

No. 53/18 PERSONNEL POLICY IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by the Acting Head of the Canadian
Delegation to the Seventh Session of the United
Nations General Assembly, Mr. Paul Martin,
delivered in Plenary Session, March 30, 1953.

... Our deliberations in the United Nations usually concern people, and I am sure that we are always conscious of the opportunity that our presence here gives us to work for the well-being of millions the world over.

Today our concern is not about millions, but a few thousands of men and women in the Secretariat of the United Nations, many of them our neighbours in the glass house next door, many of them respected acquaintances of ours and many of them our personal friends.

The United Nations is the embodiment of a great vision; of a world that can live together in peace and brotherhood. But that vision can have no substance, the dream no fulfilment, unless we, for our part, speak for the conscience of our countries and unless our colleagues in the Secretariat building beside us have the competence and the opportunity to carry into action the decisions that we make.

The subject under discussion is therefore doubly important. It tests our attitudes towards the fundamental rights of human beings; and it requires our most careful consideration in order to ensure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity in those who are members of the international civil service of the United Nations.

In any organization and for any government, the formulation of personnel policy, while of first importance, is not always easy of achievement. For the Secretary-General of the United Nations, this problem is complicated by the fact that the members of the Secretariat come from many different countries and that they work together, many of them, in a country other than their own.

The country that is host to any United Nations activity will have particular interest in the behaviour of members of the United Nations Secretariat while they are within its jurisdiction. Naturally, it will want to satisfy itself that the presence within its borders of nationals from other countries in no way threatens its own security. While, for the purpose of the United Nations, a country may extend some degree of immunity to such visitors, it has the responsibility of ensuring that this immunity does not cloak actions inimical to its own security. In establishing, therefore, a proper personnel policy, the Secretary-General must work towards a reasonable and wise reconciliation of the rights and freedoms of United Nations employees and the security of the State in which they serve.