

258.

DEA/5475-K-40

*Note de la direction des Nations Unies
pour le sous-secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from United Nations Division
to Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs*

SECRET

[Ottawa], June 17, 1949

ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF WHO

You will recall that the U.S.S.R. and the Ukrainian S.S.R. withdrew from membership in the World Health Organization last February and that, since that time, efforts by member governments to induce them to reconsider their decision have been fruitless.

2. The U.S.S.R.'s withdrawal left a vacancy on the eighteen-member Executive Board, to which the Soviet representative was elected in 1948 for a two-year term. This vacancy is in addition to those occasioned by the automatic retirement from the Board this year of six member states, under the provision of WHO's Constitution.

3. While we have not yet received any official notification that Bielo-Russia has also withdrawn from WHO, I think it is a safe assumption that they have followed the lead of the U.S.S.R. and the Ukraine. If so, one other vacancy on the Board has been created, since Bielo-Russia was elected in 1948 for a three-year term on the Executive body.

4. In connection with this matter, the United Kingdom Brief on the Assembly agenda reads, in part, as follows:

"The U.K. are also opposed to the Director General's suggestion, made verbally during a recent visit, that the U.S.S.R. and Bielo-Russian seats on the Board should remain vacant so as not to slam the door against their possible return. They think this point could be met by making it clear when electing Members to fill the vacancies for the unexpired term that they would cease to serve if the U.S.S.R. and Bielo-Russia decided again to designate persons to serve."

5. It is my opinion that the Canadian Delegation should go along with the United Kingdom view that the Russian and Bielo-Russian seats should not be left vacant. On the other hand, I do not agree with the United Kingdom view that members elected to fill the vacancies for the unexpired terms should be asked to step down if the two countries decide they wish to resume their seats.

6. I discussed this question with Mr. MacDermot who is in agreement with the views expressed in the preceding paragraph. He also agrees that the Canadian Delegation should oppose any move to accord preferential treatment to the U.S.S.R. or her satellites.