

No. 53/73

SOCIAL COMMISSION

Following are the texts of statements delivered on November 10 and November 11, 1953 by Mr. Paul Beaulieu of the Canadian Delegation in the Third Committee of the eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly on Chapters IV and V of the Report of the Economic and Social Council dealing with the work of the Social Commission. (Delivered in French)

NOTE - On November 28, 1953 the General Assembly passed resolution 155 dealing with the work of the Social Commission.

Statement made on November 10, 1953

I regret that the draft resolution submitted by the Canadian Delegation has given rise to some statements which have made it necessary to take several minutes of the precious time of this Committee, and I apologize. Our intention was merely to offer a constructive solution. My sincere thanks go to the representatives of Iraq and Egypt for their understanding attitude and courtesy, and I hope that the resolution proposed by my delegation will lead to a constructive solution for the problem debated.

As you know, Canada has been a member of the Social Commission for seven years and our participation in its work is an eloquent indication of the importance attached by my country to this functional commission and the various tasks which have been entrusted to it. For this reason, any suggestions which would improve the efficiency of the Social Commission and make its efforts in the social field more fruitful will receive careful study by us.

Allow me to say at the beginning of my few remarks that we sympathize with the purposes which the representative of Iraq wishes to attain by her resolution A/C.3/L.376. The other members of the Commission share her desire to see carried out efficiently programmes of concerted practical action in the social field. The representative of Iraq suggested that the best way of achieving this result would be by convening the Social Commission every year and increasing the number of its members. Different suggestions were put forward by other delegations, all with the same end in view. The representative of the Netherlands submitted an amendment asking the Economic and Social Council to study the question in order to find out whether it is necessary to hold meetings of the Commission more frequently and, if it feels this to be so, to reconsider its previous resolution so as to provide for annual meetings. The delegate of Peru also made a suggestion which, in our opinion, is excellent; the object of his amendment is the creation of a limited number of committees of experts who would be entrusted with the examination of technical matters that fall within the competence of the Commission. During the general debate, we also heard other proposals. The representative of China suggested that the solution does not reside necessarily in an increase in the

number of meetings, but in a prolongation to more than the three weeks provided for of the meetings which take place every two years. It was also suggested that better representation might be achieved within the present framework. Those are concrete proposals which deserve careful study.

It seems, that this Commission has to choose between two courses: on the one hand, we may discuss the different suggestions and agree upon a recommendation to be sent to the Economic and Social Council; on the other hand, we may note that the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council were reorganized in 1951 and that the Council will re-examine in 1954 the matter of their organization. It seems to us therefore that the Council is particularly well qualified to make a decision in this matter. Without wishing to adopt too formal and legal an attitude, we may refer to Article 68 of the Charter, which reads as follows;

"The Economic and Social Council shall set up commissions in economic and social fields and for the promotion of human rights, and such other commissions as may be required for the performance of its functions

The intention of the Charter, it seems to us, is that the Economic and Social Council should itself decide the number of commissions to be set up for economic and social questions and also the points of detail regarding the duties to be assigned to them.

In her resolution, the representative of Iraq raises the question of the membership of the Commission and suggests that the possibility of increasing the number of members be examined so that better representation of underdeveloped regions and different types of economy and culture may be ensured. No precise details have been given us, however, regarding the number contemplated. Present provisions are for eighteen members, and the same number applies to almost all the other functional commissions. It seems to us that any increase in representation on the Social Commission risks having consequential effects on the membership of the other functional commissions. Indeed, the other commissions may think that increased representation on the Social Commission will be interpreted as indicating that greater importance is attached to its work, and, if only out of a desire for prestige, they might well feel obliged or tempted to ask also for more numerous representation. Moreover, such a change would have financial effects to which attention has already been drawn by other delegations. The report prepared by the Secretary-General on the financial implications of the resolution put forward by the Delegation of Iraq is clear, but we are not entirely convinced that its contents have been studied with sufficient care by the Third Committee. Although the Secretary-General's report deals with the financial effects in so far as the Social Commission is concerned, it is none the less true that still greater expenses may be incurred if other commissions should insist on obtaining a greater number of members.

Another point that my delegation noted particularly is the position in which the Social Commission would find itself in relation to the Economic and Social Council if the number of members in the Commission were to be increased. Article 61 of the Charter states that the Economic and Social Council shall consist of eighteen members. It seems to us that the Council would be placed in a somewhat embarrassing

position if one of its functional commissions were to consist of more than eighteen members. Indeed, the Economic and Social Council, having a smaller representation, would perhaps be faced with the dilemma of having to reverse a decision taken by a body larger and more representative than itself. Such a situation, in the opinion of my delegation, would be most embarrassing and might well jeopardize greatly the prestige of one of the most important bodies of the United Nations.

The comments made by the Chinese representative produced a very profound impression on my delegation; he drew attention to the effect which increased representation on the Social Commission might have on the International Children's Emergency Fund. As you know, the members of the Social Commission form part automatically of the Executive Board of UNICEF. Increased representation on the former would have the inevitable result of increasing the number of representatives on the latter. Here again, the financial implications deserve very serious consideration.

I have dealt at some length with the various proposals and suggestions that have been brought to the attention of the Third Committee, and also with their financial implications. The Canadian Delegation feels that it would be unwise for this Commission to attempt to reach a final decision concerning the merits of the different proposals and suggestions regarding the Social Commission outside the framework of the discussions which will take place next year in the Economic and Social Council on the re-organization of the Council's various commissions. The most satisfactory way of proceeding in the present instance would be to ensure that the future organization of the Social Commission and, in particular, the different proposals and suggestions that have been made here regarding it shall be studied by the Economic and Social Council when it undertakes its examination of the plan for the meetings of all of its commissions. To this end, the Canadian Delegation has presented a draft resolution which, if approved, will ensure that all the constructive proposals and amendments of the here, and particularly the resolutions and amendments of the delegations of Iraq, the Netherlands and Peru, will be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council at the proper time for study and recommended action. It is the sincere hope of the Canadian Delegation that all members of the Third Committee will see fit to support the draft resolution which it has submitted.

(Statement made on November 11 follows on page 4)

Statement made on November 11, 1953

In accordance with the wish expressed by several delegations toward the close of yesterday's meeting, the Canadian Delegation got in touch with the ones which had submitted amendments to the text of the Canadian resolution. It has been possible for us to adopt several suggestions which, without modifying the substance of the Canadian resolution, completed it in certain respects. The members of the Committee now have before them the result of these consultations (A/C.3/L.385/Rev.1).

In the first place, in accordance with the suggestion of the delegate of Saudi Arabia, a suggestion which was also made to us by other delegations, we have added to the preamble the first two paragraphs which appear in the text of the resolution submitted by Iraq.

As regards the amendments suggested by the delegate of the Soviet Union, in accordance with his first suggestion, we have added to the first paragraph a reference to Article 61 of the Charter. As for his second amendment, if I understood his suggestion clearly, he proposed that the last paragraph, being a repetition, should be removed. The Canadian Delegation does not feel that it can share completely this point of view, but, as suggested by the delegate of the Soviet Union, it has removed the last five words of the last paragraph (for its guidance and information).

In response to the suggestion made by the delegate of Egypt that the end of the sentence commencing with the words "which states ..." be removed from the first paragraph, the Canadian Delegation had expressed the opinion that it did not think it could adopt his suggestion, but had added that, if the opinion of the Delegate of Egypt were shared by other delegations, the Canadian Delegation would agree. The Delegate of Uruguay and some other delegations having informed us that they supported the suggestion of the Egyptian Delegate, we have adopted it.

We indicated yesterday that the Canadian Delegation accepted the suggestions of the Chinese Delegate, and in the new text of the resolution, the word "draft" appears before the word "proposals" in Paragraphs 4 and 5.

The Canadian Delegation has also added the amendment of the Delegate of Guatemala to the other documents to be referred to the Economic and Social Council.

As regards the amendment proposed by the Delegate of New Zealand, it seems to us that the word "consider" suggests the same idea as the words "take into account".

In a constructive spirit and aware that no draft resolution submitted by any country is perfect, the Canadian Delegation has been happy to accept the suggestions made to it; it thanks the different delegations which have proposed corrections and expresses the wish that the Canadian resolution, in its new form, will receive the unanimous support of the members of the Third Committee.

