

CANADIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement No. ~~42~~ 43.

October ¹² 13, 1967

Text of Statement delivered by the Canadian Representative in the Third Committee, Mrs. Sally Merchant, on point of order during the discussion of the Draft Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Item 58), on October 12, 1967.

Now that the Committee has approved Article 6 of the Declaration, my delegation would like to make a suggestion that we feel may be valuable in facilitating the adoption of subsequent articles and final adoption of the Declaration as a whole.

During the consideration of Article 6, and the amendments to it, it would seem that many of the interventions were not always pertinent and sometimes unnecessarily time-consuming. We do not suggest that discussion is not valuable. It is the very basis of international understanding. The Declaration before us is the product of long discussion and is itself proof of the value of discussion. But we would like to suggest that the interventions in future be limited as much as possible, as was suggested by the delegate from Morocco, expressions of opposition to articles in the draft or to amendments as they have been proposed. For our own part, the Canadian delegation takes the view with Nigeria that it is in the vote itself that we can best express our approval or otherwise. We feel and would ask the delegates in the Committee to remember that we are adopting here a Declaration. I do not say a declaration only because that would imply a lack of importance. It is in fact a very important document but it is, as has been so many times said--an outline of desirable goals. They are goals which will be attained in the ways in which each of the member states can incorporate them into their national and cultural patterns. It appears that the Committee is broadly in full accord with the purposes and intent of each article and our Delegation would make an appeal that in dealing with the remaining articles delegates might see fit to resist the temptation to engage in precise national interpretations which on occasion are matters of semantics and can as we have seen result in the most incredible misunderstandings and procedural entanglements.

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Discussions that range too widely over the entire subject--or on the other hand--become too precise, all result in a virtual denial of the Committee's intention. My delegation fears that in this way we risk diminishing the prestige of a Committee that deals with the most important aspect of the work of the United Nations, i.e. Human Rights.

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