

No. 61/17 Report of the Committee on Information
from Non-Self-Governing Territories

Statement by Mr. Martial Asselin, Canadian
Representative on the Fourth Committee of the
United Nations on October 27, 1961.

Madame Chairman,

I wish, first of all, to congratulate the authors of the report before us, particularly the Chairman of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories, Ambassador Schurmann of the Netherlands; you, Madame, for your able work as Vice-Chairman of the Committee; and Miss Faiha Kamal of Iraq, whose ability and tact as rapporteur find expression in the lucid and comprehensive character of the report. We are also indebted to the sub-committee headed by Mr. Paul Edmonds of New Zealand which prepared the special report on social advancement.

VI

I think it would also be appropriate for me to express our appreciation for the contribution which was made to the Committee's work by the new delegations serving on the Committee for the first time -- those of Liberia, Mexico and Spain.

II

This report is a chronicle of what has been accomplished during the past year in those dependent territories on which information is supplied to the United Nations in accordance with the Charter. These territories are diverse and widely scattered; in some there are especially complex and difficult problems to be solved before a full measure of self-government can be achieved. We recognize this and acknowledge that these problems cannot be solved overnight. If the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are to serve their purpose, if they are to be really effective, they must be so framed (in the words of Chapter XI) as "to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories." This is the obligation laid on the administering authorities.

It is, of course, people we are talking about in this debate, not statistics. And it is people we should be concerned about: their own distinctive cultures, their political, economic, social and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses. This means, as my delegation sees it, that we should make haste, not slowly, but with due deliberation. It means that our proposals should be constructive and that we should at all times seek the active co-operation of those administering powers -- and I do not hesitate to call them the "good" administering powers -- who have undertaken to complete their mission in accordance with the aspirations of the dependent peoples, the wishes of the General Assembly and the guiding principles laid down in the Charter.

III

In a report of this scope, I single out only one aspect for comment: the special section on social advancement. The Committee notes, in its report, that social development is nothing less than the whole process of change and advancement in a territory considered in terms of the progressive well-being of society and the individual. In this endeavour it is essential to encourage leadership and to seek the active support of the peoples of the territories in the formulation of policies and the execution of co-ordinated development programmes.

One of the immediate tasks of social policy, therefore, is training the local leadership on as wide a scale as possible. We are glad to acknowledge the fact that much good work has already been done in this direction. But the need for more and better-trained indigenous personnel is general throughout the non-self-governing territories. It was for this reason that my delegation joined in co-sponsoring Resolution 1534, which urged the administering members to take immediate measures aimed at the rapid development of indigenous civil and technical cadres. I am happy that this resolution has met with a prompt response from the vast majority of administering members whose policies have recognized that, in order for dependent territories to reach what we might call the "take-off point", there must be a solid base of trained administrators.

IV

Madame Chairman, my delegation welcomed very much the announcement by the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom that his government is ready to provide full information to the United Nations on political and constitutional progress in all non-self-governing territories which remain under British administration. This is a decision of the first importance; we believe it is the right decision to make. It shows once again the sensitivity of Great Britain to world public opinion and the wishes of the General Assembly.

V

I would like to add that my delegation welcomed the appearance in our Committee, as a member of the United States delegation, of Mr. de Jongh, the special assistant to the Governor of the Virgin Islands. Happily this practice seems to be contagious, since we have also heard addresses by two rather special members of the United Kingdom delegation: Dr. Hugh Springer, Registrar of the University of The West Indies, and the Chief Minister of Uganda, Mr. Kiwanuka.

VI

Mr. Kiwanuka brought us the welcome news that, as an outcome of the recent London conference, Uganda will attain independence on October 9, 1962. He told us that at that time Uganda will make a formal application for United Nations membership. The Canadian delegation is delighted at the thought that, hard on the heels of Tanganyika, another East African country will soon attain full self-government and independence.

VII

In closing, Madame Chairman, I wish to say a few words about the assistance which Canada is giving to students from non-self-governing territories in the fields of higher education and technical training.

Technical Assistance

In the field of technical assistance, more than 500 foreign students are now pursuing studies in Canada under bilateral or multilateral technical assistance programmes. Of these 75 come from non-self-governing territories.

Scholarships

A word about scholarships. Under its Commonwealth and External Aid Programmes, Canada offers each year 250 to 300 scholarships which are open to all Commonwealth countries, including non-self-governing territories. The scholarships do not differ in value except that students coming to Canada under the Commonwealth programme may bring their wives, for whom the Canadian Government pays two-thirds of the travel expenses to Canada and return plus a monthly marriage allowance of \$50.00.

These figures give only part of the story. The Canadian share in the way of direct aid and encouragement for the educational advance of peoples in dependent territories is best shown by the total number of students from all non-self-governing territories taking higher education in Canada. In the year 1960-61 there were 980 students from non-self-governing territories studying in Canada.

West Indies

Of those students studying in Canada, a considerable number have come from The West Indies. Dr. Springer, in his appearance before this Committee, was kind enough to refer to the aid which we have given towards the development of the University of The West Indies. As an example, the Canadian Government has approved a project for the construction of a residence hall at the University of The West Indies in Trinidad, at a cost of \$700,000. We have also provided the staff of the University with three professors as teacher-trainers. Two have now completed their tour of duty; one is still with the University and a fourth will be leaving for the West Indies next month.

Under the Canadian Government's West Indies Aid programme, announced in 1958, \$10 million is being spent on economic and technical assistance to the West Indies over a five-year period to assist and accelerate economic development. This covers such projects as the provision of ships for inter-island traffic, the construction of docks and warehouse facilities, and natural resources surveys. We hope in all these ways to contribute something towards the future economic and educational development of a prosperous and independent West Indies.



