

No. 61/17 Report of the Committee on Information
from Non-Self-Governing Territories

Statement by Mr. Martial Asselin, Canadian
Representative on the Fourth Committee of the
United Nations on October 27, 1961.

Madame Chairman,

I wish, first of all, to congratulate the authors of the report before us, particularly the Chairman of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories, Ambassador Schurmann of the Netherlands; you, Madame, for your able work as Vice-Chairman of the Committee; and Miss Faiha Kamal of Iraq, whose ability and tact as rapporteur find expression in the lucid and comprehensive character of the report. We are also indebted to the sub-committee headed by Mr. Paul Edmonds of New Zealand which prepared the special report on social advancement.

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I think it would also be appropriate for me to express our appreciation for the contribution which was made to the Committee's work by the new delegations serving on the Committee for the first time -- those of Liberia, Mexico and Spain.

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This report is a chronicle of what has been accomplished during the past year in those dependent territories on which information is supplied to the United Nations in accordance with the Charter. These territories are diverse and widely scattered; in some there are especially complex and difficult problems to be solved before a full measure of self-government can be achieved. We recognize this and acknowledge that these problems cannot be solved overnight. If the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are to serve their purpose, if they are to be really effective, they must be so framed (in the words of Chapter XI) as "to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories." This is the obligation laid on the administering authorities.

It is, of course, people we are talking about in this debate, not statistics. And it is people we should be concerned about: their own distinctive cultures, their political, economic, social and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses. This means, as my delegation sees it, that we should make haste, not slowly, but with due deliberation. It means that our proposals should be constructive and that we should at all times seek the active co-operation of those administering powers -- and I do not hesitate to call them the "good" administering powers -- who have undertaken to complete their mission in accordance with the aspirations of the dependent peoples, the wishes of the General Assembly and the guiding principles laid down in the Charter.