

APPENDIX XXII

SCALE OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUDGETS

A. Canadian Statement, November 12, 1946

No one can deny that in the field of the relative financial burdens to be borne by our Member states, we run the risk of non-favourable reaction, among the public and the different governments, which might jeopardize the stable and progressive development of our entire world organization. In these matters the United Nations must have and must continue to have the whole-hearted support of our respective legislatures and peoples in our respective countries. And when we ask them for that support we must be able to convince them that the recommendations agreed to here are not only wise but just.

We appreciate the very useful work done by the Committee on Contributions. It was asked to base its report on the capacity to pay, of the Member states. We are aware that there were gaps in the information available to them and that, of necessity, some reliance had to be placed on informed guesses. We felt, however, that, on the basis indicated in their terms of reference, no better job could have been done. But Senator Vandenberg, on behalf of the United States delegation, has argued very forcibly that capacity to pay cannot safely be made the only criterion for distributing the financial burden of the United Nations ordinary administrative budget, particularly when the result of that criterion places practically fifty per cent of the burden on one nation alone out of fifty-one. The Canadian delegation agrees that to do this might very well jeopardize the success of the United Nations, both because it would tend to put a strain on the principle of the sovereign equality of all nations, in dealing with budgetary problems, and because the people of that one nation might come to feel that they were being asked to do more than their fair share.

Senator Vandenberg therefore suggested that a ceiling should be established, above which no nation will be asked to contribute. In this connection, I wish to point out that this solution of the political difficulty foreseen by Senator Vandenberg tends to create like difficulties for the other Member states. Notwithstanding the gaps in the information available to the Contributions Committee, none can doubt that, if we had on our desks the most complete and up-to-date statistics of the annual income of each of our countries, they would show two things clearly and beyond question: first, that the United States has the largest national income of any nation; and second, that in the United States the national income per capita is greater than in any other nation.

To the individual taxpayer, per capita contribution is the important factor. He is concerned with the relation which his personal contribution will have to the contribution of taxpayers in other countries where capacity to pay is equal to, or greater than, his own. Therefore, it would not seem