under which people are working together. For the composition and behaviour of a delegation will be reflected in the conduct of affairs, and men who speak in the name of their Governments and National Commissions must be influenced to some extent by the internal life of a tiny and transplanted community.

A small delegation cannot do useful work unless its members become friends as well as colleagues. The four men who represented New Zealand at Beirut lived in the same hotel. They had nearly all their meals together, beginning with breakfast at 'Cedarhurst,' and ending with a dinner which might be eaten at any time from seven-thirty to ten p.m. At least once a day they made the journey by motor car to and from Broumana. Much time was taken up with discussions of policy. In the middle morning and afternoon they separated to attend different meetings; but afterwards it was necessary to talk over the results of the debates, to watch the development of policy, to exchange information and advice, and to make it easier for specific issues to be followed by various spokesmen until they were disposed of in plenary session.

Consider, for a moment, the history of an amendment which helped to confirm the reduction of a budget allocation by one hundred thousand dollars. In the early days of the conference

all members of the New Zealand delegation studied the Budget Estimates independently. A general discussion showed that they considered the amount set aside for one department to be excessive. This department was responsible for certain information, library and statistical services required for the development of programme activities. The value of these services was not questioned, but it was thought that they were being provided on too ambitious a scale for an infant organization, and that some of them could be handled to better purpose by programme departments—that is, by such departments as Education, Mass Communications, Natural Sciences, and so on. If the budget was to be reduced (and it was clear from debates in plenary sessions that the conference would insist on a lower figure than that named by the Director-General), the delegation believed that a substantial saving could be made in this particular section.

The matter was discussed later by the Committee of Fifteen. This body, with a title which darkly suggested hooded advisers gathering by torchlight in a secret chamber of the Doge's palace in Venice, was appointed by the three commissions. New Zealand wanted a place on the committee; and a delegate, by acting quickly at a commission meeting, was able to obtain it for one of his colleagues. The second delegate heard the functions of the information department explained in detail by its executive officer. He also heard a full criticism by a United Kingdom delegate who happened to be a member of the Executive Board, and who therefore could speak with inside knowledge. What he heard convinced him that the delegation's early judgment was correct. When the United Kingdom proposed a motion, New Zealand tried unsuccessfully to have it worded more strongly.

The department was now being supported by some of the larger delegations, and although a motion asking for the organization to be reviewed, and in effect to be revised on a more modest scale, was passed unanimously by the Committee of Fifteen, an attempt was made to have the decision altered in the Administrative Commission. A New Zealand delegate who had not been present at meetings of the Committee of Fifteen, but who had heard a full account of the proceedings from his colleague, spoke against an American amendment placed before the commission, and the

attempt was later defeated. This same delegate was in plenary session a few days later when, in the last moments of the meeting, the matter was again raised for discussion. He noted that the intervention came from the United States, and he assumed that a new attempt was to be made to have the wording of the resolution altered. He informed his colleague who had been a member of the Committee of Fifteen, and it was agreed by the delegation that this representative should defend the resolution in plenary session. When the matter was raised next morning the leader of a delegation proposed an amendment which would have taken all the sinew from the resolution. The New Zealander thereupon went to the rostrum, spoke against the amendment, and moved that the text of the resolution be adopted in its original form. He was supported by the United Kingdom and France; and when the matter was put to the vote the New Zealand amendment was carried. In this way a policy decision which had been defended in meetings of the Committee of Fifteen and the Administrative Commission was finally adopted by the full conference. Admittedly, the main attack had come from the United Kingdom; but New Zealand, acting independently, had played its part, and had been able to intervene decisively. This was made possible by close co-operation between members of the delegation.

Co-operation cannot be successful unless men who are working together have confidence in one another. The growth of confidence is a curious blend of personal and collective influences. A delegate knows that his companions have been selected because they are believed to have the knowledge and ability needed for the tasks they will be called upon to undertake. He meets them, therefore, with a presumption in their favour. In at least one sense they will be people of his own kind—people, that is, with interests and qualifications that should enable them to feel at ease in the special atmosphere which grows up at an international conference. Further, they have been brought together in pursuit of impersonal ends. It is conceivable that the work they do for Unesco will give them some increase of reputation, though it may be an increase without much value in the market-place. An educationist near retiring age would not be in Lebanon with thoughts of his future career. The professor of chemistry who interrupted his 'refresher' tour

among universities of Britain and the United States to join the New Zealand delegation at Beirut would not expect to do anything that would help him in his own particular field. The delegates know therefore that their companions are prepared to work for interests other than their own. They study every problem without reference to personal profit or advancement, and enter upon work for which there are no external or glittering rewards. From the beginning, then, the delegates meet on equal terms. They are committed to a single enterprise, and they assume as a matter of course that ideas and principles will have first claim upon their loyalty.

Nevertheless, men with firm convictions and unselfish motives need not always be comfortable companions. A single fanatic or careerist could destroy all possibility of co-operation. It might have been merely good fortune which permitted the New Zealand delegation to go smoothly about its work; and yet, in the light of what is known of previous delegations it is reasonable to suppose that the group revealed characteristics which belong to the nation. There were many people at Beirut who had been to previous conferences, and we were constantly reminded that we were following a road which had been travelled by Dr C. E. Beeby and his associates at Paris and Mexico City. Standards had been established to which New Zealand was expected to conform, and although this was in some ways an embarrassment—since the standards were higher than those we hoped to reach—it was also a challenge and a source of moral support. We knew that Dr Beeby and Miss Lorna McPhee, who were in Beirut as representatives of the Secretariat, were keeping friendly eyes on the delegation. We followed our own course, but it was comforting on occasions to know that New Zealand was on the dais and at the upper table as well as in the body of the meeting. This, no doubt, was an experience common to many delegations. For the representatives of a small country, however, it was an unfailing encouragement.

What were the characteristics which emerged in a group of New Zealanders working in a strange environment a long way from their own country? There was, first, a tendency to look for practical issues. Without exception, the delegates seemed to feel that the aims and purposes of Unesco could be taken for granted.

They were sometimes mistaken, perhaps, in assuming too easily that the ideals should also be left unmentioned by people from other parts of the world. But they believed, rightly or wrongly, that men acquainted with the ideals of Unesco should devote themselves, without waste of time, to the formidable task of translating aims and purposes into policies which could be fitted into the framework for administrative action. A great deal had to be done in four weeks. It seemed unnecessary, therefore, to spend much time re-stating beliefs which were the main reason for their presence in Beirut. Similarly, they did not go out of their way to offer congratulations to the Secretariat. Tributes can be paid gracefully, and are forms of politeness; but the New Zealanders noticed that some delegates who invariably began with compliments would follow them up with stiff criticisms. It seemed more economical, where time was valuable, to deal plainly with matters under discussion.

It may be supposed that people who adopted a somewhat practical attitude would be dull companions. Here again, however, the New Zealand temperament revealed itself. The private life of the delegation was cheerful, and sometimes frivolous. There is a type of humour much practised in New Zealand which lends itself so clumsily to expression in writing that I have wondered sometimes if our excessive addiction to it explains why it is widely believed that we are a humourless people. 'Leg-pulling' depends on phrases and inflexions that take their strength from a combination of animal spirits and irony. There is nothing very subtle in banter which plays robustly, and perhaps a little crazily, over the surface of life.

I do not think the world would want to laugh with us at some of the jokes which caused amusement at the breakfast table at 'Cedarhurst.' There was, for instance, the succession of titles bestowed on Eileen, our good-natured secretary from New Zealand House in London. One day she became Lady Eileen, and a little later she acquired the title—taken, perhaps, from a chance memory of Jane Austen—of Lady Eileen de Bourgh. Finally, after a citizen of Beirut had gracefully saluted her at a reception, she was known on formal occasions as Lady Eileen de Bourgh of the Lily-White Hands Which Have Now Been Kissed In Public. Separated

from the raillery which preceded the creation of this slightly oriental title, the words themselves may not take us very far into fantasy; but there was fantasy when they were first spoken while we were sitting over our grape-fruit, with Joseph the waiter poised in the background to take orders for eggs and tea. Similarly, the comments made about newspapers to a former editor would seem merely insulting if they were reported literally. And although the scientists could enter discussions so technical that the spirit of laughter vanished discreetly from the room, they could also speak of each other's interests and qualifications with a casual freedom which in more volatile company would certainly have led to violence.

There was one way, however, in which the New Zealand sense of humour kept close to its British origins. If some of the dinner-table comments about Unesco had been overheard by strangers, it could have been assumed that the delegation was a nest of hypocrites. It is everywhere a British trait to make fun of serious matters. Perhaps it is a necessary antidote to seriousness. Men who joke about their deeper interests will not work for them less conscientiously. On the contrary, they are fortified against solemnity, and may be expected to keep a sense of proportion in their search for practical solutions. A feeling for the ridiculous is not a bad defence against the more dangerous manifestations of the international spirit. It might have been significant, and it was certainly typical, that we had not been long together before we had discovered an 'Arab sign' by which we could indicate secretly to one another that a speaker was soaring on woolly wings to the higher regions of platitude.

The New Zealand delegation was in some ways an epitome of the society from which it was drawn. It worked hard, and it knew how to relax from the pressure of committee rooms. There was imagination, but not too much of it; and although fancy could become fantasy when the strain was lifted it was kept firmly under control in business hours. If we entered candidly into self-criticism, we should have to admit some minor failures in tact and understanding. But we were ready to learn, and we made friends.

Four men and a young woman were drawn together for common

purposes. At the end of the conference they went their several ways—three to London, and two to New Zealand. Yet for the rest of their lives, even if they never come together again in a single group, they will carry with them a shared experience. They will walk again in moonlight on the ridges of Broumana. The climbing car will take them, tired after much talking and listening, through the olive groves and among the shuttered villas; and above the drone of the engine they will hear from the radio the announcer in Beirut giving his summary of the day's events at Unesco. Far below, as the car swerves around the bends, they will see the lights of Beirut glittering on one of the loveliest promontories in the world. They will turn again through the gates of 'Cedarhurst'; and as they gather up their bags and step wearily across the threshold they will see white-coated Joseph waiting with smiles to welcome them to dinner. These things have passed out of time, but they are still in the minds of five people who will remember them more clearly and gratefully because friendship holds them in lasting impressions.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

THE LIFE of a delegation is short, and in the few weeks available for growth it must pass through adjustments which come slowly to other social organisms. There is an early unity, imposed on members by the special conditions under which they are working; and this is followed, as the individuals come to know one another, by a shifting of interest, a barely discernible strengthening of intimacy here and there as professional or personal affinities are discovered. At the end, however, the unity which began as a necessity, adopted without question by people who had to live and work together, becomes a free and natural growth.

In the middle stage, when delegates are looking more carefully at one another, they are also looking about them at people they are meeting daily in the conference rooms. There is a certain amount of social intercourse from the earliest days; but it becomes wider as delegates no longer feel the need of integration within their own group. The conference develops a life of its own which on a different level is parallel with the growth of unity in the individual delegations. As the days went by at Beirut we became increasingly aware of other people, some of whom were to influence us deeply.

There were strong personalities in Lebanon, and some first-class minds; but I think it would be true to say that on the whole there were no figures so outstanding that they forced themselves on our attention with the effortless power of genius. Perhaps this would be true of most international meetings today. Their work requires vision and strength of purpose; but it also requires an understanding of administrative tasks, a pertinacious rather than a bold or adventurous mind, and an interest in details which are too close to the surface of life to arouse the faculties of men with purely imaginative or creative gifts. A few weeks before the opening of the conference in Beirut I went several times to the

General Assembly of the United Nations, which was then meeting daily in the glowing and splendid auditorium of the Palais de Chaillot. Of the statesmen I saw then at close quarters the two who interested me most were General Marshall and Mr Vyshinsky. They were both men who, in their different ways, gave the onlooker an impression of power. Yet I doubt if greatness will be attributed to either of them when historians look back upon the tumults of the age in which they played their parts. They were big men; but I suspected that they took much of their bigness from the systems and societies they represented rather than from sources of power within themselves. There is not much room in the world today for the towering individual—except, perhaps, when the crisis of war makes room for a Winston Churchill. The representative leader in peacetime is the skilled administrator, able to make his way confidently among legal and tactical subtleties which have little meaning for the plain man.

It was not to be expected, then, that we should see giants in Lebanon. Indeed, I thought sometimes in the midst of our hard-working committees that a genius could have wrecked the conference. Experience has shown that men of outstanding capacity in their own fields are not necessarily successful when they bend their thoughts upon the dry, administrative detail which is the main business of Unesco. The individuals selected for mention in these pages may therefore be said to be representative. Some of them will be seen at the next full conference; others may disappear from view. But those who disappear will be replaced by men and women of much the same types. It should be added that any selection must be arbitrary. Apart from a few obvious cases, the men we see most clearly are those we have had special opportunities of meeting and watching. My own selection would have been different if I had spent most of my time working with the Administrative or External Relations Commission, or if I had been concerned personally with the natural sciences instead of social sciences, education and mass communications.

The outstanding event of the Beirut conference was the election of a new Director-General. Dr Jaime Torres Bodet, who succeeded Dr Julian Huxley, may seem at first to refute my earlier contention that the representative leader has become a specialist in adminis-

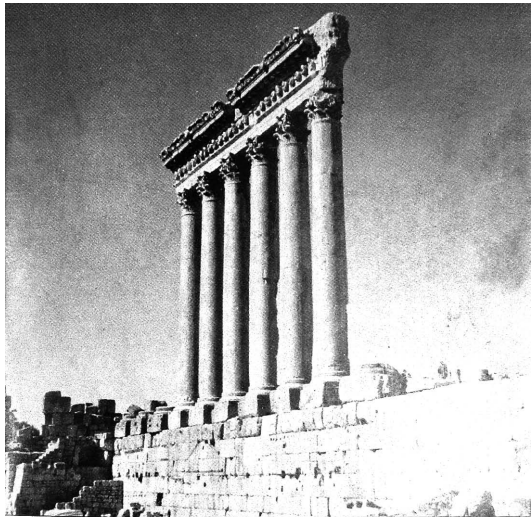
tration, and that in doing so he has lost the versatility which could be found in leaders of more spacious and less regimented cultures. Dr Bodet has been a statesman, an educationist, an essayist, a writer of novels and a poet. His gifts of expression require the different media of letters and oratory; and in letters he has used the freedom—an illusory freedom, perhaps—of prose, and has bent himself to the firmer discipline of verse. Now it has been possible in other times for an artist to be also a man of action and affairs. The belief that the life of the imagination makes a man unfit for business and politics—using these terms in their widest meanings—has grown up in an age of specialization; but history is full of examples which show the belief to be a fallacy. Yet it must be added that versatility among the great has been most noticeable in small communities, and perhaps in cultures which were local and self-contained, or which had the strong individuality that is a feature of regional vitality. Dr Bodet is a Mexican and Spanish writer; but we do not know him yet as a world writer, and it may be said that his work in the arts has been done in an environment which in some ways can be compared with the smaller and self-contained environments of Renaissance Europe.

In spite of its nearness to North America, Mexico is in some ways outside the main stream of art: its writers can draw upon the riches of an indigenous culture which has been fertilized by western thought, but which retains its own individuality. This may have both an enriching and a narrowing influence on men who attain self-development as thinkers. But the problems of politics are local and universal. A statesman in Mexico must be concerned with questions and methods which belong to the age as well as to his own country. It seems unlikely, however, that a Mexican statesman-writer can keep his dual capacity now that he has moved on to a larger stage. He will become a world figure (his election to the highest post in Unesco is the assurance of that advancement), and at the same time he may remain a man of letters at home. It is much less certain that he will become simultaneously a world figure in letters and administration. A point has been reached where one interest or task may be expected to dominate and absorb the other. If the two interests were to survive, and to develop with equal strength, Dr Bodet would indeed achieve

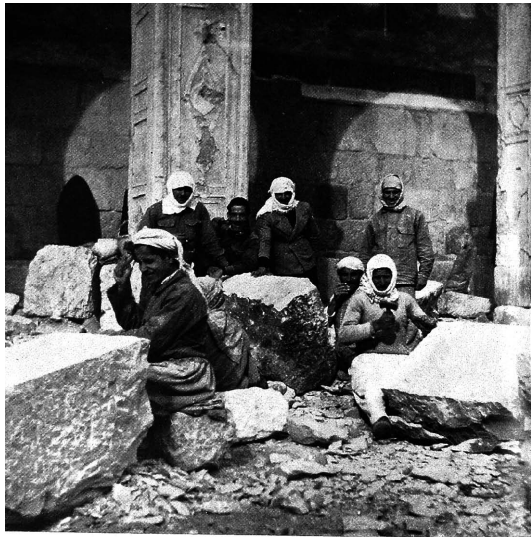
greatness. My own belief is that, in the nature of things, it is the administrator who will survive and grow. He will be stronger in his work because of the cultivation of mind and spirit undertaken as an artist; but the artist may now have to be submerged in the man of affairs; and the discipline will expose him increasingly to the tyranny of detail which, as I suggested earlier, keeps greatness in subjection.

What sort of man is he who has been called to this severe and testing vocation? I saw him first when he gave his inaugural address to the full conference. He is solidly-built, not very tall, and inclined to be swarthy. The occasion, which must have been a considerable ordeal, did not seem to disturb him. He went calmly to the rostrum, and gave his address with what appeared to be a natural fluency, although the speech must have been carefully prepared. His voice was clear and strong, slipping easily into the rhythm of one who spoke in French under the influence of training and temperament. The address was a balanced composition, rising at times to a restrained eloquence, but keeping close in mood and expression to its proper function as a statement of principles. As with most speakers who have been trained in the French or Latin tradition, the thought moved inwards from a wide perimeter, and the ideas were given in general terms. But the thought was there. The speech had to be judged strictly in relation to the occasion, and its restraint showed that the speaker understood the political implications of his new position. For although Unesco is a non-political organization, no man who assumes the leadership can afford to forget that a carelessly-worded phrase will bring politics from its lurking-place in the background.

A few days after the inaugural address, Dr Bodet was to be seen at a reception given to the delegates by the President of Lebanon. This was a function of special brilliance. The Lebanese women are often strikingly beautiful, and the wives and daughters of the upper classes bear themselves with grace and distinction. Many of the young women employed by the Secretariat are also attractive. The rooms were therefore made bright by the presence of women in the full plumage of evening dress; and although the clothes worn by men on these occasions are apparently intended to deflect attention to female splendours, rather than to encourage



STONES OF BAALBEK. The six surviving columns of the temple of Jupiter.



WORKERS IN DAMASCUS. Arab stonemasons in the courtyard of the great mosque of the Omayyades.

the eye to rest upon the men themselves, there were some interesting heads and faces to be seen, as it were, floating in space near bare shoulders or gay dresses. It was pleasant to walk about observantly; and later, when the formalities were ended and the crowd was disposing itself for the hazards of a buffet supper, I noticed Dr Bodet sitting at a table with the President, his daughter-in-law, and Dr and Mrs Huxley. The contrast between the old and new Director-Generals had been an interesting study in plenary session: it was even more noticeable now that the two men could be seen in relaxation. It was, in part, a contrast in racial types; but there were also marked personal differences. The face of Dr Bodet has a thrusting look, even when it is in repose. Although the dark eyes are full of life, it may be the bold nose and the heavy moulding of cheek and jaw-bone which give the clearest indications of character. The mouth is sensuous—a poet's mouth—and might have strengthened my impression that the face has a downward pull, as if the inevitable conflict between thought and action had had its effect on facial muscles. This seemed to me to be a man who would not be slow in revealing strong beliefs and purposes.

There must be a difference of nearly twenty years in the ages of Dr Bodet and Dr Huxley. The older man has less obvious signs of strength, but there is no weakness, and the absence of tension indicates self-possession. Dr Huxley speaks without much attempt at eloquence: his illustrations are simple and homely, and he favours a plain statement of ideas. Yet I always liked to hear him. He has the English habit of under-statement, and sometimes he showed a disarming absent-mindedness. There was a delegate who seldom went to the rostrum in plenary session without speaking passionately. After one outburst, Dr Huxley, sitting above the speaker on the dais, leaned towards the president of the conference and, forgetting the microphone, said amiably—though in a voice which immediately became audible through the head-phones: 'The delegate from Cuba is annoyed!'

Dr Huxley has the face of a man who has done much thinking, but whose thinking has been mostly apart from human or social issues. He is detached, and the detachment is expressed in the lines and texture of a face which has been touched rather than marked by conflict. Life and thought have given him a used and

relaxed look, so that you find yourself thinking involuntarily of shoes that have been worn long enough to be comfortable. They are not, perhaps, the shoes you would choose for mountain climbing; but you could learn to regard them affectionately. A certain amount of controversy will follow Dr Huxley into his retirement from Unesco. It may be too soon to estimate the value of his work for an infant organization, and no appraisal can be just which overlooks the early difficulties. Yet I think that, apart from all questions of policy, he gave Unesco a certain warmth from his own temperament. My last glimpse of him was in the lounge of the Semiramis Hotel in Cairo. He was writing busily at a table loaded with papers, and he looked remarkably fresh and full of energy. Only a few hours earlier, in spite of his 60 years, he had been among the foremost—and the least distressed—of a group of us who climbed the Pyramid of Cheops.

The President's reception in Beirut ended with a dance. It is the custom in Lebanon for an orchestra to play sequences of dances which change their character after pauses just long enough to permit you to leave the floor if you have had enough. If you take your partner for a waltz, you may find that a little later you are doing a tango, or some other measure which can be fitted to the South American rhythms which are much favoured in the Middle East. A dancer of moderate ability can shuffle through these changing measures if he has any feeling for rhythm—and, of course, if his partner is tolerant. I was in the midst of one such progress, taking modest pride in my achievements, when I looked up in time to see Sir John Maud gliding past with a young woman of exceptional beauty. He was dancing correctly and gracefully, and I could not feel surprised at a further illustration of his versatility. Sir John Maud does everything efficiently. Moreover, he makes the efficiency seem easy. He is a tall man in his early forties, with a surprisingly youthful face. The appearance of youthfulness is surprising because it has been retained in spite of a wide administrative experience that must have produced many strains. A Permanent Secretary at the British Ministry of Education could not be expected to have an easy life. Yet Sir John was always so much in possession of himself that his contributions to the conference might have seemed less substantial than in fact

they were because he appeared to make them so smoothly. He could speak fluently, without notes, in plenary session; but it was on the committees and sub-commissions that he worked hardest. To hear him making his points in logical sequence, and arriving firmly at his conclusions—smiling at delegates for whom he reserved his hardest blows—was to feel that this was the senior Civil Service at its best.

He understood the psychology of a conference, and he knew the value of a little emotion at a suitable moment. I attended many meetings of sub-commissions, and only once did I hear applause. The New Zealand delegate had made a full and rather severe criticism of the projects division of the Mass Communications Department, which had been set up in the first place to carry out a resolution proposed by the United Kingdom at Mexico City. It was evident that the meeting had been influenced by his criticism, and Sir John Maud quickly suggested that the head of the department should give a resume of work carried out since the preparation of documents on which much of the criticism had been based. The statement made thereafter by the representative of the Secretariat was admirably clear and comprehensive, although the New Zealand delegate did not think that it answered the fundamental objections. Nevertheless, the meeting was impressed, and needed only a timely gesture to pass from interest to full approval. Sir John Maud supplied the gesture by starting a clapping which ran instantly around the tables. It became evident that no further criticism made that afternoon could be successful.

Sir John could be resourceful in small things as well as in his contribution to a debate. On the day that the new Director-General was elected the conference went into secret session. At an important stage in the proceedings one of the senior interpreters was reading a document from the rostrum when the power failed. The interpreter struggled valiantly with the text, though it was evident that the light in a shadowed chamber had become too dim for unaided eyes. A feeling of agitation began to flow along the New Zealand tables from the Mexican delegates, who were sitting nearby, waiting expectantly for the election of their countryman. All was saved, however, when Sir John Maud slipped unobtrusively

from his seat, went up to the rostrum, and turned the light of a torch on the interpreter's paper.

The United States delegation was led by Mr George V. Allen, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. He, too, was tall and personable, and—like most of the Americans—friendly and approachable. He was a speaker who could bring to big occasions a generous vision and the sort of sincerity we expect from a man who speaks his mind to a trusted neighbour. There was in him, perhaps, enough of the politician to make him expansive in the treatment of large issues: he touched more often than the Englishmen on ideas which are still outside the range of practical effort. But his idealism was the expression of an international outlook, and it was shown to best advantage in the speech in which, on the last day of the conference, he proposed the acceptance of the text of the Bill of Human Rights. In sounding the note to which all other speakers remained faithful, in what was perhaps the most serious debate of the meeting—even though, as most of us realized, it was mainly a formality—he revealed a faith in international co-operation which seemed to me to rest, not merely on intellectual conviction, but also on personal humility.

His colleague, Mr Milton S. Eisenhower, is chairman of the United States National Commission for Unesco, and President of Kansas State College. He is a big man, with a resemblance to his famous brother so striking that, in a lesser man, it could be a disadvantage. But Mr Eisenhower has no need to borrow reputation from other people. He fills his position in space and time with a definiteness which is almost solidity. Professor Lucien Febvre once spoke of the 'smiling authority' dispensed by Dr Otto Klineberg, another American who is in charge of the Tensions Project organized by the Social Sciences Section of Unesco. The phrase could be applied with equal fitness to Mr Eisenhower when he takes the chair at a meeting. He absorbs the minor tensions of debate, and rests with unassailable calmness on an authority that is never in need of assertion. Yet I think his outer calmness and geniality could be mistaken too easily for a passive mildness. In meeting him privately you feel the nearness of a personal force that for the most part is under control or in reserve.

The Americans have a charm of manners which makes it easy

to move into a familiar relationship; but people from the British Dominions, who share a liking for the direct approach, sometimes discover that there are reticences beneath the surface, and that after a first movement towards friendship a point may be reached at which they seem to make no further advance. Much is to be said for American courtesy. Few things, for instance, enlarge our self-esteem more effectively than the discovery that our names, mentioned only once in a brief introduction, have been remembered, and can be repeated without hesitation in warm recognition. But I think we speak too glibly of the reserved Englishman and the open-handed American. Even at an international conference, where all men move about as equals, and may speak with whom they wish, it is unwise to mistake the implications of courtesy and friendliness. With the Americans, as with the English, there can seldom be a quick passage from acquaintance to friendship.

In looking outside the Anglo-Saxon groups there is an even greater danger of being misled by appearances. People sometimes imagine that they feel 'at home' with the inhabitants of other countries because the difficulties of language keep them close to the surface of experience. Where intercourse is confined to superficial conversation, it is impossible to reach the emotional fullness that comes when all the meanings and suggestions of words are understood. I fear, therefore, that if I try to sketch portraits of eminent people who speak another language I shall be merely superficial. The most that can be done is to look at them from the outside. Some of these glancing impressions may still be worth recording, though it may be wiser here to range freely, and to think more of persons than of positions. I do not think I can say anything of value about M. Georges Bidault, leader of the French delegation, after seeing and hearing him on only one occasion. His leadership, I suspect, was mainly a formal gesture, for he was not much to be seen after he had spoken in plenary session. Perhaps the most interesting member of the French delegation was M. Roger Seydoux, formerly Director of the Institute of Political Studies in Paris, and now Assistant Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is a man of medium size, rather dark, and the best type of intellectual. Alone among the Frenchmen, he spoke entirely without gestures: he was always cool, deliberate, and logical. In

complete contrast to him was Professor Lucien Febvre, a historian who lost no opportunity of reminding the conference that history was important. He is a man, rather high in colour, who can never be seen completely in repose. His head moves from side to side in abrupt and challenging movements, and he looks about him with a slightly angry stare—from very blue eyes—which conceals a generous humanity. When he speaks his voice seems at first to be unfitted for eloquence: it is fairly high in pitch, and a little hoarse. But he warms up to a splendid flow of words, and although he speaks with passionate conviction of interests that are bound up closely with his work as a historian he knows how to insert a witticism or a smiling phrase which strengthens the attention of listeners.

Another Frenchman who interested me, perhaps because he made a strong appeal to the imagination, was not a delegate, but a member of the Secretariat. Dr Pierre Auger, head of the Natural Sciences Division, and formerly the French representative on the Executive Board, is also a professor of physics. I did not hear him speak, but he is said to speak brilliantly. Although his work at the Secretariat must keep him closely occupied—for the Natural Sciences Section is one of the most active branches of Unesco—he retains his chair, and gives much of his weekend leisure to the direction of research among his students. He is a tall man who walks and looks about him with an air of superiority which is oddly attractive. A thin black beard follows the line of his cheekbone, and a faintly amused smile seems always to be settling around the corners of his mouth. He was noticeably in action at the ball and the President's reception, and he was one of the best dancers on the floor. It was stimulating to watch the ease and the conscious delight with which he moved with his partners through intricate steps; I could not help wondering what may be the thoughts of a physicist who enters with such precision into the rhythms of the dance. No man could be further than he from the popular conception of a scientist. Yet he shares, perhaps with an unusual fullness, the dominant characteristics of those who follow a severe academic discipline: an economical use of energy and a close concentration on the task immediately in hand.

Other people come and go in the memory. Dr C. E. Beeby is

too well known in his own country to be in need of portraiture in these pages, though it should be said that his quick intelligence and steady realism made him one of the most respected figures at the conference. Sir Ronald Adam, chairman of the British Council, was always impressive; and I should think that few people were misled by his slightly avuncular manner. A former Adjutant-General of the British Army could afford to be restrained in debate; but he could be swift and merciless with figures, and he knew how to intervene when the time had come to bring a debate safely to its conclusion.

M. Hamid Bey Frangie, most distinguished of the Lebanese delegates, won universal respect for his work as president of the conference. Sir Sarvarapelli Radhakrishnan was an Indian philosopher who looked and spoke as if his vocation had settled around him as closely as the folds of his robe. Mr D. R. Hardman, who led the formidable United Kingdom delegation, was an excellent chairman, wise in the direction of affairs, and a speaker who drew on the resources of English literature for illustration and allusion. Dr Francisco del Rio Y Canedo, Mexican Ambassador to France, was an administrator who in his ample person and volatile manner combined great ability with picturesque qualities. Of special interest to the New Zealanders was their countryman, Mr (now Professor) Ronald Syme, who lectured in classical history at Oxford, and whose archaeological work in Italy has brought him wide reputation. He was a United Kingdom delegate, but from the moment he came up to the New Zealand tables to introduce himself in plenary session he seemed to return in spirit to his own country. There was also an Australian in the British delegation—Mr Alan Moorehead, famous as war correspondent and writer, who has found himself a home, and a writer's workshop, on the outskirts of Florence. Nor must I overlook Mr J. Weeden, a pertinacious Australian with a way of leaving his mark on every debate in which he participated.

There were many others with an equal claim for mention here, though I can go little further without turning this chapter into a catalogue. Before closing, however, I must speak of one man and several women—the man because, apart from his interest as a person, he represents a type from which Unesco has much to

gain; and the women because they cannot be ignored without leaving the false impression that the conference was run exclusively by men.

Mr W. D. Pile was secretary of the United Kingdom delegation. I was told that he made his first appearance at Mexico City, where he showed a diffidence that was only to be expected in a young man who found himself among veterans. In Beirut, however, he showed that in the intervening year he had acquired experience and confidence. The experience came from his continuous work for Unesco, and the confidence from his awareness of opening powers. As with so many men who seem to combine special abilities with personal calmness, he reached calmness, not by grace of a phlegmatic temperament, but through a controlled use of brain and will. He made his first speech of the conference at a meeting of representatives of national commissions, and he appeared to be in full possession both of himself and of the subject with which he was dealing. I was close enough to him to be able to watch his face, and I noticed that his eyes were tranquil, as if he were speaking of easy and simple things to a group of friends in an after-dinner conversation.

This impression returned many times during the conference. Although his general approach to all subjects was dispassionate, he could hit hard if sharp criticism were needed; but there was never the slightest display of emotion. People who saw him in action, and from a distance, must have assumed that he was imperturbable by nature. Closer contacts showed him to be a man with large reserves of nervous energy. He was restless in the manner of those who have more personal force than is needed for immediate tasks. In private discussion it could be seen that his thoughts raced ahead, that he was always pressing on to new issues, and that he could grasp details intuitively while less active minds were waiting for further explanation. He is a big man, rather loosely built, and with a frame which may be impressive when he has hardened into maturity. His habit of stillness makes it too easy for strangers to underestimate his capacity for quick observation. It was he, for instance, who on one occasion pointed out to a chairman that two members of a delegation—one of them acting as *rapporteur*, and the other sitting in the body of the

meeting—had both voted on an issue of some importance. The lapse was inadvertent, but it could have had awkward consequences if it had passed unnoticed.

The grasp of affairs shown by Mr Pile was partly the result of specialized experience. As Secretary of the United Kingdom National Commission, he has had opportunities which are beyond the reach of most delegates to a Unesco conference. The man who knows his subject because he has studied it throughout the year must always carry too many guns for the individual who, invited by his Government to attend a conference, has to learn what he can of the policies and methods of Unesco in a few short weeks. An outsider who looks for the first time at documents which others have assimilated gradually cannot be expected to reveal a masterly understanding of the issues that are to be discussed. Unless he has wide experience and a native ability he is almost certain to stray into irrelevancies, or to reopen issues which have been discussed and closed at previous meetings.

At every conference there is a leavening of innocence, and it is therefore not difficult for a full-time worker in the field to move with assurance amidst complexities which are confusing to the newcomer. Yet experience is not enough: there must also be talent and purpose. Mr Pile seemed to me to exemplify the qualities that are most needed by Unesco. He has strength of mind and character, a clear understanding of what can be done by committees, and a resourcefulness that is being strengthened by increasing knowledge. It is through men such as he—men who will concentrate on practical things, leaving others to supply platitude and vague aspiration—that Unesco will find its way to concrete achievement.

There should be no need, at this stage in history, to discuss the place of women at an international conference. They are there by right, and if they do not play an equal part with the men it is mainly because they are still outnumbered. Nevertheless, a United States delegate, Mrs Louise Wright, became chairman of the Committee of Fifteen, and was called upon to control one of the most difficult discussions at Beirut. She did not come unprepared for her task. As director of the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs, president of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and a

trustee of the Institute of Pacific Relations, she has acquired a wide background and a firm grasp of procedure. Her mind is incisive, and she moves with an eager interest towards the clarification of ideas. At the end of the committee's deliberations I sat with her as member of a small drafting committee. Our task was to find words which gave exact expression to the recommendations of the Committee of Fifteen on a number of important issues. At one stage, when a sentence had been changed many times in our search for precision, she leaned back to make a comment: 'This is surely teaching us something about the English language. Here we are—an American, an Englishman, an Australian and a New Zealander, using the same words, but with different shades of meaning. It's quite an education!'

Another woman who understood the value of words was Mrs Anne O'Hare McCormick, known throughout the world as a writer on foreign affairs for *The New York Times*. She was a middle-aged woman who sat rather squarely on her chair at a conference table, looked amiably through her glasses, and spoke in a comfortable voice. Few persons have received more citations and awards for distinguished service in journalism, and especially in foreign correspondence; but she carried her honours lightly. Nevertheless, she was unmistakably the newspaperwoman when a discussion touched the functions of the Press, and her outstanding contribution was an address to the Programme and Budget Commission on the need for closer relations between Unesco and the world's editors and publishers.

Mrs Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, of India, was elected chairman of the Sub-Commission on Mass Communications. This was perhaps the hardest of the sub-commissions—not merely because it had more meetings than most of the others, but also because the subjects discussed were difficult and controversial. One of the toughest debates of the conference was centred on the activities of what is known as the Projects Division, a committee of experts who are obliged to find ways of stimulating public interest, through Press, radio and cinema, in the development of international understanding. The work of the division was given close and critical examination; and although this was a sign of health in the conference, it must have placed a strain on the chairman. Mrs

Chattopadhyaya was a quietly watchful figure throughout the debate. She found her way through a heavy agenda without faltering, and at the end of the meetings she had left with her colleagues an impression of stillness which might have explained the source of her influence.

There were women with some of the other delegations who showed that they were by no means amateurs in administration. Mme Edel Saunte, of Denmark, is a member of Parliament and a barrister at the Court of Appeal. Her braided hair, blue eyes and composed features made her an interesting figure at committee meetings, and she had a legal pertinacity in following a subject to its proper conclusion. Equally attractive and competent were the women members of the Lebanese delegation. They were alert and charming, and at least one young woman of Lebanon made it impossible to doubt that beauty and intelligence may be found together.

In a last glance at an interesting group of people it is only right that I should notice a woman who moved and worked as an equal among the most efficient members of the Secretariat. Throughout the meetings of representatives of national commissions, which preceded the opening of the General Conference, Miss Lorna McPhee sat next to the chairman in the place reserved for the officer who must supply information and expert opinion. I hope no violence will be done to the international spirit if I mention here that I was at all times proud to remember that she was a New Zealander.



TENSIONS

AMONG THE ILLUSIONS which grow up in the slightly humid atmosphere of a conference is the belief that the immediate future is likely to be one of the more important periods of history. The constant movement of people, the exposition of ideas and the little solemnities leave a feeling of achievement, as if the passing of a resolution could somehow bring us to higher moments of experience, or as if speeches which invited us to look down the shadowed ways of history could also bring us nearer to bright and sunlit ways in the future. This, of course, is the necessary mood, the glow of enthusiasm, without which no work of much value could be done. If men did not feel themselves to be engaged usefully, they would be better at home; and it is to be expected that in concentrating on the tasks before them they should come to imagine the tasks to be greater than they are.

Because the work in Beirut aroused all our energies, and was international in character, we felt ourselves to be proving the value of co-operation. Its efficacy, demonstrated to us daily in committee rooms or in full conference, encouraged the belief that the world was a more reasonable place than we had supposed it to be. Perhaps, after all, the pessimism outside was unjustified. The nations were learning to negotiate, and although there was crisis in western Europe, and a little war in Palestine—less than a hundred miles from the conference rooms—these might be subsiding tensions which would not interfere seriously with the movement towards sanity.

It was therefore chilling to find after the conference that people everywhere were depressed by the state of the world. Little confidence was being shown in United Nations. Our own conference had been modestly successful; but statesmen who had attended the General Assembly in Paris were saying openly that the session had been 'a poor show.' And if the parent organization

were thus falling into disrepute, it would be hard to convince the public that the work of its specialized agencies, including Unesco, could be much better than a playing of fiddles while flames began to show redly among the outworks of our civilization.

I suppose that most of us at Beirut had shared the general misgivings before the conference opened. We, too, had believed that events in Germany and Palestine were undermining the peace. Failures of negotiation had seemed to us, as to other people, to widen the gulf that already existed between the giant factions of east and west. Yet the work of the conference, by turning us from spectators into actors—even though we were actors with minor roles—had lifted us towards hopefulness. It was true that *our work had distant objectives*. The promotion of fundamental education and a series of research projects in the social sciences require a long interval of peace for their successful completion. We all understood that our projects rested on the assumption that peace would be maintained, and that our efforts would be lost like gossamer slashed by hailstones from blind hedges if the nations slipped again into war. Yet we knew also that, whatever dark web the furies might be spinning, the work had to be done. There is a compulsion for good as well as for evil; and I think sometimes that efforts which seem to be wasted when the cause is lost are preserved in an essential way in the real world that *exists outside time*. Or if that be a belief which requires metaphysical support that cannot be supplied in these pages, it can at least be said that men and women who have made the attempt are themselves better for the striving. And although we do not need to go to an international conference to discover this simple truth, we need to remember it if we are to be realistic in our approach to tasks which otherwise would be too formidable.

The mood I have tried to describe was never really absent from the conference; but I think it reached its sharpest edge when we came to discuss what is known as the Tensions Project. It must be admitted at once that in the work of the Social Sciences Section of Unesco there is *much room for misconception*. An inquiry into tensions affecting international understanding is supposed by many people to be an attack on immediate tensions in politics. Experts are thought to be engaged in an exhaustive

search for some formula which will miraculously remove the dangers which now hang like clouds above the international scene. The misconception has been brought about largely by the use of ordinary language to classify an activity which belongs to the thin atmosphere of academic research. One delegate said at a meeting of the Sub-Commission on Social Sciences that the entire programme of Unesco was in effect an attempt to remove tensions. In the meantime, however, the Social Sciences Section can narrow the attack to fields of psychology and education where thinkers are concerned with the formation of attitudes.

Some tensions are found only in the individual. Others grow up inside a group which may be a class or section of society, or a complete nation. Still others may be described as inter-group, the products of friction where classes, societies and nations are in touch with one another. Social scientists have been studying these mental and social phenomena for many years; and in some countries, especially the United States, their investigations have been so thorough that whole libraries have been built up around them.

There are, of course, many different theories: it could be said that there are even different languages for explaining them. Moreover, social scientists, who include workers in various fields of research, are inclined to believe that the true faith has been granted only to their own discipline, and that the darkness of ignorance covers all other attempts. These are the little academic tensions which remind us that original sin pursues us from the lowest to the highest levels of human enterprise. Nevertheless, the conflict of method and the variety of hypotheses do not weaken the value of the work: they merely indicate its limitations.

In New Zealand, for instance, we have seen the outline of the Maori situation more clearly since men like Professor I. L. G. Sutherland and Professor Ernest Beaglehole carried out their scientific investigations. When we are given reliable information about the way a minority lives, its special problems of adjustment within a larger society, we begin to see what needs to be done to remove friction and injustice. In other parts of the world men are engaged on similar inquiries. If their studies are compared, it may be found that, when allowance is made for differences of

environment and history, certain factors are constant. The way is then opened for tentative conclusions. Thereafter the educationist, taking notice of what has been discovered, may see before him a new field for the application of methods that have been found useful for the modification of attitudes.

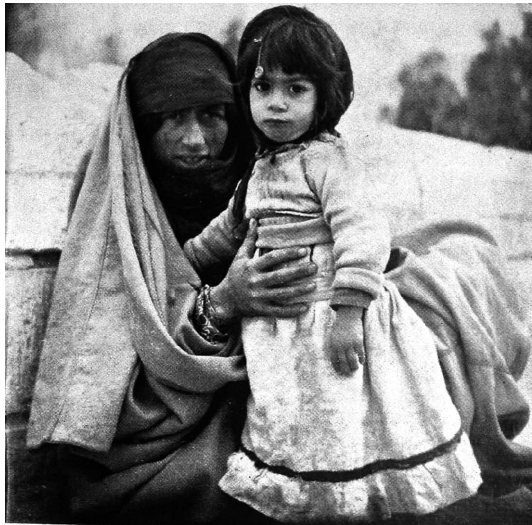
This is a simplified account of a process which is both complex and technical. There is much to be investigated. What, for instance, is the part played by early nurture in the development of character? What can we learn from the behaviour of children separated from their parents and families during wartime evacuation? What opinions do children hold about 'foreigners' in their midst, and why do they hold them? What influences have built up the conception, or image, which a people has of itself and other nations? How do children of different nationalities behave if they are educated together? What can be done by community centres to reduce the tensions of family and communal life? What results have been obtained by experimental schools—for example, the folk high schools of Denmark—and how far could the methods used by them be successful in other countries?

These are some of the simpler questions that are being asked by psychologists, sociologists and educationists in different parts of the world. In some places the questions are being asked more carefully than in others, and wider resources in research are being used to answer them. Elsewhere they are not being asked at all, or are being studied inadequately because the men who could help to find the answers are required for routine work in the universities. Clearly, then, the first necessity is to find out what is being done. Unesco has called upon experts to supply information which becomes, as it were, a map of relevant activity throughout the world. When the map is completed, it will be possible to see where new research can be stimulated. It will be seen, also, where social scientists have most to gain from new methods. Simultaneously, research is being encouraged in subjects that so far have been neglected, or that have been treated superficially. In the background is the need to bring research workers more closely into touch with one another, so that results obtained in one centre can be known more quickly in other countries, and so that the stimulus which comes from co-operation in academic tasks can be

shared more widely. If social sciences can help to overcome the ills of the age, the work that is being done by Unesco is potentially valuable.

A project which covers so many different subjects for research may seem from the outside to be unwieldy and artificial, a patchwork from which the pure scholar must turn with raised eyebrows and gently twitching nostrils. It is certainly a complex of interests which needs to be approached carefully by critics; and I noticed, without surprise, that delegates on the sub-commission which examined the project at Beirut moved on its outskirts with due circumspection. Admittedly, little more than that could be done in the short time at their disposal. A subject which has grown in scope and complexity, with the assistance of scholars of high reputation, cannot be examined by a miscellaneous group of laymen in three hours. Nevertheless, they were spokesmen for national commissions, and they were able to express opinions, in general terms, which had been reached by experts in their own countries who had looked at the project more closely.

Almost without exception, their comments described the growth of a single attitude. In the beginning there had been scepticism, a feeling that the field was too vast, and exposed too much to the incursions of faction in the newer disciplines of the social sciences. How could it be possible to find a central pathway through that murky and confused region, where so many little paths ran off into bogs and wastelands of the mind? But the project was established, and as reports came in of new activities the scepticism was replaced by interest. Men who studied the work that was being done began to see that some of it was valuable, and that even if the human race continued to generate tensions of the sort which make the lives of organized societies precarious it would strengthen the assault on ignorance. Perhaps it would be a good thing after all if there could be a central clearing house for material which was being collected by patient investigators. The social sciences imply action as well as research: it must be assumed that discoveries about human behaviour can be applied eventually in the newer methods of education. And what better testing ground could there be than an international bureau which could have the co-operation of thinkers and research centres



APPRAISING EYES. An Arab woman and her child, photographed on the pavement of a city in the Middle East.



WELCOME TO DAMASCUS. Some of the children who greeted Unesco delegates outside the entrance to the Syrian University.

throughout the world? The ultimate purpose may be too big, and too nebulous—a purpose to be looked upon as an ideal rather than as an attainable objective; but in the meantime there can be incidental results of increasing value in the schools, the clinics and the homes of ordinary people. Therefore the national commissions began to give their support more freely, and interest moved gradually towards an unreserved co-operation.

I thought of these things as I sat with the sub-commission and heard the delegates give their testimony. It was instructive, also, to hear the concise and lucid exposition given by Dr Otto Klineberg, the American social scientist in charge of the project. He is a man who, though short in stature, contrives always to leave an impression of bigness. The impression comes partly from his face and head, which are finely moulded; but it is strengthened when he speaks. He was not a stranger to me at Beirut, for I had met him previously at a small conference held at Royaumont, a medieval abbey about 30 kilometres from Paris. The purpose of the meeting, which was attended by representatives of fifteen different nations, was to discuss methods of attitude change which could be incorporated in the Tensions Project. It was a difficult conference. The subjects were abstract, and some of the delegates showed that they were still feeling their way towards a clear understanding. Dr Klineberg, who acted as chairman, guided the discussions with great ability. His summaries and recapitulations saved us often from irrelevancy, and he had an unusual capacity for grasping ideas: he could reach towards meanings that were sometimes rather deeply embedded in statements made by other people.

There could have been no better place than Royaumont for the work we were doing. The abbey had been occupied for centuries by monks of the Cistercian order, and although it had not been unvisited by violence (a broken tower and an empty lawn showed where an attempt at dismantlement had been made during the French Revolution) its walls and cloisters had preserved a deep tranquillity. We lived in the abbey for five days, taking our meals together, walking in the gardens between meetings, and sleeping at night in narrow little rooms with stone walls. Outside was autumn weather, an ample sunshine filtering through the

trees in the park and falling upon the turf and the enclosed garden. I had come from a place where on most days of the year a wind is rustling among the trees, and perhaps it was easier for me than for most other people to feel the continuing stillness. Yet it was stillness within as well as without: the walls excluded no influence from the quiet countryside, and the great building seemed to have its own reserves of peace in corridors and silent chambers.

I heard some light-hearted talk of ghosts; and indeed, if such entities may exist in places that have been warmed and stained by human occupancy for hundreds of years, it should have been possible to find them at Royaumont. Yet I doubt if I have ever slept anywhere more quietly. There was no sight of a hooded shape in the dim corridors, no 'cold spot' on the stairs, no feeling of evil or unhappy presence. Sometimes I would lie wakefully, unwilling to go to sleep while moonlight came through the open window and lay softly on the stone walls of my room. It was impossible to feel the returning peace without remembering that men had worshipped here in the age of faith. There must be some connection between the earlier life of the abbey and the peace that survived from it. Perhaps this was the answer to questions we were asking in our conference room about the tensions of the times. Was not religion the most potent of all influences in the changing of attitudes? Were we not relying too much on reason and scientific method, trying in our intellectual life to keep pace with the racing machine? Could solutions be found only in the mind, while grace was withheld from neglected spirit? But then came further questions. Many religions are in the world, and none of them can be dominant. In the room next to mine a Moslem was sleeping. At every international conference may be found Christians, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and the followers of creeds and sects which reveal opposed conceptions of human destiny. Religion keeps the way open for inflowing spirit, and men of faith may do better work than the unbelieving humanist. But there must be both faith and works. Unesco can never supply any sort of substitute for religion: it can only supply new tasks for those who see that in every stage of history the religious temper is man's best defence against evil.

At the end of our discussion on the Tensions Project at Beirut

it fell to me to move that the programme resolutions be adopted. I noted with interest and satisfaction that one of those who offered to second the motion was a priest as well as a delegate.

MEMORIES IN STONE

WE WORKED six days a week, and were usually freed from the last meetings by seven o'clock on Saturday night. Sundays were used mainly for excursions organized by the Lebanese authorities, whose hospitality during the four weeks of our stay in Beirut was unfailingly generous. We were taken in fleets of motor cars to Baalbek, where the ruined temples of Jupiter, Bacchus and Venus stand massively on the rural landscape of the Bekaa, or central plain. The Syrian Government invited us to Damascus, and again the long line of cars moved across the Lebanon—this time with snow on the upper roads—to the flanks of Anti-Lebanon, the brown plains and the ancient city. On our own initiative we went one Sunday to Byblos, the site of an early Phoenician city, about twenty miles from Beirut. In all these places we looked back through time, or peered as far as we could, with the aid of baffled imagination, to civilizations which have left a few monuments, pillars and colonnades like broken teeth, and heaps of stone and rubble for the instruction of tourists.

Baalbek is the archaeological show-place in Lebanon. The Romans called it Heliopolis, and on the site of a temple dedicated in remote times to Hadad, the sun (known generally as Baal, or Master, Lord) they built temples of their own. These were enormous structures, intended to be permanent; but they have been shaken by earthquakes, desecrated by barbarians, and partly demolished in the interests of newer faiths. The temple of Jupiter was destroyed by order of the emperor Constantine; but the task was too great even for the ant-like hordes at the disposal of his legions—or perhaps it was interrupted by border warfare—for six of the fifty-four columns which surrounded the temple are standing to this day. Theodosius, responsive to the spirit of assimilation which informed the early Christian faith, turned the temple of Bacchus into a church. Time and war, however, brought

the cluster of sacred buildings to a common ruin. Moslem invaders turned part of Baalbek into a fortress. There was fighting under the walls, and blood was spilt on the steps of the citadel. Conflicting accounts are provided by historians: the details given here may not be exact. In general outline, however, the story is the familiar one of religious and military conquests. From the time of Solomon, who is reputed to have built the first temple of Baal in one of his busiest trade centres (for Baalbek was a depot on the route from Mesopotamia) men have worshipped and fought with equal fervour on this patch of earth under the western slopes of Anti-Lebanon.

We stood in the Great Court of Sacrifices and looked about us at the terraces, the six pillars of Jupiter, and the tumbled masonry. A large group of delegates followed an English-speaking guide, and paused in the sunshine to hear him recite the facts of architecture and history. Other groups found their own way up the terraces and ramps of earth, and into shadowy places under the walls, where arrow-slots gave them a bowman's view of the world outside. It was a time for thinking of the past, and of lessons that have not been learned; and if further reminders were needed they could be found in the soldiers stationed with machine-guns and rifles at vantage points around the precincts.

I should think that only the trained archaeologist could feel himself at home in that wilderness of stone. It did not bring to me any strong feeling of the past. The relics of a vanished age stood before us; but they were merely the bones, and no surviving warmth of the flesh clung about them. In Phœnician times the cult of Astarte had demanded voluptuous expression. Thousands of slaves had suffered under the lash, and had died miserably while Roman engineers watched the great stones being levered into position. For hundreds of years men and women of another age had climbed those terraces, or had bowed themselves before the golden statue of Jupiter. The chanting of the faithful had been heard among the Corinthian pillars which formerly surrounded the old temple of Bacchus. Blood had fallen on the stones of sacrifice. People had been slaughtered here by Moslems, Tartars and Crusaders. It would be difficult, I thought, to find any other patch of earth which had absorbed such torrents of feeling. Yet the fear and hatred, the lust and religious ecstasy, and the hopes

and passions of millions that have been pressed out of the sunshine into the dust, are quite extinct. Even the stones, worn and smoothed by countless feet, and touched by countless hands, are neutral. The cleansing rains have fallen for centuries on forgotten altars. There have been earthquakes and floods, and all the blood has been washed away.

It was much the same at Byblos, which in some ways is more interesting than Baalbek. We stood on the ramparts of a castle built by Crusaders and looked down upon the low fences of stone which are the remains of a Phoenician city. There were vestiges of an Egyptian temple. Among the ruins were pits which contained sarcophagi. Near the water's edge (for Byblos was a port, reputedly the oldest in the world) was a small Roman theatre, with semi-circular tiers which seated about 150 people, and with a stage supported in front by pillars of perfect design and proportion. We looked and wondered, and the weight of time was too much for us.

New Zealanders have no relics of history in their own country, and perhaps it is harder for them than for most other people to grasp the implications of stone. We are so far from the ancient sources of culture that we must see them in the imagination, if we are to see them at all; and we are oppressed by their warnings of mutability. Against the emptiness of our own islands, deprived of human warmth while elsewhere men fought and migrated and loved and died, the broken columns are thrown as if into a mirror; and we pause in our readings of classical history to see them with a strange distinctness. It is hard for us to believe that people who live within reach of ruins, in Europe and the Middle East, should be so slow to learn from them the lessons of human folly. Yet in our mirror we see only the ruins: we do not see the countryside around them. Not until we stand on the sites of ancient cities and temples, and see how easily the earth contains them, do we begin to understand the meaning of the monuments.

The people of Lebanon value their relics. Their national museum in Beirut, one of the finest institutions of its kind I have ever visited, reveals the movement of history across the coasts of Asia Minor. It could be said, perhaps, that in one sense the whole of the country is a museum. Yet it is by no means a museum in

the meaning given to the word by many of our own people, who are inclined to believe that a building which houses relics of any kind is a dull and depressing place. Here is a land which has been lived in for thousands of years; but it is not overshadowed by the past. The coastal plain is a warm and fruitful garden, glowing with oranges and bananas, and filled with villages that are overflowing with life. Along the ranges are villas and hotels which receive tourists from many parts of the world, especially from the dry regions of the Middle East. The terraced hillsides are cultivated by a new generation of peasants, and the rich soil of the central plain produces crops that continue to be plentiful in spite of the immemorial harvesting. Beirut is the capital of a young republic, finding its new place among the nations. Men are living and dying, and the lesson of the ruins is not more significant than the lesson of headstones in a cemetery. Individuals die, and so do nations and races and civilizations. The earth itself remains fruitful. Time is a stream which flows in the semi-real world of change and evolution; and the true realist is he who sees that only values are permanent, and that they have their source outside time, in the real world of spirit.

Men who work for an international organization, hoping to make the world a better place, need not be dismayed when they pause in their labours to look upon the graves of other cultures. Products of the mind live longer than temples and fortresses. Moreover, cultures rarely become extinct: they are superseded, but with few exceptions they are absorbed by newer systems, and make their contributions to the moral and intellectual experience of mankind. The material vestiges of classical Greece are a few buildings and monuments which, in spite of their great durability, could be levelled and broken by bombs. But the teachings of Plato and Aristotle have been transmitted by scribes and printers until their books are so widely dispersed that some of them would survive a new ice age of the intellect, and would help to bring about another renaissance when the time came for tyranny to be overthrown. Further, they have been elements in history, influencing rulers and churchmen. The words and ideas, though they might have seemed flimsy and intangible things when compared with solid masonry, were marvellously productive, while one by one

the temples were being lowered into the dust. Similarly, we do not look for the remains of the Roman Empire in roads, dilapidated theatres and sagging aqueducts, but seek them in the systems and traditions of law and government.

Delegates who are pledged to activities of mind and spirit will not be dismayed by reminders that the proudest achievements of soldiers and engineers must come to nothing. Nevertheless, they have need to remember that scholars and artists can work only in the framework provided for them by sovereign States. If the way of life is too harsh and narrow, thought and vision will remain close to the surface. Civilizations pass; but they should not pass too quickly if the world is to be saved for the human race. And one of the reasons why they decline and die is their increasing rigidity. That, at least, was the thought to which I returned most often while I looked upon the ruins of Baalbek and Byblos.

In the centuries before Christianity there was no lack of religion in the world; but it was too often a crude and wasteful spiritualism which was bound up inextricably with earthly interests. The gods played about with human destiny, and the aim of worship and ritual was to persuade them to make life easier and happier for their chosen peoples. Gods and men alike were concerned with the world, and on the other side of the river was only darkness, or at best a twilight in which men could yearn unavailingly for the sun and the good earth. The mood was expressed most plainly in funeral customs. There are sarcophagi in the museum of Beirut which are so massive that an immense expenditure of labour with crude tools and inflexible stone must have been needed to prepare them for the tomb. Kings and noblemen went to their graves with food and equipment which showed that their journey to the next world was visualized merely as an extension of life as it was known on earth. Even in the Roman period, men living in the East were buried in cumbrous caskets of stone, designed to last for thousands of years. In the basement of the Beirut museum may be seen, reconstructed in entirety, the tomb of a Roman family. Presumably it belongs to a time when, under the influence of Christianity, cremation was passing out of favour. Several centuries had passed since the heavier sarcophagi were in use among the Syrians; and the coffins in their narrow apertures in the walls, although still

made of stone, were much lighter. They were made, perhaps, when the thought of permanence, or survival, was losing some of its former earthiness. But even then the cringing soul found shelter in stone.

The older civilizations were not unlike the soft-bodied monsters of prehistory, in that they failed to adapt themselves to new conditions. They sought permanence, and their great structures seemed to imprison ideas which could have lived only if they could evolve. But rigidity is a property to be found not merely in stone. The mind has won new and wide regions of activity. In doing so, however, it has not lost the impulses which formerly expressed themselves in sarcophagi meant for a crudely conceived eternity. Men build more simply today because the advance in science, which is the product of intellectual freedom, has given them lighter and more flexible materials. Further, they can look back through history, and therefore are less disposed to reach possessively into the future. But our civilization, although more flexible in its material forms, is not without its own tendency to become rigid. We build our houses with the thought that if they stand for fifty years we shall have had all that we need from them; our public buildings are replaced at decent intervals; and—in New Zealand, if not so much elsewhere—there is little desire to erect monuments. Yet we bind ourselves increasingly in networks of regulation. In every country in the west the business of government has become so complex that it is being left to experts. Administration is a necessity in the age of steel, and we must have new ways of organizing life amid the complexities brought upon us by the machine. Like all activities of mind, however, it moves towards an intense and spontaneous proliferation. There is a point in human affairs where it ceases to be a necessity and becomes an interest in itself. Excessive administration can restrain and weaken a culture, even though its initial aim is to free the human spirit.

Unesco is essentially an administrative machine, and it is therefore exposed to the same dangers which exist today in all States that are highly organized. It has acquired experts who are like machine-minders of the intellect. Inevitably, they develop a technical skill which makes it hard for them to be patient with amateurs who come in from outside with criticism and suggestion.

The man who looks after the machine is inclined everywhere to think of it as something which belongs to him, or at least as if its purposes were narrowly functional. He is always in danger of losing sight of the aims it is intended to fulfil. Even within the factory or workshop his own department becomes the true centre of activity. Moreover, the concentration upon administrative detail is infectious. Delegates who come to a conference with ideas that seem to them to be worth attention may find that ideas have to be measured against the needs and capacities of the machine.

There were many reasons why Lebanon proved to be an ideal place in which to hold a general conference. Not least among them was the nearness of antiquity. The transition from conference room to the ruins of Baalbek and Byblos was a lesson in perspective which could not fail to have a profound effect on all who shared it. Unesco should go forward more smoothly, and to better purpose, now that the vision which drives it has been renewed on coasts from which the Phoenicians, those earlier voyagers, set out to find their way through unknown seas.

'MY DAY AT UNESCO'

ONE OF THE MINOR PROJECTS which New Zealand has declined to support is an essay competition for children. In our belief, it would fail to stimulate interest in Unesco, and would be more likely to induce the special loathing reserved by the young for more tedious tasks of the schoolroom. Only a few boys and girls have any capacity for writing essays: for most children it is a drudgery which causes acute discomfort. The work is less difficult if it can be connected with actual experience, or with interests that are close to the hearts and minds of youth. Even a boy who speaks most of the time in pidgin English of the playground, and who has few thoughts apart from his animal needs, may write with truth and feeling if he is asked to describe in his own words a football match which has been soothing to local pride. The further the subject is taken from what he has known and seen for himself, the deeper will be his frustration. What is furthest from the interest of the normal child than an international organization? He must learn about it, and it will become a natural extension of work that is already being done in social studies. But teachers and parents who have read what has been written by intelligent children about such matters as the government of their own country and the administration of law must have noticed that in most cases the statements were pale copies of what had been taught them, untouched by any hint of life which could show that the ideas had been gripped by the mind. It would all slide away when the child was free to think of other and more congenial things.

The response is different if the subject is concrete, and if it is brought in a dramatic way into the life of the school. And that is what happened in Beirut. As in other parts of the world, Unesco had been a word which meant very little to children. Then came the announcement that the third General Conference was to be held in Lebanon. From that moment the word began to have

personal and national implications. The President made statements of policy; the Government debated ways and means; the newspapers kept the public fully informed; and shopkeepers in the narrow streets and bazaars made calculations about the possibilities of profit. By the time the conference building was ready, there could have been few children in Beirut who did not understand that something unusual was about to happen. The delegations began to arrive, and motor cars with Unesco number plates were to be seen in the city. Finally, on a day of brilliant sunshine, the flags of all the member States were solemnly raised—a pretty girl handling the ropes at every pole, under the supervision of anxious policemen; a guard of honour and a band marched up to the main entrance; the President arrived for the opening ceremony, and the echoes of music and polite acclamation were heard by crowds outside the gates. This, clearly, was an event which could be explained without much difficulty in classrooms where interest had already been stimulated.

During the next four weeks there was a constant movement of people towards the grounds and buildings which came to be known collectively as Unesco. The public galleries were never empty. They were usually well attended, even for sessions which were expected to be short; and for debates of more than ordinary interest they were crowded. One afternoon we looked out from our office window and saw that the police had had to form a cordon, through which visitors, brandishing passes, were permitted to move singly towards the doors. Could this have happened in New Zealand? Undoubtedly, there could have been the same eagerness to gain entry to a building, but only if the spectacle to be watched were a prize fight, a wrestling match or a circus. We felt reasonably certain that our countrymen would not have struggled for seats from which to hear middle-aged and elderly persons make speeches on such matters as the proposed use of Spanish as a third working language for Unesco.

Day after day the children came in long crocodiles. Many of them were attended by nuns or priests, for fifty-three per cent. of the people in Lebanon are Christians belonging to sects which include the Maronites, the Greek Orthodox, various Catholic groups, a modest number of Protestants, and even a handful of

' Jacobites,' representing an offshoot of the Nestorian Church. Equally numerous are the sects of Islam. We watched the children, waiting until room could be found for them in the galleries; and we often wondered, as we passed the long and animated queues, what impressions of Unesco would be taken back to the homes and schools. As it happened, we were able to obtain a little evidence which helped us to see the event through some of those younger eyes.

Among the people with whom we became friendly was a master at a Quaker mission school. He had been in charge of a number of boys who visited the conference, and who afterwards were obliged to write essays entitled ' My Day at Unesco.' If it had been possible to analyse the essays, using methods which enable research workers to discover cross-sections of opinion, we might have reached conclusions of more than transient value. There was no time or opportunity to do more than rely on the impressions given us by a man of intelligence and broad interests.

The boys were all Arabs, and their average age was fourteen. It was clear from their essays that they had been impressed by what they had seen. Even when allowance was made for the desire to please which is one of the weaknesses of essay-writing in schools—since children tend to say what is expected of them rather than what they really think—the notes of interest and excitement could be detected. They liked the flags and the crowds. In every essay some mention was made of a floral reproduction of the word ' Unesco ' on a lawn inside the gateway. The conference building was described in terms which showed that the boys looked on it as a national achievement, of which they were entitled to feel proud. It was *their* building.

Not surprisingly, the most interesting thing inside the building was the use of listening apparatus through which simultaneous interpretation could be made of speeches from the rostrum. Many boys described the instruments, with phonetic accuracy, as ' waukie-taukies.' Headphones and batteries were available for spectators in the galleries as well as for delegates. They have been made familiar, at least in appearance, to cinema audiences throughout the world; but it was a new and exciting experience for young Arabs to adjust the headphones, to lift up the catch which brought

the set 'alive,' and to move the tiny knob until the right number was shown on the dial and the voice of speaker or interpreter could be heard with miraculous distinctness. The effect on schoolboy listeners ranged from ingenuous mystification to a faintly smug criticism. 'I say, sir,' exclaimed one lad, 'there's a man speaking up there, and I can hear a woman saying it in English!' Another boy, remembering the dignity of learning, controlled his emotion and became the solemn and precocious linguist: 'I listened only to the speaker, sir. I could hear it in three languages, but as I understood all of them it was better to listen to the speaker, because the translation was so bad!'

The delegates were described in some essays as 'commissioners,' and one boy thought he was being accurate when he referred to them as 'delicates'—a word which so delighted the New Zealand delegation that it used no other, in private conversation, for the remainder of the conference. Conscientious observers produced a list of delegates, and the countries they represented, in the order in which they had spoken. And much notice was taken of personal characteristics. One speaker of substantial girth received general attention: we were told that the school's fat boy was already being called 'the delegate from —.'

Perhaps the most interesting reaction, however, was provoked by a question of behaviour. While the boys were in the galleries the president of the conference announced that the discussion of 'the language problem' (the proposed use of Spanish as a working language by Unesco) would be adjourned until the following morning. In the meantime the session was to be adjourned for five minutes. As was usual in such cases, the five minutes proved to be elastic; and when the meeting was resumed the seats were thinly occupied. The boys were frankly shocked. 'This is bad,' they said, looking seriously at one another. 'Only fifteen present!'

The Arabs have a natural tact in these matters. They are courteous, and are careful to avoid actions which might seem to be offences against the sacred laws of hospitality. The boys felt instinctively that the dignity of Unesco was impaired by thin representation at a plenary meeting. Possibly they would have gone further, and would have insisted, in their conscientious way, that every meeting at a conference should be fully attended. There

are, of course, good reasons why empty chairs should be noticeable in committee rooms. Some delegations are so small that they must select the occasions which, from their point of view, are the most important. Nevertheless, the schoolboy critics were closer to the mark than they might have realized. There had been a full plenary meeting because the language question was being discussed; and as soon as the debate was adjourned the delegates from many countries found that they had pressing business elsewhere. They were reminded of this by an outspoken delegate when the debate reached one of its warmest moments on the following day. Commission and committee meetings of the utmost importance, he said in effect, had been so poorly attended that in some cases chairmen had had difficulty in obtaining a quorum. Yet people crowded into the main chamber to take part in a discussion which involved regional instead of international interests.

It is unfortunately true that issues which involve national prestige can still provoke the greatest activity at a Unesco conference. The Spanish-speaking peoples have a case for the use of their language: they can argue, with obvious truth, that fourteen States cannot take a fully effective part in the discussions while they are compelled to rely on delegates who are able to speak English or French. But the costs of interpretation and translation, both at conferences and in the preparation of documents, are very high; and the adoption of a new working language would make it still harder to restrain the expenses of administration in a comparatively small budget. The great need is to reduce administrative costs in order to devote more money to programme activities which justify the existence of Unesco.

The world would need to be a better place than it is today if the work of a conference were to be entirely free from national and regional rivalries. Men who argued passionately in Beirut for an administrative reform which would increase the prestige and influence of their own countries were also able to do good work in initiating, or strengthening, projects that were purely international. And it was not only in the campaign for the use of Spanish that losses of moral unity could be detected. Differences of outlook illustrated the position of member States in the groupings that have taken place since the inception of Unesco. Some nations

were receiving assistance; others were giving much more than they could ever hope to receive. Inevitably, therefore, national interests sometimes came to the surface.

Beyond these narrow interests were the wider hopes and aspirations of race. It is believed in some countries, not without justification, that Unesco is influenced too much by European thought; and attempts have been made to obtain 'cultural centres' to serve distant areas under the guidance of the parent organization. India has already succeeded in gaining authority for setting up an 'institute of cultural co-operation' for south and east Asian countries. Although these moves are taking place within the framework of Unesco, they may indicate the growth of a cultural regionalism which has an interesting, and possibly a significant, parallel in politics. Similar requests have come from the Middle East and Latin America. They are unwelcome to internationalists because they imply the formation of blocs which may be used to support special instead of general interests.

Yet it is necessary to be realistic about the nature of international co-operation. Arab schoolboys, watching from the public galleries, might have supposed that delegates assembled in conference were meeting on terms of intellectual and moral equality, and that they could be expected to be faithful to ideals and principles which were equally valid in all parts of the world. Undoubtedly, there was a loyalty to common ideals; but for some nations the principles are embedded deeply in history, whereas for others they are lessons that are being learned slowly, and with difficulty, amid political interruptions and in social climates that are not entirely favourable. There are many stages of political development. The Englishman is able to speak on international themes from a background enriched by long maturity in government; and the American may speak with the assurance of knowledge and power. But other nations are still in a state of adolescence. They are becoming influential in their own areas, or they are attempting to win economic and military security in regions with too many frontiers. Sometimes they are assertive because they are unsure of their place in the world. And sometimes they feel obliged to demonstrate their friendship for stronger neighbours.

There are subjects discussed at a Unesco conference which

leave undisturbed the pride, fears and ambitions of weaker States. Then, indeed, it is possible to see what could be done if equality rested on political and economic grounds as well as on a clause in a constitution. The discussion becomes an example of true co-operation, with every delegate anxious to assist in the discovery of the best solution. There are individuals of high moral stature who take this mood to every meeting; but sooner or later a controversial question brings up evidence of the nationalism which dilutes the work of every conference. Perhaps it would be wise to remember that men would not be active in international causes unless they had learned first to be active for the welfare of their own people and country. Nationalism is the enemy of international co-operation when it is felt and expressed too strongly; but in its more modest and balanced forms it is an essential feature of the process. Men and ideas must be rooted somewhere: they cannot live permanently and healthily in the thin atmosphere where common purposes are brought into being. Internationalism at its best is not an unstained purity of thought and effort, but a striving for understanding which is like the reaching upwards of spirit. And spirit works through mind, which is dependent on the body; and the flesh has many weaknesses.

How can these things be explained to the young? Perhaps, after all, it is not necessary to explain them. The mere fact of a conference has its impact on the imagination. Our Quaker friend told us that the older boys at his school were fascinated by what they had seen and heard. One boy sat all day in the gallery, and the words that recurred in his essay were 'wonderful' and 'inspiring.' This boy was not responding merely to superficial excitements. He was listening to speeches, and he was hearing something that could not be heard by delegates, or even by adults in the galleries. People from British countries are not easily touched by oratory: they look for meanings, and are suspicious of words which leave ideas in a mist of sound. Yet sometimes there is need of music which only suggests, and which leaves in a receptive mind a disturbance that may loosen old prejudices or clear the way for new thinking. The young listener was receiving what he needed.

If it can be shown that the friction of minds at a conference

can be shared imaginatively by a few schoolboys, there may be reasons for hoping that the experience will not be without value for a wider audience. But how can that audience be reached? The work of Unesco has to be seen in the round before it can be seen faithfully. Its imperfections, even its follies, must be accepted as elements of achievement. For the imperfections are being attacked, and the follies are being resisted; and out of the total process there must come, for the sympathetic spectator, some echoes of that music which may be heard, as the Arab schoolboy heard it, beyond the edge of human attainment. Unfortunately, the General Conference of Unesco can make only a slow progress from one country to another. The ordinary man hears discords, and a few isolated reports of practical effort; but for the most part there is silence. And that is the hardest enemy to overcome.

LAST WORDS

THE CONFERENCE began to die at the beginning of the fourth week. Its decline could not have been noticed by people outside Unesco. There was no sudden change of appearance, no falling away of public interest, no pause in the flow of documents from electric duplicators. Motor cars with Unesco number plates were numerous in the traffic, and strangers were still being served in the shops by zealous salesmen. Fewer meetings were announced in the Journal (a printed news-sheet, issued daily by the Secretariat), but the reports of committees were being received by the Programme and Budget Commission, and there were to be plenary meetings of some importance. Yet a subtle alteration of mood was taking place inside the organization. Delegates were not now overwhelmed with business. The sub-commissions had nearly all come to the end of their work, and although reports were being heard of severe incisions in the budget, and of last-minute attempts to reverse decisions reached at earlier meetings, it became evident that the hardest work was over, and that the general outline of the programme for the coming year had been fixed irrevocably. Meanwhile the delegations were collecting material for their reports, attending luncheons, dinners and cocktail parties in a conscientious exchange of courtesies, and making preparations for departure.

It was easy, but rather dangerous, to slip into the more relaxed mood which came in the last days of the conference. Much work was still to be done; and it was now, when reports were being discussed and adopted in plenary meetings, that the results of earlier efforts could be lost or confirmed. Delegations which had fought for resolutions or amendments through different stages of the conference had to be ready to defend them from the rostrum. Nothing was safe until the last word had been spoken. In the background, however, were thoughts which could weaken our concentration on issues which a week ago would have had undivided

attention. Most of us had interests and tasks to which we were anxious to return. In a few days we would be dispersed as widely as the leaves blown from a tree in autumn. The English writer with whom I had lunched an hour or two ago would be on his way to a home in Italy. Men and women whose faces had become familiar and pleasant to us would disappear in planes that were to carry them to countries under the grey and darkening skies of winter. Others would turn towards the sun, travelling swiftly to antipodean summers. And there would be differences of circumstance as well as of climate. Men who had been eating, with obvious relish, the rich and unrationed foods of Lebanon, would know again the straitened diet of Central Europe. And what were the thoughts of Chinese delegates as word came to us of advancing armies and captured cities in the land to which they would presently return?

At the end, however, the conference triumphantly retained its unity. Whatever might have been the private thoughts and feelings of delegates, there was no loss of effort or enthusiasm in the final meeting. It was a day for speeches of more than usual amplitude. The galleries were crowded, and delegations were fully represented. Now was the time for summing up, for looking back on what had been done in four strenuous weeks, and for looking ahead to better results in the future. It was a time for self-examination.

One theme received attention from many speakers. What could be done to make the work of Unesco more interesting to the general public? It was not a question of propaganda. Delegates were reminded that they had been watched during the weeks of their deliberations by people who had come to the galleries with high expectations. They came to receive inspiration, said more than one speaker in effect; but they found instead that they were obliged to listen to dry debates on the details of administration. What could they be expected to make of it? What conception would they have of Unesco when the flags were furled and the making of speeches was ended? No doubt they had come in the first place with mistaken or incomplete views of the nature of the conference. But we should ask ourselves if we had given them what they needed, even if what they needed was something quite different from what they expected. A suggestion was made that at future

conferences the work could be organized in ways that would make it more interesting to the public. It was proposed that, while the necessary examination was being made of programme and administrative requirements, a discussion on set themes of universal interest could be conducted by men of great reputation.

A French delegate argued with much force and eloquence that a debate of this kind would help to bring Unesco nearer to intelligent people throughout the world. It would show that ideas could be brought to the notice of thinkers from a forum which would be respected. Instead of merely promoting conditions favourable to creative work elsewhere, Unesco itself would be creative, and on its own ground. This is a brief and sketchy summary of an argument which received much support, and which was embodied in a resolution adopted by the conference. The desire to make Unesco a platform for ideas, to prepare it for an intellectual leadership that would be visible and impressive, is perhaps a natural reaction from a policy which tends to become unobtrusive, and even austere. Yet I could not help thinking, as I listened to the speeches of that last day in Beirut, that the world has no need of additional platforms.

Possibly there was never a time in history when ideas were advanced more plentifully than today. What can be said, at Unesco, which is not already being said by thinkers who need no further incentive to be vocal? In thousands of books, and in countless addresses made on solemn occasions, the ills of the world have been analysed. Moreover, we know what remedies should be applied. The resources of moral law and political economy are not inexhaustible. Spiritual needs and duties have been defined in religious teachings. The conditions of the good life have been made plain to mankind for two thousand years, and although in the changing circumstances of history the truths of human experience must always be re-stated amid new relationships, it can be assumed that philosophy will remain faithful to its vocation.

The examination of ideas has always been for me an exciting and fruitful part of experience. If there are to be debates by world figures at future conferences, I should like to hear them or at least to read reports of them in suitable publications. I do not think, however, that such debates will promote the true work of Unesco.

The nature of that work became clearer to me while I was travelling to and from Beirut. In countries of the Middle East are cities where large numbers of people live in deep poverty. Bazaars are fascinating places for tourists. It is interesting to watch beggars sitting blandly in the sun, to see picturesque costumes, and to feel the stir and movement of life which for centuries has followed an unchanging pattern. Beneath the colour, however, is suffering and squalor. These conditions are to be found in wide areas across the world.

I think we speak too often of the problems of peace as if they could be settled in reasonable discussions between people who meet on equal terms. The real argument is not between intellectuals at the universities or statesmen at international conferences: it is between wealth and poverty, enlightenment and ignorance. We are sometimes surprised because ideas which seem to us to contain elementary truths should not have a quick and universal acceptance. But what are ideas to a man with an empty belly? It is idle to talk of maintaining the peace while millions of people are fighting against famine and disease. I have seen in the eyes of a beggar, squinting at me in the African sunlight, an argument so powerful that it could overturn in a moment the finest theory of an academic peacemaker.

It may be true that education by itself will not solve our problems. We cannot make the world safe for transient generations, no matter how justly our wealth and opportunity may be distributed. People who read and write can be deluded as well as illiterate millions. At every stage of social evolution the old difficulties present themselves in new forms. But the danger is greatest where ignorance is deepest. Men who are clothed against the winter winds, who have food and material security, are free to think of more than their elementary needs. And although in western countries they think too often of superficial entertainment, and are unwilling to enter upon the harder disciplines of mind and spirit, the creative minority has an open membership, and all men are free to move to the higher levels of living. We may make our fine speeches, and produce our subtle theories; but the fundamental task is down in the darkened alleys where human beings still live like animals.

I believe, then, that the work of Unesco must of necessity be humble, patient and severely practical. If it can strengthen the attack on ignorance, the vision will be fulfilled. It is a vision which may have to be renewed, after interruptions which will shake the world. But all our thinking must lead us back to the needs of depressed millions, to people everywhere who wait for the emancipation which comes through health and education. I do not think we should mind if the work of Unesco makes little appeal to the public, though we should be able to show, increasingly, that the work is bringing results. But education cannot be made dramatic, and the science which becomes 'popular' is far removed from reality. Schoolrooms and laboratories are for men and women who are able to devote themselves to tasks which may be exacting and tedious, and which withhold their rewards from all except those who know that they have found their vocation. If Unesco's work is predominantly in the same fields, it must share the intellectual tone of austere interests. There is no room in it for glamour.

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The last resolution was proposed, seconded and adopted; and the president gave a single rap with his gavel. It was the end of the third session of the General Conference of Unesco. There was a stir and flutter in the galleries, and in the chamber below them the delegates rose, looked at one another, gathered up their papers and satchels, and moved slowly into the aisles. Nobody seemed anxious to leave. This was the last scene, the last opportunity to speak with old and new friends. Little groups were gathering in the central aisle, and there was much shaking of hands.

'Be sure to look me up if you come to London.'

'Thanks very much: I should like to.'

(And a thought came unbidden: 'Are these like shipboard friendships, quickly forgotten, or is there something in the work of a conference which can make them survive the abrupt separation?')

'Well, it's over. Give my love to New Zealand!'

'I will indeed. But don't stay too long in Paris: we'll all be glad to see you when it's time for you to come home.'

(How easily the extra warmth came to voice and hand when we said goodbye to someone from our own country!)

'Au revoir, M'sieur!'

(Bows and smiles, handshakes and the brief words of farewell might have fostered the illusion that we should meet again; but early darkness was over the land, and soon the lights would be going out in the buildings around us, and we should go our different ways.)

We crossed the courtyard, climbed the stairs to the delegation office, and collected our personal belongings. Documents had been gathered or discarded; the typewriter and stationery had been packed and removed; and the room was already looking bare and indifferent. We had a last look round before turning away.

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The flags were still flying when we passed the conference buildings for the last time on our way to the airport. We did not look back as we climbed into the Viking that was to take us to Cairo on the first stage of our journey home. The conference was over; but we thought that a new vitality, and perhaps a new stability, had been given to the work of Unesco. We, too, had gained something that would stay with us long after we had flown across the continents and the empty seas.

We looked down from the Viking at the coasts and hills of Lebanon; and I had a feeling of personal loss when the city of Beirut and the promontory fell away from us in the blue Mediterranean. The conference had taken its character, not merely from the delegations and the argument, but also from the country and the people. Unesco is a new fact in human relations, and it lives upon influences which must come to it from places where ideas have grown up, like the branching cedars of Lebanon, from roots that are deep in history. No place could have given more, in the coinage of spirit, than that small and lovely country to which the prophets of the Old Testament turned so often for symbols of hope and fertility.

