



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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### CANADA'S VIEWS ON UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Statement by Mr. Benjamin Rogers, Canadian Representative on the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, November 5, 1957.

My country, Canada, is a member of the Economic and Social Council. I might have contented myself with renewing Canada's support for the decisions taken in the past year by the Economic and Social Council, which are reflected in the documents before us. I think, however, that I should explain something of the background to the positions on technical assistance problems which my delegation has taken in the past and will doubtless take in the future, and I should like to make a few suggestions on specific subjects.

In the first place, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the work of the Technical Assistance Committee under the distinguished chairmanship of Mr. Janos Stanovnik of Yugoslavia. The Technical Assistance Committee during 1957 has dealt expeditiously and fairly with a number of difficult problems and has made an important and constructive contribution to the development of United Nations technical assistance programmes. In this connection, special mention should be made of the work on the Committee of the six additional members elected in 1957 for two- or three-year periods: Czechoslovakia, India, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland and Venezuela.

The central problem facing the technical assistance programmes of the United Nations has been forcefully brought to our attention by Mr. David Owen, of the Technical Assistance Board, and by Dr. Keenleyside, of the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration. This problem can briefly be stated as that of reconciling the increasing demands that are being made on the expanded programme of technical assistance with the resources which are not increasing and may even be decreasing.

There are two separate ways of dealing with this situation. One method already being pursued by the Technical Assistance Committee and the Economic and Social Council is that of appealing to governments to increase their financial contributions to the programme. The Canadian Delegation certainly believes that it is useful and desirable to bring to the attention of member governments the problems and requirements of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in relation to the urgent needs of the less developed countries. It should be recognized, however, that by themselves appeals for additional funds do not necessarily represent the most constructive action which the Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council can take in relation to the dilemma that I have already mentioned. The Economic and Social Council has already requested the Technical Assistance Board, and invited participating governments, to suggest measures which would make it possible to implement a larger programme. No matter how much money governments contribute to the expanded programme the total available resources will always be less than the demands to be made on them. In these circumstances the remainder of my statement will be devoted mainly to a consideration of how the present available resources can best be used. We believe that, in our discussions in this Committee, emphasis should be placed on this aspect of the question.

Before complying with my own prescription, Mr. Chairman, I should like to refer briefly to the support which the Canadian Government has given and continues to give to the Expanded Programme. This support was reaffirmed on United Nations Day this year by the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Hon. John G. Diefenbaker, who stated: "The very important but often unheralded economic and humanitarian aspects of United Nations work are an excellent example of the forward strides which can and have been made. Outstanding in this field is the aid to under-developed countries which has been given through United Nations programmes of technical assistance, and the advances in social and physical well-being which have been achieved throughout the world by the Specialized Agencies."

The Canadian Delegation to the Eighth United Nations Technical Assistance conference announced that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Canadian contribution for 1958 would be of the same order as that for 1957. The Canadian contribution for 1957 to the Expanded Programme was 2,000,000 United States dollars, fully convertible in every respect, which was placed entirely at the disposition of the Technical Assistance Board. This was the third largest contribution, being exceeded only by those of the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I should like to turn to a consideration of how available resources can best be utilized. In Mr. Owen's statement our attention was drawn to the effective co-operation which has been established between the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance and other programmes of economic aid. Members of this Committee will recall that my delegation has always believed

that such co-operation should be encouraged. The resources of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance will certainly not be used to the best advantage if the Expanded Programme is operated without taking into account other programmes of economic aid. Of course, the primary responsibility for co-ordination of United Nations programmes and other programmes rests with the receiving countries themselves. This was emphasized in ECOSOC Resolution 659(XXIV). The Canadian Delegation believes that the action which the General Assembly and ECOSOC have taken to encourage effective co-ordination of United Nations programmes and other programmes of economic aid will continue to be of great benefit to the under-developed countries. As the distinguished delegate of Ghana mentioned in his intervention on the report of ECOSOC, the United Nations has an important responsibility to ensure that duplication of effort does not result in the wasting of scarce economic aid resources. The Canadian Delegation looks forward with interest to the report which the Technical Assistance Board will be presenting to ECOSOC at its 26th Session on the correlation of "the resources of the Expanded Programme with other programmes of economic and technical assistance in over-all integrated economic development programmes".

In his important contribution to our debate The Netherlands representative mentioned another aspect of this question of co-ordination. He referred to the need of avoiding any confusion between technical assistance and capital assistance. The Canadian Delegation has always listened with great interest to anything which The Netherlands Delegation says on the subject of economic development or indeed on any other subject. On this particular point, however, we must suggest a somewhat different emphasis. As the countries in this Committee from South and South-East Asia are aware, Canada has been a strong supporter of the Colombo Plan since its inception. In fact, Prime Minister Diefenbaker announced in the Canadian House of Commons on October 22 of this year that, subject to the approval of Parliament, Canada will provide 35,000,000 dollars of assistance under the Colombo Plan in 1958. In the operation of this programme it has been the Canadian experience that it is most important for both technical and capital assistance to be closely related. Many capital assistance programmes could not be undertaken if technical assistance programmes had not prepared the way. Furthermore, it is difficult and, in our experience, undesirable to maintain a rigid distinction between the technical and capital assistance. In many specific examples it is difficult to classify particular projects. For example, is the equipment to be provided in support of a technical assistance expert to be classified as capital assistance or technical assistance? In a real sense it does not matter. What does matter is that the total volume of economic aid available be used in the most efficient possible ways. Therefore, my delegation does not find it possible to separate technical assistance and capital assistance into rigid categories and indeed we feel that only by closely relating them can the best possible results be achieved.

Mr. Chairman, I was struck by the comments, made by the distinguished representative of Mexico on November 1, concerning the need for concentrating the use of the resources available for technical assistance under the United Nations. In this connection I may say that the Canadian Delegation supports the decision of the Technical Assistance Board subsequently approved by the ECOSOC further to consider the expansion of technical assistance activities under the Expanded Programme in Europe before any new programme was recommended. As the distinguished delegate of France has already noted, this provisional decision was taken as a temporary measure and without prejudice to the basic principles governing the programme. In general, however, the Canadian Delegation believes that any concentration which is achieved under the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance should be a concentration of subject and that, far from concentrating its resources geographically, the Expanded Programme should make its services available to countries and territories that need those services, without geographical restrictions or limitations.

Our Mexican colleague was, however, referring particularly -- if we understood him correctly -- to the importance of concentrating the resources of the Expanded Programme on particularly useful and important subjects and activities. He correctly noted, of course, that these subjects and activities would have to be chosen by the recipient countries themselves under the terms of the country programming procedure. I think that it might be desirable for the Technical Assistance Committee to study the possibility of suggesting to member governments that their requests for technical assistance be concentrated on subjects and activities for which the United Nations programmes are particularly well qualified to provide assistance. For example, it may be that some countries would like to concentrate United Nations technical assistance on developing and establishing their over-all economic development programmes. Other countries might wish to emphasize the development of natural resources; still others, industrial development. Some governments might wish to concentrate United Nations assistance on the provision of assistance in the field of public administration. In effect, our Mexican colleague suggested that, whatever, the subject, the resources for the Expanded Programme might be better used if concentrated somewhat more than at present. It is obvious in this as in other programmes that an attempt to do everything well is likely to result in failure to do anything well. Perhaps the Technical Assistance Committee could study this question.

The Canadian Delegation has been most interested to see that the distinction between donors and receivers under the Expanded Programme is rapidly disappearing. This is a tendency which we are sure all governments support. All countries, no matter how great their own general needs for technical assistance may be, have some particular background of experience which may be useful to other countries. Particularly within the various regions there is no doubt that an exchange of experience can bring great benefits. Even those countries now facing serious economic

difficulties may at the same time have experience or training facilities in some particular field which they can share with others.

Another important development which the Technical Assistance Committee will be studying further is the so-called Burma Plan. The development of the Burma Plan is perhaps the highest form of compliment which can be paid to the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. What this development means is that countries which have foreign exchange resources of their own for economic development find it cheaper and more effective to use these resources through the machinery of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance than to do so in some other way. It is entirely possible that the government of a country in Latin America, for example, wishing to hire an expert from Europe, should use the services of the Expanded Programme, which has recruitment offices already operating in Europe with considerable experience in finding and locating the right type of individual. Similarly, governments wishing to send students abroad may find great advantage in consulting the technical assistance authorities of the United Nations concerning the most suitable training institutions in other countries of the world. This type of service is certainly a valuable feature of the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance. It is available to the underdeveloped countries if they desire to use it.

There is a whole series of specific problems already mentioned in this debate on which I now propose to comment very briefly. My delegation's position on most of these questions is set forth in greater detail in the summary records of the Proceedings of the Technical Assistance Committee.

(1) My delegation supports the Netherlands suggestion that in future the General Assembly discuss the UNTAA programme and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance as separate sub-items of the over-all technical assistance item. We consider, however, that the Technical Assistance Committee is the appropriate body for detailed study of the UNTAA programmes as part of its general responsibility for technical assistance under ECOSOC.

(2) Our Mexican colleague has already mentioned problems connected with the creation of the United Nations Atomic Energy Agency. The Canadian Delegation believes that technical assistance in the field of atomic energy should be related to other forms of technical assistance provided by the United Nations and the specialized agencies. It is not yet clear exactly what form the relationship should take but, whatever the results of current discussions may be, an effort should be made to avoid duplication of administrative machinery already existing under the Technical Assistance Board.

(3) A number of suggestions have been made for improving the use of experts under the expanded programme. The Netherlands practice of providing junior experts to assist senior experts is certainly worthy of further study. Similarly, it is clear, as our Mexican colleague has suggested, that short-term experts uninformed concerning the general economic and cultural condition of the country they are trying to assist cannot be very successful. Dr. Keenleyside's initiative in promoting the use of short-term high-level experts for particular projects on the other hand is well worth our support. It will be interesting to see how this proposal develops.

(4) The Canadian Delegation takes a position on the out-posting of programme officers of the UNTAA very similar to that of the Netherlands Delegation. In general, the Canadian authorities consider that it would not be desirable to establish regional technical assistance administrations. We have great respect for the advances in administrative efficiency which have been made under the direction of Mr. Owen and Dr. Keenleyside. We believe these advances can be continued. We are not sure, however, that the answer to current administrative problems is the creation of regional headquarters with much the same functions as United Nations headquarters. In the meantime, however, it is clear that there are advantages in continuing the present experiment in Latin America until its usefulness can be assessed.

(5) The Canadian Delegation believes that there should be a continuance of the current evaluation practices. Without these it will not be possible to discover what changes should be made in the operations of the Expanded Programme.

(6) Another major problem before the Technical Assistance Commission and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly is that connected with the administrative and operational costs of the Expanded Programme and how they are to be met. The Canadian Delegation hopes that some over-all solution to this problem can be found, and that in the meantime no hasty action by any particular specialized agency will be taken which might make it difficult to arrive at a final decision.

(7) My delegation was most interested by Dr. Keenleyside's and by Mr. Owen's emphasis on the usefulness of the United Nations in providing help in the field of public administration. We look forward to further study of the Secretary-General's proposal for the provision of administrators to be employed in national administrations. It may well be that a useful new type of technical assistance programme will emerge from this consideration.

(8) Finally, my delegation would strongly support the position taken by the French Delegation that it is undesirable for ECOSOC or the General Assembly to pass resolutions concerning technical assistance for a particular country. It has

been our experience that this type of resolution has been neither useful nor desirable: it does not increase the amount of assistance available, and may well arouse hopes which cannot be fulfilled.

Much of my statement has been concerned with details. I should like to conclude, however, by referring to the comments, which both Mr. Owen and Dr. Keenleyside have made, that we cannot in considering a mass of detail allow ourselves to forget the human values involved in the United Nations programmes for technical assistance. If my delegation concentrates more on specific problems than on the human values of the programme we do so because we believe these human values are universally recognized and supported. The Canadian Governments' strong support for the United Nations programmes of technical assistance makes us all the more anxious to ensure that the programmes develop as effectively as possible.

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