



LEFT: Léon Blum, first President of Unesco, speaks at the opening of the Paris Conference.

women will be chosen to come out of those countries to continue their studies in more fortunately-placed countries.

"Less than half-a-million dollars is available in Unesco's 1947 budget for this particular work of rehabilitation, but this amount is purely for administration and co-ordination. Much vaster sums will have to be raised by donations to finance the actual projects. But I think they will be forthcoming: America alone has already voluntarily given 40 million dollars for this purpose, and the Americans haven't really got going yet. All delegates who spoke at the conference stressed the urgency of the reconstruction aspect of Unesco, and each programme of activity in all the various sections puts primary emphasis upon it."

The rehabilitation and reconstruction proposals are non-recurrent items in UNESCO operations: they are suggested for development and probable completion during 1947.

It should be emphasised that these proposals do not make UNESCO a relief agency in its field comparable with UNRRA in its broader scope. The chief function of UNESCO is still that of stimulating and helping to co-ordinate the work of reconstruction and rehabilitation. . . . It is proposed, therefore, to strengthen and expand the appropriate staff of UNESCO, and to make it responsible for a vigorous and world-wide campaign. It should be the organising centre of such a campaign, working in close co-operation with all other agencies interested in the problem. Such a campaign, organised in each country through national commissions (or co-operating bodies), or voluntary organisations, would appeal to the people of the world, and should set as its goal the contribution of 100 million dollars for needed materials or services to devastated areas of Europe and Asia in 1947.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE RECONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION COMMISSION OF UNESCO.

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## ATTACK ON ILLITERACY

UNESCO'S plans for an attack on world illiteracy were next discussed by Dr. Beeby and Miss McPhee. "Sixty per cent. of the human race is illiterate. Not much imagination is needed to see the threat to world peace that exists in the fact that 60 people out of every hundred can't even read and write — quite apart from any consideration of whether the rest use their reading and writing to good purpose. Much good work has, of course, already been done in devising techniques to tackle this problem—for example, the 'Each-one-teach-one' technique used in Mexico and China. But there's a need almost everywhere for books with a childish syntax yet adult contents, for use by the natives of South America and of our own Pacific islands, for instance. There is no reason why a job like that should be done independently; what is needed is a central clearing-house, such as Unesco will provide, to collect and disseminate such special skills and techniques as have already been developed, and to devise new ones for attacking mass illiteracy. Because we haven't got illiteracy in New Zealand, we daren't wash our hands of it: so long as more than half the human race is illiterate we in our more favoured position can still become the victims of an easily-led mob.

"Obviously, even one organisation like Unesco can't teach 60 per cent. of mankind how to read and write; but Unesco can carry out 'pilot projects,' can co-ordinate the knowledge and methods that already exist, can go to governments and say, 'Can you train people for us? Can you supply experts for this

# REPORT ON UNESCO

"SINCE wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." Those are the opening words of the Charter of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation). They are fine words, but no more than words, and in themselves can do nothing to make the defences of peace secure. It was to find out what practical plans lie behind them, what concrete proposals have been agreed upon, what material is at hand and needed for this great project of fortifying world peace in its most easily assailable yet most vital sector, the human mind, and to what extent the architects and builders are already at work — it was to find out something about all this that "The Listener" called on Dr. C. E. Beeby, Director of Education, who has just returned from a trip abroad, during which he represented New Zealand at UNESCO's first general conference in Paris near the end of last year. He was chairman of the sub-Commission on Administration and Finance—the central committee of the conference, laying down the pattern of the secretariat, arranging for staff, passing the budget—and he was also chairman of the Nominations Committee, which had the job of nominating the officers of the conference.

WHEN we interviewed him, Dr. Beeby did not merely answer our questions. To assist with supplementary information, he called in Miss Lorna McPhee, who was his colleague at the conference and who has just come back to the staff of the Prime Minister's Department after 10 years abroad. And both of them gave us conference reports and other literature about Unesco to read and digest. Confronted by all this information, one's immediate reaction is to wonder whether Unesco may not be tackling an impossibly ambitious task, may not be in some danger of dissipating its energy and good intentions upon a programme that is much too wide in scope. But this, we learned, was identically the first reaction of most delegates to the conference; and because it was, one notices as soon as one studies the reports that all projects have been listed in order of priority according to their "crucial importance and obvious usefulness."

This then, as we got it from Dr. Beeby and Miss McPhee, and from the documents they showed us, is the story—or more correctly the opening chapter—of this agency of the United

Nations for the liberation and protection of the human mind—an organisation which, by a stroke of almost cosmic irony, has its headquarters in Paris in the very building used as Gestapo headquarters for France during the Occupation and before that as headquarters of the British delegation to the 1919 Peace Conference.

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## FIRST PRIORITY: Reconstruction

THE first and most immediate aim of Unesco in all its activities is the rehabilitation and reconstruction of war-devastated countries," Dr. Beeby told us. "It is impossible, for instance, to imagine the conditions for school-teaching which exist in countries like Poland, Yugoslavia, China, Czechoslovakia, and parts of the Low Countries. Teachers in those countries have absolutely nothing — no books, no pencils, no paper, no chalks, no blackboards—sometimes only a handful of pebbles. The devastation of libraries, and the equipment of science laboratories in the universities, has also been terrific. It is true, of course, that the central and over-riding objective of Unesco's whole programme is world peace; not just the advancement of education and culture for their own

sake, but the advancement of world peace through educational and cultural means. Yet just imagine whole generations growing up without opportunities for education, as they are growing up in many countries now — and not countries which are ordinarily illiterate either, but which formerly had high standards of scholarship. You can understand the amount of resentment there is among parents suddenly faced with the prospect that there will be almost no education at all for their children—not just inferior education, but none at all to speak of. Why, that feeling of resentment is sufficient in itself to shake world peace, quite apart from the danger of children growing up in ignorance. So rehabilitation in the educational field is not just humanitarianism; it is an essential—not, of course, such a first priority as food, but certainly a second priority.

"Among its educational projects, therefore, Unesco is asking that fellowships for students should be made available; Denmark has already done a lot in this sphere, and so has England. Teams of field-workers and consultant groups will go into the devastated countries to assist and report; and, as fellowships become available, men and