

External Affairs
Supplementary Paper

No. 162/11 RACIAL POLICY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

Statement to the Special Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on November 1, 1962, by Mr. Heath Macquarrie, the Canadian Representative.

...Questions of race relationship in South Africa constitute not only one of the most difficult and complex issues with which the United Nations is concerned, but also one of the most frustrating. Despite repeated exhortations of successive Assemblies, the Government of South Africa has not seen fit to alter in any way the deplorable policy known as apartheid; in fact...far from ameliorating this harsh and repressive policy, the Government of South Africa, in the face of ever-increasing criticism, has enacted even more stringent legislation. Let me say at the outset, then, in clear simple terms, that the Government of Canada is irrevocably opposed to any form of racial discrimination regardless of where it is practised and that we condemn, without any qualification whatever, the South African Government's policy of apartheid. I do not think that I need dwell on this point, which my Government has made abundantly plain in the United Nations, in the Commonwealth and on every appropriate occasion at other international meetings. When he returned from the Commonwealth prime ministers' meeting in 1961, our Prime Minister, Mr. Diefenbaker, in his report to the Canadian House of Commons on March 17, 1961, spoke about South Africa's request for continued membership in the Commonwealth in the following terms:

"I took the position that, if we were to accept South Africa's request unconditionally, our action would be taken as approval, or at least condonation, of racial policies which are repugnant to and unequivocally abhorred and condemned by Canadians as a whole -- and I do not have to say that this attitude represents no recent conversion. I pointed out that we were opposed to racial discrimination and made it clear that I could not approve any formula or solution which did not maintain beyond any doubt that non-discrimination in respect of race and colour is an essential principle of Commonwealth association."

The Canadian Parliament has itself enacted a Canadian Bill of Rights, one of the main parts of which provides that there shall be no racial discrimination in Canada. We have also...made the South African Government aware of our attitude toward apartheid and of our increasing concern about fearful consequences which may ensue if the South African Government continues to pursue its present course. It has been apparent for some years that nearly all member states of the United Nations regard apartheid as a most reprehensible policy and that they fear that the results of that policy may lead to tragic situations which might endanger preservation of peace in Africa. That mutual concern is reflected in many resolutions on this issue which have been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, and in the draft resolution now before this Committee. It is fair to say that all member states here share the same convictions, both that