

Economic Development of Under-  
developed Countries

Statement by Mr. Gordon Aiken, Canadian  
Representative on the Second Committee of  
the United Nations on October 27, 1961.

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first occasion on which I have addressed this Committee, permit me to add my congratulations to those already extended to yourself and to the Vice-Chairman, Dr. Mahdavi, and to the Rapporteur, Mr. Rego Monteiro. You have already indicated your ability to give leadership to the Committee, and in order to assist in your expressed desire to proceed expeditiously with the work of the Committee, I do not propose to make a lengthy statement today.

There is no question that much has been accomplished by the United Nations and its organs in the field under discussion and Canada is proud of the contribution it has been able to make. And yet we feel that there is much more to be accomplished. If, in this intervention, I should make reference to what has been done, both by my country and by the United Nations organization, it is not to suggest that we should rest on our oars, nor to express self-satisfaction, but for the purpose of taking stock of our position, and determining the direction in which we should go.

It has been amply demonstrated in this debate that member nations are gravely concerned with problems of international commodity trade. My own country is heavily dependent on exports of basic materials and foodstuffs. We are therefore fully alive to the urgent need to reverse the downward drift of commodity export prices. In our view, the best hope of solving these problems lies in a commodity-by-commodity approach leading ultimately to a comprehensive series of international commodity agreements. It goes without saying that such agreements, to be beneficial and effective, must necessarily include the major producing and consuming countries. In a related field -- the sudden inflow of low-cost imports leading to disruption of traditional markets -- we now have before us heartening evidence of international economic co-operation in the form of the Cotton Textiles Agreement drawn up by a number of contracting parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

From the foregoing, it will be apparent that my delegation would view with favour any enlargement in the scope for multilateral trading arrangements. We are by no means opposed to the old type of bilateral agreement, nor indeed to the formulation of regional trade groupings. Canada only wants to ensure that such groupings should not be achieved at the expense of outside countries; that they should not result in new barriers to trade; indeed, we believe that such groupings should contribute to the expansion of trade with third countries rather than be inward-looking and restrictive in their operation. We would be particularly disturbed if such regional groups upset the patterns of mutually advantageous trade associations.