

E. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY

1. Scale of Assessments

The scale of assessments is an important item on the agenda of the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). The scale itself is recommended by the Committee on Contributions, but it must finally be adopted by vote. All the Member States participate in the vote, which takes place first in the Fifth Committee and afterwards in Plenary. The scale assigns each Member State a proportion of the UN's expenses according to a complex formula which takes account of a number of criteria, the main one being the ability to pay, measured by national revenue. Although it has been the subject of careful study and numerous debates in the past, the scale of assessments recommended by the Committee on Contributions has always been accepted so as to best serve the interests of the United Nations.

In the last few years, economic instability and international monetary disturbances have increased the complexity of the task of establishing a scale, which is already made difficult by the thorny problem of availability of and difficulty in comparing national statistics. The countries whose national revenues have increased substantially, particularly those receiving income from the export of oil, made requests with a view to minimizing the increase in their contributions. To satisfy such requests in part, the reference period for the establishment of the scale of assessments was changed to seven years. Thus, eighty-five States saw their contributions decrease, the minimum contribution also being lowered from .02 to .01 per cent of the UN's budget. Canada's contribution, however, went from 2.96 per cent to 3.04 per cent, and it is now the ninth largest contributor. The scale of assessments for the 1978-79 two-year period was adopted by a vote of 90 in favour, 2 against and 12 abstentions.

Canada supported the report of the Committee on Contributions, judging that its members had successfully completed a difficult task, considering the opinions expressed at the Fifth Committee's thirty-first session. Mr. Claude-Andre Lachance, M.P., Canadian Delegate to the Fifth Committee, gave the Canadian position in these terms in a statement made on October 24, 1976.

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The General Assembly last year set the Committee on Contributions an exceptionally difficult task. In this respect the scale of assessment which the Committee on Contributions developed earlier this year and recommended for the years 1978-79 is indeed a noteworthy accomplishment. The report of the Committee is thorough, lucid and comprehensive. It contains a wealth of information and careful analysis which contribute to a realistic appreciation