

No. 60/10 REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Statement by Mrs. H. H. Steen, Canadian Representative  
on the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural)  
Committee of the United Nations October 17, 1960

Mr. Chairman:

Over the past week, we have heard many speakers representing the various social, economic and political systems of the world discussing those parts of the Economic and Social Council Report of vital interest to them. Those of us who are new to the Committee have not failed to be impressed by the magnitude of the social, humanitarian and cultural problems facing the United Nations which has been revealed in these statements.

In deference to the appeal which you have made for speakers to be brief, I shall restrict my remarks to a few salient points in the Report. By omitting reference to other items, my intention is not, of course, to minimize their importance.

The distinguished delegates who have preceded me have, rightly I think, singled out the work of UNICEF for special attention in their remarks. The report on UNICEF activities serves to point up UNICEF's dynamic character. Established originally to meet the emergency needs of children in war-devastated countries, it has evolved into an agency assisting governments to develop permanent health, nutrition and welfare services for children in order to combat diseases to which children are particularly susceptible. More recently it has extended its aid to include projects providing social services for children and has put increased emphasis on training programmes. At the same time it has continued to respond promptly and effectively to needs for emergency relief.

In other words, UNICEF has not contented itself with simply continuing along established patterns but has constantly sought to improve its service to the needy children of the world. I note in this regard that the Executive Board at its session next June intends to undertake "a systematic review of children's needs and the opportunities for action in order to determine more precisely the most important areas requiring national efforts and international aid in the future, and the best ways of giving such aid". I also note that this survey is to be made on the basis of an analysis prepared by the Executive Director in consultation with the Specialized Agencies and taking into account the views of recipient countries as to their own priority needs.

UNICEF's changing outlook and its great reputation for providing effective assistance has meant that demands made upon it continue to be pressing.

I do not pretend to know how the increased financial resources which will be required to meet these demands are to be obtained in these days when heavy demands are being made on national budgets from so many other directions. The distinguished delegate of the U.S.S.R. and others have suggested that savings from disarmament are one source of funds for economic and social



programmes of this kind. As Committee members know, Canada has devoted a great deal of energy to the problem of disarmament and does not intend to give up its efforts to ensure that agreement on disarmament is achieved for the benefit of mankind. Obviously we would be the first to welcome any increase in resources that might result from disarmament. However, in the absence of agreement on disarmament and the implementation of actual disarmament measures, it is obviously fruitless to speculate on the scope of the resources which disarmament might help to release for these programmes, and it may even be harmful since it diverts attention from the exploration of more immediate ways and means of obtaining the much needed resources.

My Government is constantly reviewing its many commitments to international aid programmes to determine what assistance it can give. I wish to assure UNICEF that the Canadian Government, which has been a consistent supporter of the Fund, intends to continue its support of UNICEF's activities. It has already begun to provide the 18 million pounds of powdered milk which it has announced it would contribute this year to UNICEF's nutrition programmes in Asia, Africa and Latin America; and, subject to Parliamentary approval, it will make another financial contribution in 1961 of \$650,000 Canadian. I would be remiss if I did not mention here that the people of Canada, through the National UNICEF Committee, have made direct contributions to the Fund. Last year, they purchased over a million and a quarter UNICEF greeting cards, placing Canada third in the world sales per capita; and children across Canada collected \$200,000 during their "Hallowe'en for UNICEF" campaign.

Mr. Chairman, it should come as no surprise to anyone here that my delegation will be voting in favour of the draft resolution on UNICEF which acknowledges once more the important humanitarian achievements of the Fund and which recognizes the need for greater work in Africa.

The Report of the Economic and Social Council gives encouraging evidence of achievement by the various functional commissions. The very detailed section on the "International Control of Narcotics" indicates that some progress has been made in extending international participation in multilateral narcotic treaties; in compiling statistical information on drug addiction; in providing technical assistance in the field of narcotics control and in developing methods of determining the origin of opium - one of the main drugs in the illicit traffic. Canada, besides carrying out its treaty obligations, has always played an active role in the international control of narcotics. As a permanent member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, it has endeavoured to improve international control, and to this end it has participated in the preparation of the proposed Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and has collaborated in the scientific research programme to determine the origin of opium.

For the last three years, Canada has participated in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women. It is clear from the ECOSOC Report that questions concerning the political, legal, economic, social and educational rights of women are being vigorously pursued by the Council and its Commission on the Status of Women. I do not propose to deal with the many substantive matters covered in the Report since the Canadian position on them was well presented by Mrs. Harry Quart of Quebec City, who has been representing the Canadian Government on the Commission. However, I should like to reaffirm the Canadian support for the unanimous view of the Commission that there should



be African representation on the Commission if at all possible. The new perspective which African representation has already brought to the United Nations has been a significant contribution to the work of our Organization, and would be equally valuable to the Commission's work of advancing the right of women in all parts of the world to participate fully in political, social and economic life.

As the Committee knows, Canada's term on the Commission on the Status of Women lapses this year. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to express the Canadian Government's appreciation of the opportunity which it was given to serve for three years on the Commission and to participate directly with seventeen other members in its important deliberations. My Government's membership on the Commission has served to broaden the knowledge in Canada of the progress that has been, and is being, made in promoting the rights of women. I am sure I speak not only for my government but for all the women of Canada when I say that Canadian interest in the work of the Commission on the Status of Women will remain very active. As a practical expression of this continuing interest, the Canadian Government is supplying materials for the exhibit which is being arranged in connection with the regional seminar on the participation of women in public life to be held in Ethiopia in December.

It is also pleased to support the draft resolution on "United Nations Assistance for the Advancement of Women in Developing Countries" which, as the co-sponsors assured us, was aimed at drawing to the attention of all delegations, particularly the new members, the need for collaborating with the Secretary-General in preparing his study on the need for, and the possibilities of, further United Nations assistance in this field. My delegation has taken note of the remarks made on behalf of all the co-sponsors by the distinguished delegate of Pakistan that this draft resolution is intended to emphasize the urgency of the matter and to get the study undertaken by the Secretary-General completed without undue delay, and is not intended to prejudice or prejudge the outcome of the study in any way. In the light of this clarification, we shall vote in favour of the draft resolution.

In the next four years the Canadian Government will be addressing itself to the problems before the Social Commission, to which it has recently been elected by the Economic and Social Council. The very helpful review which the Director of the Social Bureau of the Secretariat, Miss Julia Henderson, gave at the beginning of our discussions has indicated that the coming years will be important ones for the Social Commission, particularly as decisions on ways of strengthening ECOSOC's work in the social field may soon be taken in pursuance of the General Assembly's resolution 1392(XIV). We think it is appropriate that a study on the ways of strengthening the social side of the United Nations activities should have been undertaken at this time since the historic changes in the membership of the United Nations which we have witnessed at this session will bring to light new needs in the social field that will have to be met.

Two sections of Chapter VII, dealing with the relations between the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, have been brought to the attention of our Committee for any views we might wish to express before they are considered by the Fifth and Sixth Committees. I refer to the sections entitled "Programme Appraisals in the Economic, Social and Human Rights Fields" and "Consultations with the Specialized Agencies". These sections indicate that there



has been a growing need for the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies to work out some arrangements which will ensure that the programmes and activities of the individual bodies are not only in harmony but are, where circumstances permit, co-ordinated and concerted.

My delegation appreciates the very useful analysis of this question which the distinguished delegate of New Zealand presented to this Committee a week ago and I am sure the members of this Committee and the Fifth Committee will give it the detailed study it deserves.

As regards the related question of consultations with the Specialized Agencies which was raised in paragraph 645 of the Report, it is well known to all countries which participate actively in the work of the Specialized Agencies, and perhaps to none more than the developing countries, that many valuable programmes are being implemented by these bodies and that they have much potential for further helpful activities in many fields closely related to those in which the United Nations is concerned. As the work of all members of the United Nations family has developed, the necessity of dovetailing and relating frequently complementary activities has become more and more apparent, if limited resources are to be used to best advantage without the wastage in financial and human effort that is the inevitable corollary of duplication. Moreover in many fields, to consult the wealth of actual experience in the Agencies would help ensure that United Nations programmes were soundly conceived. These obvious advantages of good co-ordination would become more certain of achievement if the principle in paragraph 645 of the Report were put into practice.

My delegation therefore believes that the Third Committee should endorse the objective of the draft resolution recommended by the Economic and Social Council in paragraph 645 of its Report, in order to ensure that prior consultations will take place with the Specialized Agencies before the General Assembly finally launches into any project which is of concern to the Agencies. In expressing this view, my delegation does not wish to take a rigid position at this time on the wording of the proposed draft resolution. The distinguished delegate of India in his very useful remarks on this subject last week raised important considerations which we think should be transmitted to the Sixth Committee when it deals with the question. We think some wording could be arrived at which will meet the point raised by the distinguished delegate of India so that there will be no question of the draft resolution preventing the Assembly or its committees from taking initiatives. At the same time, we would hope that the draft resolution could be so phrased that consultations with the agencies concerned can be undertaken before the Assembly takes final decisions on projects which it may wish to launch.

One of the many striking things which I have found about the ECOSOC Report is the prominence given to education, particularly in the human rights activities of ECOSOC. Section VI of Chapter VI draws attention to the action which is to be taken by the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on the question of discrimination in education which has been dealt with by UNESCO. It also refers to the appeal made by the Commission on Human Rights to public authorities and private organizations to make sustained efforts to educate public opinion with a view to eradicating racial prejudice and religious intolerance; while Section III of Chapter VI deals with the question of promoting national advisory committees on human rights as a means of educating public opinion on these questions.



Since the last General Assembly, Canadian interest in the question of human rights has been stimulated more than ever by the "Act for the Recognition and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" passed by the Canadian Parliament at its last session. This piece of legislation, sponsored by the Prime Minister, establishes a Bill of Rights for Canada wherein it is:

"recognized and declared that in Canada there have always existed and shall continue to exist the following human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely,

- (a) the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property, and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law;
- (b) the right of the individual to protection of the law without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex;
- (c) freedom of religion;
- (d) freedom of speech
- (e) freedom of assembly and association; and
- (f) freedom of the press."

As a result of legislative action, and the success of large-scale adult education programmes in Canada, public opinion in my country at the present time is particularly favourable to the promotion of human rights and inter-ethnic, inter-religious and inter-racial harmony. The continuing education programme by such agencies as the National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as well as the Federal Department of Labour and the Citizenship Branch reinforces a growing body of anti-discrimination legislation and aims to encourage harmony among the various groups forming the Canadian nation. In addition, Canadian voluntary organizations play an active part, through education, in preventing religious and racial discrimination and in promoting understanding of human rights. They accomplish this by publications, organizational and public meetings, panel discussions on television and radio, seminars and conferences. It is against this background that we shall be approaching the discussion of the draft resolution on "Manifestations of Racial and National Hatred" put forward by the distinguished delegate of Czechoslovakia.

Later when we come to discuss Article 18 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Committee will have occasion to have a closer look at Document E.CCN.4/Sub-2/200, the "Study of Discrimination in the Matter of Religious Rights and Practices", which is an important contribution to the study of human rights. This is a document which has already attracted some attention in my country where out of a large population of some 400,000 Canadians of Ukrainian origin 191,000 are members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. These latter have been deeply troubled by the forced merger in the Ukraine of the Ukrainian Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church in 1946 after four centuries of separate existence.



Mr. Chairman, Canada is at present making substantial contributions to education in less developed countries and will therefore follow with particular interest the discussion on the draft resolution entitled "Training and education in countries in process of development, especially in Africa". The distinguished delegate of the United Kingdom has already referred in her remarks to the Commonwealth Scholarship Programme which was instituted to arrange student exchanges among Commonwealth countries. Canada's share in this scheme amounts to one million dollars a year which will permit some two hundred students from Commonwealth countries to study in Canada at any one time. The majority of these will come from Africa and other less-developed areas. At the Commonwealth Education Conference of 1959 which launched this scheme, Canada announced also a special programme to provide and train teachers for developing Commonwealth countries. Canadian educationalists are now serving under this programme in a number of countries and more will be provided in the near future.

During his statement in the General Assembly, on September 26, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, announced that as its share in the Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme which has just been established, Canada planned to contribute 10.5 million dollars over a three year period towards the development of African countries within the Commonwealth. Some of these funds will be devoted to technical assistance and aids to education.

These bilateral programmes which will bring assistance complementary to United Nations programmes, are regarded as Canada has increased its contribution to United Nations assistance programmes which will reach other African countries, a great number of which are French-speaking. Canada, as a bilingual country, has very considerable facilities for education and training in the French language and a large pool of French-speaking technical personnel. It will therefore welcome French-speaking students from Africa under United Nations programmes. The Canadian Government is prepared to co-operate to the fullest extent with the United Nations in providing training and expert personnel for French-speaking African countries under these programmes.

Mr. Chairman, as I have already encroached too long on the time of the Committee, I shall conclude my statement at this point and shall reserve any remarks on the other draft resolutions to another time.

Thank you.

