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STATEMENT MADE BY THE CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE  
ON THE FIFTH COMMITTEE ON NOVEMBER 19, 1962,  
DURING DEBATE ON PERSONNEL QUESTIONS:  
ITEMS 70(A) AND (B)

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Most of us here are quite familiar with the questions of geographical distribution of the staff of the Secretariat and the proportion of fixed term staff. These are two old acquaintances and we have come to regard them as almost regular items on our agenda. This is understandable since both these questions are of concern to all delegations and since it is continually necessary to strike a balance between the legitimate desires of member states to achieve a wide geographical distribution of staff, against the concern of members to ensure that the United Nations Secretariat is as efficient as we would all like it to be.

The Canadian Delegation looks forward each year to the Secretary-General's report on these subjects and to our discussion of them, since we believe that the Fifth Committee should take a continuing interest in these matters. It is clear that at one time there was a considerable imbalance in the geographical distribution of staff. However, each year has seen a progressive improvement in the situation. Delegations need only look at pages 3 and 4 of Document A/5270 and page 2 of Document A/C.5/933 to see just how significant this improvement has been. We should also remember that this steady trend towards a more equitable distribution and towards a better balance between fixed term and career staff are primarily the result of three things. First, conscientious and continuing efforts by the Secretary-General on our behalf; second, provision of comments and guidance by the General Assembly on the need for and methods of improvement; and third, recognition by most Member States that it is essential to follow correct administrative proce-

The first part of the document discusses the general situation of the country and the progress of the war. It mentions the importance of maintaining a strong and united front and the need for continued cooperation between all sectors of society. The text emphasizes the role of the government in ensuring the well-being of the population and the success of the military efforts.

In the second part, the focus shifts to the economic and social challenges facing the nation. The document highlights the need for efficient resource management and the implementation of policies that support the war effort while also addressing the needs of the civilian population. It calls for increased productivity and the mobilization of all available resources.

The third section addresses the political and administrative aspects of the government's operations. It discusses the importance of maintaining a clear and effective system of governance and the role of various government departments in supporting the national goals. The text stresses the need for transparency and accountability in all government activities.

Finally, the document concludes with a call to action for all citizens. It encourages the population to continue their efforts in supporting the war and to remain committed to the principles of justice and freedom. The text expresses confidence in the ultimate success of the national struggle and the future prosperity of the country.

dures and to avoid drastic changes in the composition of the Secretariat which would severely reduce the efficiency of the Organization.

Just how significant these improvements have been can be seen from the following. In 1946, out of 52 members, 40 or 77 percent had either no nationals in the Secretariat or were below the desirable range. In 1962, after the Organization had doubled its membership to 104 there were only 22 members or 21 percent who either had no nationals on the staff or who were below the desirable range. In my Delegation's view, this clearly illustrates the desirability of allowing the Secretary-General to proceed on the basis of general guidance from the Assembly. In its continuing desire for equitable geographic distribution the Fifth Committee at the sixteenth session requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the matter for our consideration at the seventeenth session. The Secretary-General's report is now before us; it is very thought-provoking and deserves our careful examination. I think that all delegations will be able to agree that the Secretary-General has done a most commendable job in ensuring that due regard is paid to geographic distribution. Our task is to continue to provide him with general guidance on the very complex problems which he faces without restricting his freedom to act in accordance with his responsibilities and his authority as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization.

What sort of guidance should he be given? I think it is first necessary to recall the very specific guidance which is given in Articles 97, 100 and 101 of the Charter. In brief, these articles state that the Secretary-General shall be the Chief Administrative Officer, that he has the responsibility for the appointment of the staff and that the paramount consideration in the employment of staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of ensuring the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Furthermore, in the recruitment of staff, due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting, on as wide a geographic basis as possible, personnel who will be officials



responsible only to the Organization. The Canadian Delegation has consistently supported the principle of equitable geographic distribution but believes that efficiency, integrity and competence are of paramount importance in an international organization. My Delegation also believes that in giving due regard to geographic distribution one of the chief elements in Member States' entitlement to positions should be the contributions of members to the regular budget.

It is absolutely essential that the Secretary-General should not be restricted by any rigid mechanistic formula or approach in considering this problem. The Charter and staff rules and regulations are quite explicit on the Secretary-General's authority in the selection, promotion and administration of staff whose first loyalty is to the Organization. The Canadian Delegation mistrusts any statistical approach to recruitment and have preferred to place our trust in the Secretary-General's competence and good judgment, supported by regular reviews carried out by this committee. We believe that the confidence which Member States have shown in the Secretary-General has been completely justified in view of the progress he has made in achieving a more equitable distribution.

From the documents before us it is quite clear that there is still some room for improvement. Looking at Document A/C.5/933 we see that in the P-1 and above posts all but two regions are above the median of the desirable range of posts. These two areas are Eastern Europe and North America. It is just as clear that this statement does not tell the whole story, since there are a number of inequities within most regions because some members have either more than or less than the median of the desirable range. My Delegation is confident that these inequities can be substantially reduced, given time and the willingness of Member States to cooperate with the Secretary General in his search for competent international civil servants. In this regard, I would like to state that, as far as Canada is concerned, the Secretary-General is free to recruit individuals from the ranks of qualified Canadians for employment



with the United Nations.

However, my Delegation would like to make clear its expectation that, in the Secretary-General's efforts to improve geographic distribution and to ensure that there is a fair proportion of fixed term and career staff, he will ensure equality of treatment as between the nationals of different Member States in terms of opportunities for promotion and the proportion of high level posts. We, for our part, will be watching developments in respect of this problem closely, not only in their general application but also of course as they affect the position of Canadians on the Secretariat.

Turning to the Secretary-General's suggestions contained in his report, the Canadian Delegation hopes that the Fifth Committee will continue to show its good judgment in permitting the Secretary-General a high degree of latitude in the performance of his responsibilities. In the light of the very real progress made, we hope that the General Assembly will take its time in considering any proposals to ensure further improvement and will allow the Secretary General and members time to assess the implications and desirability of any suggestions.

Most of my remarks thus far have been concerned with geographic distribution and while some of the points I have raised apply to the proportion of fixed-term staff I would like to outline briefly the Canadian Delegation's views on fixed-term and career staff. We believe that it is desirable to have a fair balance between fixed term and career staff in order to ensure a healthy influx of new ideas while maintaining high efficiency and morale. No business, government or other organization can operate effectively or efficiently with a high rate of staff turnover. Every organization needs a sizeable body of devoted, loyal career personnel if it is to be efficient. At this and previous sessions, the Committee has heard much about the need for efficiency within the Secretariat. It is highly questionable in my Delegation's view whether efficiency can be maintained when most of the staff members on fixed-term contracts leave the Secretariat within two years or less. Documents A/C.5/933





and 938 indicate that in the P-1 posts and above there are considerable differences among regions as regards the proportion of fixed-term staff. Taking two examples, in one region, 79% of the individuals are on fixed term contracts while in another region only 14% are on such contracts. While variances are bound to occur, we wonder whether such a wide range is desirable.

The Secretary-General has done a remarkable job in increasing the proportion of fixed-term contracts. As recently as 1955, 11% of the staff were on fixed-term contracts, while in 1962 the proportion had risen to over 25%. The Secretary-General is to be commended for his efforts. However, the Canadian Delegation has strong doubts about the desirability of raising the proportion of fixed-term contracts beyond 25% and would suggest that this ratio should be stabilized in the interests of efficiency and in view of the relatively high costs resulting from staff turnover.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to meet the desires of members while at the same time acting under the explicit guidance of the Charter. His task and those of his senior officials is far from easy since it is always necessary to consider a number of variables in ensuring that the Organization maintains the high standards of efficiency for which it is known. The Canadian Delegation hopes that members will show patience and good judgment in any suggestions for guidance and will cooperate closely with the Secretary-General in his never-ending search for competent personnel who are suited for employment as international civil servants.

