

At the opening session of the Food-for-Peace Conference held in Washington in May 1959, the Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce expressed Canada's hearty support for the humanitarian objectives of the President of the United States in his proposals to Congress for the more effective utilization of surplus food supplies in the interests of peace and he recalled Prime Minister Diefenbaker's many previous suggestions for international action to alleviate distress and to promote economic development in the less fortunate countries of the world. At the last session of the FAO Assembly in October 1959, the Canadian views on this subject were once more put forward. The Canadian Minister of Agriculture, referring to the challenge of surpluses and hunger continuing side by side, urged member countries to encourage and assist multilateral action whenever possible.

My Delegation recognizes that the draft before you is open to improvement and I would emphasize that we are deeply interested in the views of other delegations on the issues raised in that resolution. For our part, we would earnestly hope that the FAO, in its study of the feasibility and acceptability of new arrangements for mobilizing and distributing available surplus foodstuffs in areas of greatest need, will find it possible to recommend for this purpose the establishment of a U.N. food bank which would be supported by all member countries on an equitable financial basis. As Prime Minister Diefenbaker said on September 26, "A few countries cannot underwrite the costs of transferring their surpluses to countries in need. What we need is to join together in contributing to a solution of truly world-wide scope to this problem." Canada would of course expect that any food bank that may be established as a result of the FAO's study would be both realistic and workable. We fully agreed with the distinguished representative of Argentina when on October 18 he said that any international arrangements established for the disposal of surplus agricultural commodities must avoid damage to legitimate and normal commercial trade. Our own trade has in the past been disrupted by erratic surplus disposal arrangements and we would certainly have no intention of ourselves supporting action which would have this effect. The Delegate of Argentina is correct in saying that the concept of a world food reserve has been studied in FAO and considered at various times in the past. But times are changing, and my Delegation is convinced that a fresh look at this problem, in an atmosphere of goodwill and sympathy for the world's suffering people, could this time produce concrete results.

The problem is admittedly complex, but in our view its solution is of the greatest urgency for every day the numbers of hungry people increase. Let our goal be the abolition of hunger in a world where hunger should no longer exist and let us now join together in taking a great and decisive step forward.

Mr. Chairman, I now propose to comment briefly on the text of the resolution itself and to refer to some of the comments other delegations have been good enough to make both in the Committee and outside it on this subject. The statement which I have made in the first part of my intervention governs of course everything that I will be saying in this second part.

In the first place, may I say how much my Delegation appreciates the spirit in which this resolution has been received. We believe that there is now a general appreciation of its purposes.