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STATEMENT BY MR. ARTHUR R. SMITH M.P. CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE
ON THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1960

ENLARGEMENT OF SECURITY COUNCIL AND ECOSOC

Mr. Chairman:

We have not spoken until today in order to hear first the opinions of the states of Africa and Asia, which perhaps are most intimately concerned with the problem before us. While the question of expanding the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council is a matter which affects all states represented here, it does have a more direct bearing on those states from areas suffering from inadequate representation, and it is apparent to us that any successful solution to correct this imbalance will have to grow out of a desire by those states who will benefit the most from the enlargement of the Councils.

Before setting out my Delegation's views, I should like to thank the distinguished Representative of Argentina for his most helpful opening statement recalling the intricate course of discussions during past sessions of the General Assembly on this item on enlargement of the Security Council and ECOSOC. He also made a number of interesting suggestions for dealing with the procedural problems involved on enlargement, on which I should like to comment a little later in this statement.

II

I think it might be relevant to recall to distinguished delegates here the warm and sincere words of welcome extended by all delegations since the opening of this session to our 17 new member states. Indeed, I am particularly pleased that the representatives

of two of these states are now my neighbours on this Committee. When we and other delegations welcomed the admission of these states, we also welcomed the contribution which each of them would be able to make to the United Nations, and looked forward to their active participation in our deliberations. It is perhaps significant therefore, Sir, to point out that the item now under discussion in this Committee involves an active attempt to translate those words into deeds, by giving meaningful opportunities for the new members to participate in the United Nations work.

III

The political and economic developments that have taken place in the world since 1945 and the great increase in the number of member states have created a situation by which the composition of the two Councils of the United Nations no longer adequately reflects the interests of Africa and Asia. The Canadian Delegation has long believed that these countries were not proportionately represented on the Councils, and that the only satisfactory way to remedy the imbalance was to enlarge their membership to an extent consonant with efficiency of operation. It seems incredible that this legitimate wish on the part of the majority of states represented at the United Nations has been frustrated these past five years; that debates on the subject have been diverted into fruitless examinations of unsatisfactory substitute half-measures which would only postpone a realization of proper representation for all areas; and that action has sometimes been prevented for the most irrelevant of reasons. As has been so clearly stated already, if we question the legality of an Assembly decision reached without the participation of a non-member, we will have to be consistent and question every other Assembly decision reached since 1945. But the large number of new members at this session makes it urgent and imperative that we make progress now. My distinguished colleague from Nigeria has already made eminently clear that the under-representation of Africa cannot be permitted to continue any longer, while other delegates

have drawn attention to the fact that postponement of a decision will only prolong unnecessarily the inevitably deliberate procedures of Charter amendment.

In this connection, I should like to call attention to the suggestion of my distinguished colleague from Argentina that, since Article 108 of the Charter comprises a two-stage procedure for amendments, we in the Assembly should get on with the first stage without delay and adopt an amendment acceptable to all parties. Then will be the time to concern ourselves over obtaining ratifications, when we are halfway to our goal. In this respect, Article 69 of the Charter could perhaps be of aid in bridging the interim period between voting and ratification, by enabling additional representatives from the now under-represented areas to participate in the deliberations of ECOSOC prior to their formal election.

It is quite clear from the statements made so far on this item that it is generally recognized that the African and Asian areas are at present seriously under-represented on the Security Council and ECOSOC, and that additional seats should be provided for these areas. I think that the statements have also reflected a primary interest in the enlargement of ECOSOC which, as a functional body, is of very immediate practical value in assisting the development of new states. Also, because the membership of ECOSOC is not restricted by specific Charter rules or other formal conventions regarding membership, it may be less complicated to adapt to present-day political realities.

IV

We are then agreed that the African and Asian areas are inadequately represented on the Councils. Since it has also been, I think, demonstrated that we must make real progress at this session, I suggest we should proceed first in the direction where the obstacles or possible areas of disagreement are least evident. If politics is the art of the possible, we should then perhaps not try to solve both

the most difficult and the easiest aspects of this problem all at once. It seems to my Delegation that the outlook this year for enlargement of the Security Council is not too encouraging, in spite of the valid reasons advanced for the necessity to reform in this direction. Major political differences inevitably become involved with the purely procedural aspects; and we fear that resultant disagreements with respect to one objective might seriously prejudice reaching a satisfactory solution this year for the other.

It is therefore up to this Committee to determine by what procedure we can adequately satisfy the objective so overwhelmingly expressed here. There are several alternatives open to us which have been suggested during the course of this debate:

The first is: Observer status, as authorized under Art. 69 of the Charter: - Representation of this type would be without voting privileges and could therefore, I think, be regarded only as an interim solution. My Delegation could not look favourably on any attempt to create in this way a kind of second-class membership for any sovereign state. We could possibly envisage that some interim arrangement through observer status could enable additional representatives to participate in the deliberations of ECOSOC between the time of Assembly approval of additional seats and completion of the ratification process. We repeat, this suggestion could only be considered as an interim measure.

The second alternative is: Redistribution of existing seats: - This second alternative does have the advantage of not requiring Charter amendment, but would, of course, require approval of two-thirds of the member states. Previous speakers have called attention to an important disadvantage of this procedure - the fact that an old

injustice would merely be replaced by a new one. This procedure would not, I think, Sir, contribute to a harmonious and lasting solution. On the contrary, I fear it would arouse the determined opposition of a formidable number of member states, all of whom are naturally obligated to defend their own regional interests. It might also be a bad precedent, which would give all areas a feeling of insecurity regarding their entitlement. Any attempt to raid these seats would likely arouse far more widespread opposition than has ever been shown toward proposals for simple enlargement. We would also agree with the distinguished representative of Guinea that re-distribution without enlargement could not provide sufficient seats for a satisfactory representation of Africa and Asia.

Perhaps distinguished delegates would permit me to recall, for the record, the present distribution between areas of seats in ECOSOC. The 18 seats are now held as follows: 5 for the permanent members of the Security Council, (who are not counted in the area groups because of their special responsibilities); Latin America for 20 states, 4 seats; Western Europe for 17 states, 3 seats; the Commonwealth for 11 states, 1 seat; Asia for 14 states, 2 seats; the Middle East and Africa for 30 states, 1 seat; and Eastern Europe for 8 states, 2 seats. Now Sir, I do not want to suggest that the sole criterion for electing members to ECOSOC should be equitable geographical distribution. Although the Charter lays down no criteria for membership, ECOSOC in our view cannot function efficiently unless a reasonable balance is maintained between the contributing and receiving countries. Distribution of seats should

therefore in our view take account of both regional and functional considerations.

The third alternative is: Enlargement: - Various statements made before this Committee have suggested six to be an equitable number of additional seats for ECOSOC. My Delegation sees expansion of ECOSOC as the only method of assuring adequate representation for all areas, while maintaining some balance between the donor countries and the recipient states in international economic aid programmes under United Nations auspices. We believe that enlargement of Council membership is, in view of the vast increase in United Nations membership since 1945, the only answer to the problem of making the Council an effective organ for carrying out the obligations placed upon it under Chapters IX and X of the Charter.

It has been stated at previous sessions that enlargement was an unattainable ideal in view of the objections raised by a permanent member of the Security Council. It should perhaps be stated again now that no Great Power can veto a decision of the General Assembly; we have therefore only to develop a united front to reach the two-thirds majority required to approve enlargement. If the support were strong enough at this stage, an almost irresistible moral pressure would surely be exerted to obtain ratification from all the Great Powers. The suggestion has been made that to bring pressure for a final solution by an Assembly vote was somehow unjustifiable, since it was not a technique of conciliation. Whether one agrees with that view or not, it must nevertheless be recognized as a method of democratic procedure which the Assembly

has adopted without protest in dealing with many other perennial agenda items.

The Canadian Delegation followed attentively the comments on Friday of the distinguished representative of India. We did not agree with his argument that geographical areas should consider themselves sufficiently represented merely because a permanent member of the Security Council happened to belong to their particular area, but we have a further misgiving arising from his proposal to refer this question to a Charter Review Committee, or some similar body, such as that envisaged in Res. 1404 (XIV), before Assembly action is taken. The net result of this, in our opinion, is that nothing will be done, for at least another year, to set in motion the process of amending the Charter. When one adds this delay to the inevitable time required in obtaining ratifications under Art. 108, it would be another year again before additional members could actually be seated. We believe that the areas of the world now under-represented deserve something better than this. Also, we hope we did not misunderstand his recommendations to imply that responsibility for solving the problem before us should not be the concern of all the smaller powers of this Assembly, but should be left solely in the hands of the Great Powers through a small Committee. In a matter such as this, in which the interests of all member states are affected, none can afford to abdicate his responsibility.

My Government has carefully considered the three alternative solutions so far proposed, and would be prepared to support the draft resolutions now before this Committee for enlargement of the two Councils, as the best guarantee of equitable geographic representation for all, while maintaining the Council at a size consonant with efficiency of operation. Once this has been accomplished, we can then determine the method or system by which these new seats may be distributed.

V

My Delegation has suggested, Sir, that a concentration of effort on this problem alone, eliminating all unnecessary complicating factors or reference to quite separate questions which

have come before the General Assembly, would be the best guarantee of reaching a satisfactory solution. The wide-ranging proposals advanced by the distinguished Representative of the USSR for a simultaneous alteration of the entire structure of the United Nations, should not distract us from the problem before us or delay its solution. The extensive Soviet proposals clearly involve a full-scale re-writing of the Charter, which could not possibly be decided by this Committee. They would require a formal Conference on Charter Review, provision for which is clearly made under Article 109 of the Charter to which our attention was drawn by the distinguished representative of Indonesia. In actual fact, the General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/4199) at the Fourteenth Session which requested the Committee on Arrangements for a Charter Review Conference to report with recommendations to the General Assembly <u>not later</u> than at the Sixteenth Session. Therefore, we suggest that the Soviet proposals might be more appropriately held over until that time.

It is our view that since the world is divided into geographical areas corresponding to different traditions and national interests, the main organs of the United Nations should reflect this fact as well as the specific criteria of individual membership either as laid down in the Charter, or established by past performance through functional contributions. We therefore cannot understand the Soviet desire to reorganize the basis of representation here along lines of massive power blocs. This classification is not only completely at variance with the principles of the Charter which seek the harmonization of nations, but it would also have the effect of enshrining a formal and totally artificial division of the world in terms of defensive alliances or of political differences which we must all hope to be merely temporary. Since this Committee is examining a proposal for Charter amendment, we should use extreme care to maintain the Charter as a document which embodies firm principles but recommends procedures elastic enough to meet the needs of changing times.

Mr. Chairman, my Delegation is pleased to note that the discussions on this item, with only a few exceptions, have at this session avoided the temptation to lay blame for past failures or to indulge in vitriolic recriminations when setting out our points of view. The real issue has been kept clearly before us, and no time has been lost in the by-ways of procedural arrangements which must follow, and not precede, agreement on whether or not to enlarge the Councils. We sympathize with the natural and clearly-expressed desire of the many new states to take some concrete steps forward at this session. We cannot agree with those who discourage any attempt to amend the Charter, simply because we were not successful at previous sessions. The admission of 17 new states to this Assembly is reason in itself for prompt and decisive action, for in expanding the Councils we are not only correcting the imbalance of the present, but providing positive assurance to those yet unborn member states that they will have an opportunity to make an effective contribution to the work of the United Nations.

We therefore, Sir, cannot deny the reasonable expectations of any given group of member countries to adequate representation on a continuing basis in the major organs of the United Nations, and my Delegation is therefore prepared to support those wishes, as set out in the two resolutions before this Committee.

Thank you.