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The achievements of the Geneva Conferences : first assessment

The two conferences of the International Telecommunication Union, the Plenipotentiary Conference, which began on 14 October, and the Administrative Radio Conference, which began on 17 August, 1959, have now finished. The Chairman of the Plenipotentiary Conference was Mr. J. D. H. VAN DER TOORN, Head of the Netherlands Delegation, and the Chairman of the Radio Conference was Mr. Charles J. ACTON, Head of the Canadian Delegation.

Two international documents of great importance have now been signed officially by the representatives of 85 and 84 countries respectively :

- 1) the new Convention, replacing the International Telecommunication Convention of Buenos Aires 1952 ;
- 2) the new Radio Regulations, replacing those of Atlantic City, 1947.

The new Convention will take effect on 1 January, 1961, and the new Radio Regulations on 1 May, 1961. Some additional protocols had to be signed so that certain decisions (for example, the elections of the newly-constituted Administrative Council, the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, and changes made in the budget system) could take effect forthwith.

Numerous recommendations and resolutions were also adopted, and decisions concerning the way the Union is organized, how it is run, and its future development were reached by the Plenipotentiary Conference.

The Administrative Council will henceforth comprise 25 Member countries, to ensure a more equitable representation of the various major regions of the world, in line with recent political changes and the requirements of the new and developing countries. The various regions will thus be represented by the following Member countries :

Region A—the Americas : Brazil, Mexico, Argentine Republic, United States of America, Canada, Republic of Colombia.

Region B—Western Europe : France, Italy, Switzerland, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Spain.

Region C—Eastern Europe and Northern Asia : Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Czechoslovakia.

Region D—Africa : United Arab Republic, Kingdom of Morocco, Ethiopia, Tunisia.

Region E—Asia and Australasia : Japan, Republic of India, China, Iran, Commonwealth of Australia, Republic of the Philippines.

The representatives of the 25 countries elected to the Administrative Council met for the first time on 16 December at the conferences headquarters.

Mr. Libero Oswaldo DE MIRANDA (Brazil) was elected Chairman and Mr. Vladimir ŠENK (FPR of Yugoslavia) Vice-Chairman.

The new Council decided that it would meet again on 28 May, 1960.

In opening the thirteenth plenary meeting, on Monday, 7 December 1959, the Chairman of the Plenipotentiary Conference paid tribute to the outgoing Administrative Council in the following terms :

“ This Council of eighteen Members has served our Union since Buenos Aires, that is to say, for seven years. They have had to deal with difficult problems, as may be seen from their extensive and interesting report to this Conference. I think that the countries, but more especially the persons representing them, should be assured of the great appreciation we all have for the work they did in the interests of the Union. Those who have worked in that Council, and have given to it their valuable time and the benefit of their experience and wisdom, deserve our sincere gratitude for what they have done to the benefit of all of us. Many thanks, Gentlemen, to each of you personally and to the Council as a body. ”

It was agreed that the future Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General of the Union should henceforward be elected by the Plenipotentiary Conference itself and not, as heretofore, by the Administrative Council.

On 8 December, 1959, the Plenipotentiary Conference elected the new Secretary-General of the Union, which post had been vacant since the summer of 1958, when the former Secretary-General, Dr. Marco Aurelio Andrada, had died.

Among the seven candidates, Mr. Gerald C. GROSS, already Acting Secretary-General, was elected at the third ballot by 51 votes out of 86 valid voting slips. He takes office on 1 January, 1960.

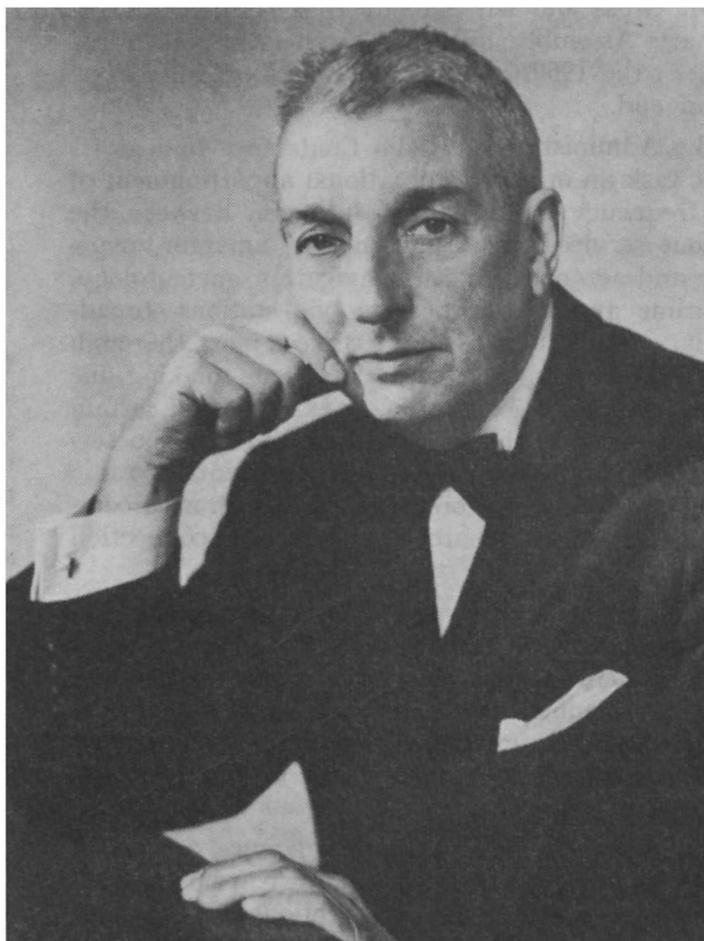
Mr. J. D. H. van der Toorn, Chairman of the Conference, warmly congratulated Mr. Gross on behalf of all delegations present.

The following day, on 9 December, the Conference had to choose a Deputy Secretary-General¹ of the Union. By 58 votes out of 81 valid voting slips, it entrusted this important post to Dr. Manohar SARWATE, Head of the Indian Delegation to the Radio Conference, Assistant Head of the Indian Delegation to the Plenipotentiary Conference, and representative of India on the ITU Administrative Council. It will be remembered that Dr. Sarwate was Chairman of the Council Session in 1958.²

¹ New title for the former post of Assistant Secretary-General.

² See *Telecommunication Journal*, No. 8, 1958, page 153e.

**The new Secretary-General,
Mr. Gerald C. Gross**



**The new
Deputy Secretary-General,
Dr. Manohar Sarwate**

Mr. Gross and Dr. Sarwate took the oath at the Plenary Assembly on 21 December, at which the work of the 1959 Geneva Conferences officially came to an end.

The Administrative Radio Conference had as its basic task an orderly international apportionment of the frequency bands in the spectrum between the various services (fixed and mobile, amateur, maritime and aeronautical radionavigation, meteorology, maritime and aeronautical mobile stations, broadcasting, etc.). It had to undertake a most thorough overhaul of frequency band allocations, making due allowance for the extraordinary expansion of certain services, such as the broadcasting and aviation services, while providing for the requirements of radio astronomy and of the organizations which need communications for research purposes in connection with outer space.

New duties were assigned to the International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB), which is called upon to facilitate the use of the maximum number of radio channels in those parts of the spectrum where harmful interference may occur, while paying particular attention to the needs of the new and developing countries.

The Administrative Radio Conference appointed the 11 members of the IFRB, drawn from five different parts of the world. The elections took place on 11 December, 1959, with the following results :

Region A (the Americas)—3 seats :

Mr. F. DELLAMULA (Argentine Republic)
Mr. J. H. GAYER (United States of America)
Mr. A. HERNÁNDEZ-CATÁ (Cuba)

Region B (Western Europe)—2 seats :

Mr. J. A. GRACIE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Mr. R. PETIT (France)

Region C (Eastern Europe and Northern Asia)—2 seats :

Mr. M. FLISAK (People's Republic of Poland)
Mr. N. I. KRASNOSSELSKI (USSR)

Region D (Africa)—1 seat :

Mr. N. H. ROBERTS (Union of South Africa)

Region E (Asia and Australasia)—3 seats :

Mr. TAI KUANG WANG (China)
Mr. M. N. MIRZA (Pakistan)
Mr. SHIN-ICHI HASE (Japan)

The part played by the ITU in the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance will be increased and in future the ITU will itself manage its own technical assistance schemes. The Consultative Committees (CCITT and CCIR) will be called upon to supply technical guidance to certain countries, the telecommunication systems of which are not yet fully developed.

The Telecommunication Plan for Europe, the Mediterranean Basin, Southern Asia and the Far East will be extended to Latin America.

It became very apparent at the Conferences that the Union attaches increasing importance to its links with certain specialized agencies such as ICAO, IMCO, WHO, WMO and UNESCO and with the United Nations itself.

It was decided that the ITU should join the United Nations Common System (conditions of employment, salaries, allowances and pensions).

Henceforward, Russian will be used at Union conferences as a spoken language on the same basis as French, English and Spanish.

The Union's budget for the next few years will be considerably increased to enable it to cope with the new tasks it has to shoulder in all branches of its activity. The budget for recurrent expenditure which in 1959 amounted 6 687 350 Swiss francs, will rise progressively from 9 000 000 Swiss francs in 1960 to 12 200 000 Swiss francs in 1965.

Considerable sums have been set aside for the conferences and meetings to be held between now and the next Plenipotentiary Conference, which will meet in Switzerland in 1965, on the occasion of the Union's centenary. The Government of the Swiss Confederation has already invited the Union to celebrate the occasion here.