

CANADA AND THE KEEPING OF PEACE

The following is a partial text of a statement to the Special Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly by the Canadian Representative, Mr. Paul Beaulieu, November 19:

I do not need to emphasize the importance which my Delegation attaches to peace keeping. Canada has been called upon to participate in United Nations peace-keeping operations since the early years of the United Nations. More than 2,000 Canadian servicemen are now engaged in this task. Canada has taken special measures to prepare for its participation in peace keeping, including the organization and training of units of its armed forces. It is true that the Canadian national interest, in the narrow sense of the term, may not be directly implicated in all the disputes which have resulted in these peace-keeping commitments; but, in the broader sense of national interest, we believe that the interests of Canada are best served by our participation in collective arrangements to maintain or restore peace and security. Furthermore, our involvement in peace keeping has given us strong reasons for wishing to improve the methods which govern peace keeping and thus to take an active interest in the item before us.

Let me review briefly our position on the authorization, control, and financing of peace-keeping operations. We agree that the Security Council must continue to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. But we cannot accept that, in the absence of agreement between the members of the Council, the United Nations is prevented from recommending measures to maintain or restore peace. In these circumstances, we believe, the membership as a whole must have an opportunity to recommend what is to be done. Some have expressed or implied the belief that the Assembly might be tempted to make recommendations which are inapplicable and irresponsible. But the history of the United Nations demonstrates, on the contrary, that the Assembly can act and has acted with both moderation and despatch in this field.

CONTROL EFFICIENCY

In regard to the control and direction of peace keeping, we should urge that considerations of efficiency be allowed to prevail. The system whereby the Secretary-General retains administrative supervision of peace keeping, even though the Security Council may exercise overall political control, has worked well since the establishment of UNEF in 1956. Nevertheless, we should be prepared to examine carefully, and on their merits, any detailed proposals that might be made which would enable the Council, either through the Military Staff Committee or in some other way, to exercise this function of administrative supervision of peace keeping, always provided such proposals were likely to result in the efficient running of the operation and not its virtual paralysis. We should also be extremely concerned if any change in the present arrangements were to make difficult the kind of advance planning for peace keeping which

Canada and a number of other countries have found it appropriate to do. On the contrary, we should hope that the United Nations would find ways of facilitating such planning, in particular by the strengthening of staff arrangements at headquarters. Planning by governments on their own can have only limited results as long as appropriate central co-ordination is inadequate.

FINANCIAL SHARING ESSENTIAL

As a major participant in peace keeping, Canada feels strongly that the sharing of the financial burden amongst member states is an essential principle of equity and fair play. The apportionment of peace-keeping expenses by the General Assembly amongst all the members of the United Nations, taking into account the guide-lines already agreed on by the fourth special session of the General Assembly, should be the preferred method of financing peace-keeping operations, particularly so for those operations authorized by the Security Council. If it is right and proper for the Security Council to have the primary responsibility for decisions to establish peace-keeping operations, it is equally to be expected that the members of the Council, especially the permanent members, should pay an appropriate share of the cost. Alternative methods of financing would, of course, remain open for recommendation by the Council, including payment of the costs by the parties directly concerned and voluntary contributions from all members. But voluntary contributions are not a satisfactory method of financing, as the Secretary-General has often pointed out and as the example of UNFICYP has demonstrated, unless, at the same time, such contributions are accepted as a general obligation on the membership, each of whom thereby acknowledges some part in the common task of keeping the peace. All of us can find reasons for justifying our lack of direct interest in any particular dispute. But none of us, certainly not the smaller states, can guarantee that we, too, may not wish to appeal to the United Nations for assistance some day. The most immediate opportunity we have to discharge our responsibilities is by making a voluntary contribution to restore the United Nations to solvency. Canada has already suggested that a pledging conference be held for this purpose, but whether or not such a conference takes place my Delegation would urge those who have not yet done so to make an appropriate contribution. If we cannot liquidate the debts we have accumulated in the past, there is little hope that we can reach agreement on an adequate system for financing the obligations of the future.

Canada is also concerned, as a major contributor to peace-keeping operations and in view of the possibility that peace keeping will be financed on the basis of voluntary contributions, about arrangements whereby such contributors as are not permanent members of the Security Council can exercise an appropriate voice of initiation, financing and supervising of peace-keeping operations. We have noted with interest some of the proposals which have been