

External Affairs  
Supplementary Paper

No. 54/35/UN9/12

HUMAN RIGHTS

Text of a statement on November 2, 1954, by Mrs. K. G. Montgomery, Canadian Representative in the Third Committee at the ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, on agenda item 58 - Draft International Covenants on Human Rights

Note: The text of the resolution adopted by the Committee and the results of the voting are included at the end of the statement.

The Commission on Human Rights is to be congratulated for having presented us with final drafts which, even though they are not complete due to lack of agreement on some points, nevertheless represent an important step towards the aims of the United Nations on the subject of Human Rights. Some of the views held by the Canadian Delegation on the draft Covenants have already been expressed by previous delegations and, bearing in mind the number of speakers still on your list, I shall endeavour to limit myself to a brief explanation of the Canadian position on what we consider to be the more important aspects of the matter under discussion.

The first of the two covenants before us deals with economic, social and cultural rights. These rights appear in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 and it is the view of the Canadian Government that in this century of ours the traditional civil liberties cannot be fully enjoyed unless they are accompanied by the exercise of economic and social rights. Generally speaking, however, these rights differ substantially from political and civil rights in that the latter impose limitations upon the State as against the individual, whereas the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights calls for the carrying out of positive social and economic policies involving detailed legislation and the establishment of administrative machinery. From a practical point of view therefore, if for no other reason, the Canadian Delegation considers that if there is to be a codification of economic, social and cultural rights it is appropriate that there should be two instruments or covenants dealing with each category of rights.