

agenda of the 11th session of the Commission in 1956.

The Social Committee of the Economic and Social Council also debated the question at its 20th session, expressed sympathy with Afghanistan and asked that the views of the Committee members be brought to the attention of the Commission.

The United Nations Laboratory for Opium Research, the establishment of which had been decided by the General Assembly at its ninth session, was set up in Geneva at the end of 1955.

The Commission considered that the scientific methods for determining the origin of opium by chemical and physical means had been sufficiently advanced by the chemists of the United Nations Secretariat and collaborating national scientists to warrant a measure of practical application. It requested governments, in cases of important current seizures of opium in the international illicit traffic, to transmit samples to the Secretariat for the scientific determination of their geographic origin. It authorized the Secretary-General to arrange for such determinations and to report the findings to the government submitting the opium sample in question, as well as to the country which would be found to be the country of origin.

THE PROBLEM OF THE COCA LEAF

In view of the fact that general agreement was reached that the practice of coca leaf chewing in South America constituted a form of addiction, the Council at its 18th session had adopted resolution 548 E (XVIII) recommending that the governments concerned continue their efforts to abolish progressively the chewing and limit gradually, but as quickly as practicable, the cultivation and the export of the coca leaf to legitimate purposes.

At its 10th session the Commission considered the practical measures which could be taken to promote that gradual abolition and limitation. It also recommended that governments limit their imports of coca leaf and crude cocaine to supplies originating in countries which were at present the principal coca leaf producers.

THE PROBLEM OF CANNABIS (INDIAN HEMP)

In some countries the cannabis plant is widely used for its fibre and seed in a perfectly legiti-

mate way, while at the same time other parts of the plant are illegally used by addicts. The Commission and the Council had been considering the possibility of reducing the dangers from cultivation of the plant for industrial purposes by gradually replacing it with varieties which would not produce the harmful resin, or by other fibre-producing plants.

The Commission had an opportunity to review the situation in the Union of South Africa, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Swaziland in the light of a series of surveys on various factual aspects of the cannabis problem carried out by the United Nations.

At its 10th session the Commission considered a study prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization, in collaboration with the United Nations Secretariat, on the possibility of breeding a resin-free cannabis strain or of cultivating substitute plants. The study indicated that such breeding or substitution would involve lengthy and difficult operations.

The Council adopted unanimously resolution 588 C (XX), in which it asked the governments concerned to comment on this study. It also requested governments of countries in which research for the development of a resin-free strain was carried on to give such support as seemed practical.

THE PROBLEM OF DIACETYLMORPHINE

In 1954 the Council, by resolution 548 G (XVIII), had urged governments to prohibit the manufacture of and international trade in diacetylmorphine, since that drug has strong addictive properties which are not offset by therapeutic advantages not obtainable from other less dangerous drugs, and this recommendation was accepted by a large majority of governments.

At its 10th session the Commission on Narcotic Drugs noted with satisfaction the overwhelmingly favourable response of governments to this resolution and urged all governments which had not done so to prohibit the use of diacetylmorphine, as well.

THE PROBLEM OF SYNTHETIC DRUGS

During the past 15 years the number of narcotic substances placed under international control has approximately tripled. Most of these